TEACHER IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION: ON BECOMING ESL TEACHERS WITHIN THE MALAYSIAN CONTEXT

Universiti Malaya

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FACULTY OF EDUCATION
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Abstract

Key to this study is the question of how ESL pre-service teachers (PSTs) construct their professional identity (PI). This research explores the process of becoming a teacher and what this process implies to the construction of identity in terms of belonging to a community of practice and using one's personal adaptation process to develop one's professional identity. The aims of this study are: 1) to understand what PI transformations PSTs experience during their teaching practice stage, 2) to understand what personal and socio-contextual factors in the teacher education program (TEP) contribute to pre-service teachers' professional identity (PSTPI) construction, and 3) to explore how PSTs employ adaptation processes in response to the surrounding social context to develop their identities. This work is a case study. Eight (8) female Malaysian ESL pre-service teachers (PSTs) in the final stage of their third year of the teacher education program for teaching English as a second language (TESL) at University of Malaya (UM) were chosen as the research participants. Interviews and observation are the data collection methods employed in this study. Constant comparative analysis serves as the analytical data analysis approach. The findings show that professional identity (PI) is dynamic and changing constantly as one re-interprets and re-evaluates their practices and self as a teacher. Varying contexts from universities to secondary schools expose PSTs to different opportunities and challenges that may hinder or facilitate their PI development. The study reveals that a number of personal and socio-contextual factors interplay and influence PI development. This study also demonstrates how PSTs develop a sense of professional identity (a way to see themselves as teachers) and awareness of their potential as a new generation of teachers through their simulated teaching classes at

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university and based on the theories of language teaching and learning they encounter through their university courses. Upon shifting to actual teaching at schools, PSTs' evolving identity conflicts with their new community of practice. Moreover, poor physical conditions of the schools and interpersonal relationships hinder PSTPI development. The positive notions of belonging to a community of practice (i.e., collaboration, mutual and collegial relationships) prove to be applicable in the simulated teaching class context. In such a supportive training context, PSTs use their adaptation process of observation-experimentation and evaluation to attempt different teaching practices. Nonetheless, the positive notions of the community of practice (CoP) are inapplicable in the teaching practicum context. Hence, PSTs struggle to construct their PI and negotiate their understanding and teaching practices. PSTs must alter their adaptation processes to find other strategies to negotiate PI construction.

Keywords: Pre-Service Teachers, Community of Practice, Simulated Teaching, Practicum, Social Context, Constructivism, Possible selves.

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PEMBINAAN IDENTITI GURU: MENJADI GURU BAHASA INGGERIS SEBAGAI BAHASA KEDUA DI MALAYSIA

Abstrak

Persoalan bagaimana guru-guru pra-pendidikan membina identiti professional mereka menjadi kunci dalam kajian ini. Kajian in mengeksplorasi proses menjadi seorang guru. Ia mengkaji apakah proses tersebut boleh diserap dalam pembinaan identity dalam kerangka *CoP* untuk membina sebuah identity professional. Tujuan kajian ini adalah: 1) untuk memahami apakah transformasi PI terjadi melalui pengalaman mereka sewaktu tahap menjadi pelajar, 2) untuk memahami apakah faktor-faktor sosial dan personal dalam program pendidikan guru menyumbang kearah pembinaan identiti professional dan 3) untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana calon guru menggunakan kaedah adaptasi sebagai tindakbalas konteks sosial untuk membina identiti mereka. Kajian ini adalah berbentuk kajian kes skala kecil. Lapan penuntut pra-perguruan bidang *TESL* dari Universiti Malaya dipilih untuk kajian ini. Mereka adalah pelajar Tahun Tiga. Dalam kajian ini dua instrument digunakan sebagai pungutan data iaitu observasi tingkahlaku dan sesi temubual. Analisa *constant comparative method* digunakan sebagai alat analitikal analisis data. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa identiti professional adalah dinamik dan berubah pada setiap masa apabila seseorang itu menginterpretasi dan menilai kerja seharian mereka dan juga diri sebagai seorang guru. Penukaran keadaan dari pembelajaran di university dan juga praktikal di sekolah telah mendedahkan pelajar-pelajar ini kepada beberapa peluang dan cabaran yang boleh meningkat atau menghimpit pembinaan identiti professional mereka. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan bahawa beberapa faktor personal dan sosial memainkan peranan penting dalam pembinaan identiti professional. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa guru pelatih yang menjalani

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pengajaran simulasi sewaktu di universiti membantu mereka untuk meningkatkan pembinaan identity professional mereka. Dalam kata lain, teori-teori pengamalan di universiti berkesan membantu mereka untuk membina identiti professional keguruan. Walaubagaimapun, setelah berada dalam linkungan sekolah berlaku konflik terhadap apa yang mereka pelajari (teori) dan perkara sebenar yang berlaku (praktikal). Lingkungan keadaan fisikal sekolah dan hubungan interpersonal mengekang pembentukan dan pembangunan pelajar-pelajar kajian ini. Beberapa idea seperti kolaborasi dan hubungan setiakawan dapat diaplikasi di lingkungan sekolah. Dengan demikian, para pelajar mencuba beberapa kaedah mengatasi kelemahan dengan melakukan proses observasi-experimentasi dengan pelbagai teknik pengajaran. Walaubagaimanapun, idea *CoP* yang positif tidak dapat diaplikasi dalam keadaan praktikal sekolah. Justeru itu kebanyakan pelatih ini mengahadapi masalah dalam membina dan menegosiasi pemahaman mereka sewaktu di sekolah. Mereka harus merubah proses adaptasi ini bagi mendapat strategi lain untuk membina identiti professional mereka.

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Dedication

This entire work is dedicated to my beloved parents, husband and children who have been with me all along my PhD journey with their unquestioned support and eminent love.

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List of Abbreviations

PI	:	Professional Identity
TI	:	Teacher identity
PST	:	Pre-service teachers
STs	:	Student teachers
PSTPI	:	Pre- service teacher's professional identity
ESL	:	English as a Second Language
CoP	:	Community of Practice
SCoP	:	Supported community of practice
TEP	:	Teacher Education Program
UM	:	University Malaya
K12	:	Educational stages covering Kindergarten or pre-school, primary school and secondary school

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

This chapter begins with an investigation of the research problem (i.e., exploration of pre-service teachers' professional identity (PSTPI) construction). A summary of literature on the problem of pre-service teachers' professional identity development follows, to demonstrate the significant need to address this problem. After establishing the gaps in literature, an explicit problem statement, the study goals and research questions are presented. Later in this chapter, the theoretical frameworks guiding this study are discussed, indicating how they relate to, and support this thesis. The end of the chapter presents a discussion of the approach and research strategy to capture the complexity of PSTPI development. The definitions used in this study, assumptions, scope of the study, delimitations and limitations are also discussed.

Background of the Problem

Teacher identity as a recent research area. The development of teacher identity within the context of second language (L2) teacher education is a recent research area (Ahmadi, Abd Samad, & Noordin, 2013; Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Castaneda, 2011; Castañeda, 2014; Chong, Ling, & Chuan, 2011; Izadinia, 2013; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Lin, 2011; Tsui, 2007; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). Teacher identity is one of the central topics in literature (Tsui, 2011), with extensive focus on the development of in-service teacher professional identity through in-service professional development (S. Brown, 2005;

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Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009; Yost, 2006). However, studies on exploring PSTPI construction or on describing what PSTs undergo during student teaching throughout their PI construction journey are scarce (T. C. Farrell, 2001). The pre-service preparation stage requires close attention due to its importance to PSTPI development, which influences careers later on (Grow, 2011; Tsui, 2007). On account of this suggestive information, it is particularly interesting to personally examine the little-known phenomenon of teacher identity construction among ESL pre-service teachers in Malaysia.

Why so little attention. A general review of the literature on pre-service teachers' education shows that PSTPI as a holistic development phenomenon and means of becoming a teacher (Naylor, 2015) has received little attention owing to a number of inherited connected complexities. The literature surveyed thus points to the complex interrelationships between multi-factors, such as prior experience, family, university and school setting, educational policy and ideology (Olsen, 2008) to name a few, that interact with each other and lead to the emergence of different complementary or conflicting teacher sub-identities (Samuel & Stephens, 2000). Due to time constraints, researchers usually choose to focus on certain factors while neglecting others. Another complexity stems from the need for permission to follow PSTs at university and school. The school setting is specifically more difficult to access due to focus on content teaching rather than research. Noticeably, the majority of researchers are university professors who may have more convenient access to their own university students.

Many interacting factors may influence the construction of teacher identity amongst ESL PSTs. Due to the multi-dimensional nature of identity, I draw on both psychological perspectives (possible selves and adaptation strategies) and social

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perspectives of practice/learning communities. To respond to the personal and social dimensions of constructing a professional identity, focus is on the transformations that PSTs experienced in their PI during their teaching practice stage and the different factors affecting PI construction. The way PSTs use personal adaptation strategies in response to their learning context to achieve possible teacher selves is also examined. The broader sociocultural context, such as community, religion, race or gender, is not addressed in this study due to time and space constraints of the current small-scale study.

The concept of Professional Identity (PI). Researchers of education consult the philosophical stance of social sciences to describe, relate and explain the concept of PI (which refers to teacher identity too). This has resulted, according to Beijaard et al (2004) and Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), in this notion being conceptualized differently. Tsui (2011) contended that identity involves relational and experiential dimensions. The relational dimension refers to how we see ourselves and how others see us in a certain context (Gee, 2000), while the experiential dimension means that identity is constructed through our engagement in building meanings within our communities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Hence, the teacher not only receives the knowledge and skills inherited in a community, rather, he/she participates actively in shaping and reshaping such competences (Tsui, 2011).

For the purpose of this study, PI construction is connected with the concept of learning as a becoming process that leads to constructing one's professional identity (Britzman, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991) and results in better professional development (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). Generally speaking, researchers and PSTPI experts agree that professional identity is a complex ongoing process of becoming in a specific context. It involves "values, beliefs, attitudes, approaches to

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interaction and language that have been developed within personal" contexts (family, own community, and life history) "combined with understandings, pedagogical commitments and approaches and routines of professional practice" (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008, p. 153). The professional components are developed in teacher preparation programs and earlier under the effect of previous experiences as a K12 student (Olsen, 2008) as well as the social image of model teachers and teaching.

This definition of PI re-conceptualizes teacher identity in a holistic manner and does not only focus on the professional aspects of being a teacher. Integrating the different aspects of being a teacher (i.e., personal and professional aspects and components) is aimed to cultivate teacher identity construction wholeness. Nonetheless, perfection is not the goal, but it is acknowledging the entirety of who a teacher is (Palmer, 2007). The following figure (1.1) indicates the complexity of teacher identity construction as a mix of different overlapping factors. It is worth noting that constructing one's PI is not necessarily as linear as it may appear in the figure, but it is an iterative process with various cycles (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008) influenced by a range of aforementioned factors at different stages.

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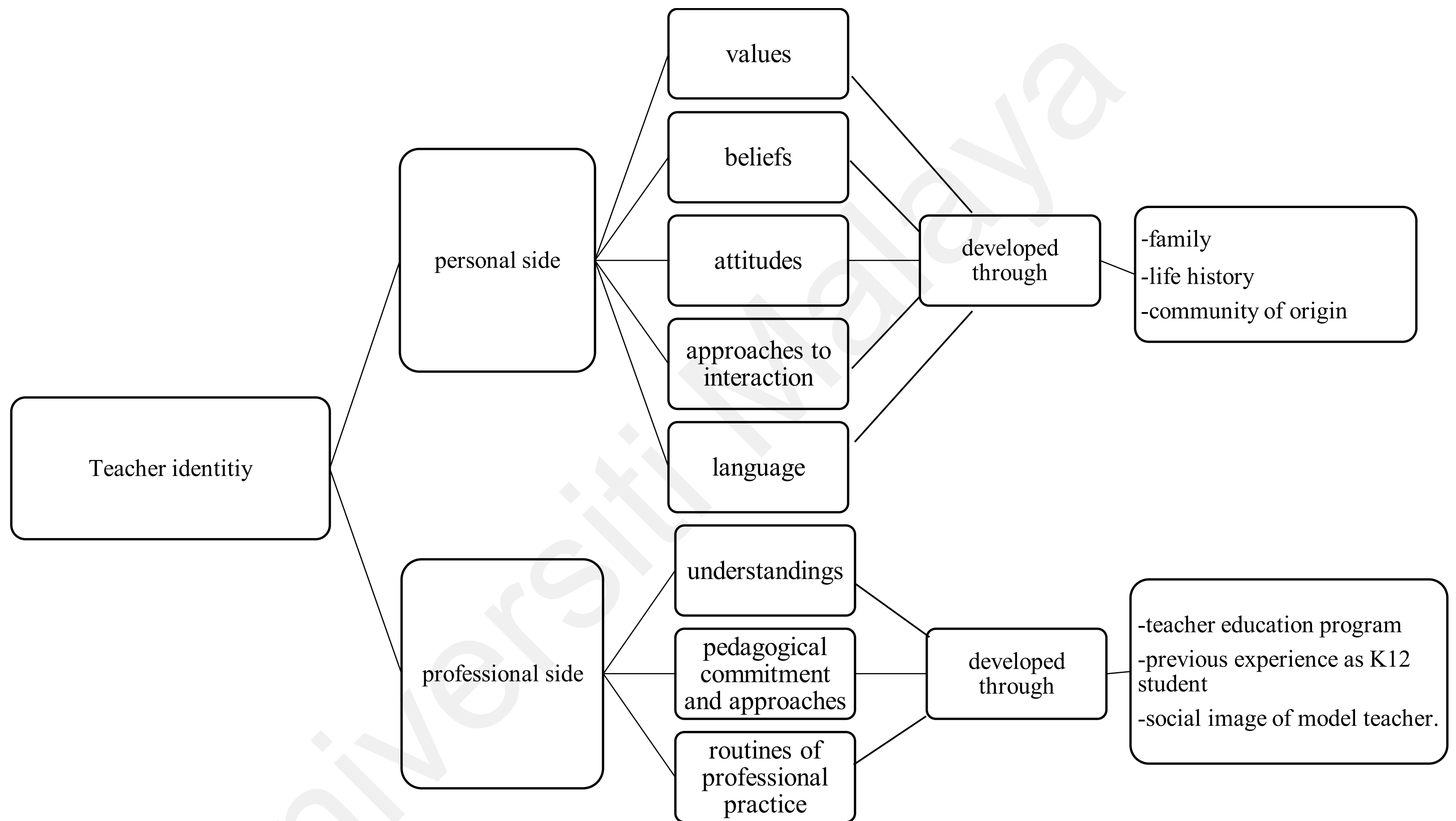

Figure 1.1 Definition of teacher identity based on Hoffman-Kipp (2008).

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PI and the self-concept. Connected to PI in this study is the concept of possible selves that is referred to as part of PSTPI. While identity is connected with one's roles in society, self-concept is a mental picture or image of who one is as a person. It is connected with our behaviors, abilities, potential and unique characteristics. Burke and Stets (2009) argued that the self-concept emerges within the social context, creating multiple selves based on the various roles we may play in society. Each smaller self within the overall self represents a different identity. Hence, self as student is an identity, as is self as a colleague, self as a teacher, self as a daughter, etc.

Hamman, Gosselin, Romano, and Bunuan (2010) postulated that both identity and self-concept involve representation to others, implicate utilizing strategies towards specific outcomes and are influenced by the sociocultural context. The addition of 'possible' to the self-concept in PSTPI construction refers to the different teacher images and roles (e.g., knowledgeable, compassionate, innovative, follower, conformer, etc.) that participants have and seek to achieve or avoid through their journey of learning to teach. In this study, possible selves are subcomponents of PSTPI.

Why Study PSTPI

For teacher educators. The process of PI formation is given different titles and metaphors in literature, such as professional identity construction (Castaneda, 2011), journey of becoming (Cooper & He, 2012), becoming a professional (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008), learning to teach (Castañeda, 2014) and the developmental journey (Lin, 2011). Still, there is general agreement on the significance of PI (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Izadinia, 2013); hence, there is a

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need for focused research on teachers' professional identity construction (Beijaard et al., 2004). Understanding the processes through which PSTs construct identities and the different overlapping personal and social factors and relations that affect them, can help teacher educators understand the kind of persons PSTs become and how that empowers or hinders their ability to respond thoughtfully to their students' needs (Fairbanks et al., 2009).

"While it is important for teacher educators to understand what identities novice teachers construct, it is also crucial for them to understand why or how those identities are constructed" (Kayi-Aydar, 2015, p. 101). The emerging identity can inform us if the teacher is traditional and conforms to "conventional wisdom" or "established practice" (C. Fairbanks et al., 2010, p. 166), or is an innovative changer who is culturally responsive to the needs of their context. These identities help teacher educators understand how those teachers see themselves "in relation to teaching, to the context …, to [their] students, and to [their] community." (Battey & Franke, 2008, p. 128). What supports PSTs' needs may be based on such understanding of PI construction (Beijaard et al., 2004; Olsen, 2008).

For teacher education program designers. At the teacher education program design level, recognizing the range of factors that affect teacher identity can encourage program designers to devise plans of teaching future teachers how to effectively negotiate contextual elements (e.g., school, community, national policies, politics or economics) (C. Fairbanks et al., 2010). There is a need to consider teacher identity as an important component of teacher education (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Johnson, 2006).

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For PSTs. PSTs themselves can benefit from understanding their own teacher identity and how it affects learning and engaging in their coursework, "informing what they learn." (Horn, Nolen, Ward, & Campbell, 2008). Adding to this, PSTs need to understand how their learning, under the effect of different personal and contextual factors, will modify their teacher identity (Horn et al., 2008; Izadinia, 2013).

At the Theoretical Level. Horn et al. (2008), Olsen (2008, p. 5) and Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) recommended using teacher identity as a research frame "because it treats teachers as whole persons in and across social contexts who continually reconstruct their views of themselves in relation to others, workplace characteristics, professional purposes, and cultures of teaching". Gee (2000) considers identity as a profound dynamic approach to understand the dynamics of learning and interaction among people in a specific community of practice or learning.

The contribution of the current study to literature on PSTPI construction has been embodied in three articles. The first article is entitled "Identity Construction of ESL Pre-Service Teachers within The Malaysian Context" published in the Journal of Education in December 2016. The second article is entitled "Complexities and Tensions that ESL Malaysian Student Teachers Face during their Field Practice" published in April 2017. The third article is entitled "On the cultivation of their community of practice: A case study of ESL Malaysian pre-service teachers" (El Masry & Mohd Saad, 2018), accepted and published by the Qualitative Report/Nova Journal.

In addition, the study contributes theoretically to the literature by building a model that represents the different shifts in PI that PSTs experience during the

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teaching practice stage. The model also introduces the various personal and social factors that contribute to PSTPI construction. The study additionally shows how PSTs alter their adaptation strategies in response to the training context to construct their PI.

The Statement of Problem

Through the lens of the social approach that emphasizes the social context in forming one's identity (Margaret L. Anderson & Howard E. Taylor, 2013), a number of studies have been conducted to investigate the (re)construction of teacher professional identity in teacher preparation programs (see e.g.,Ahmadi et al., 2013; Fajardo Castaneda, 2011; Fajardo Castañeda, 2014; Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Merseth, Sommer, & Dickstein, 2008; Smith, 2006). The available studies follow different conceptual bases in analyzing teacher identity (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010).

In addition to L2 teacher education in the ESL/EFL context, I have also consulted studies on general teacher education. Some of those studies attempt to yield an understanding of the relationship between person and context in teacher identity development, while others aim to describe the different characteristics of teacher identity. Scholars highlight the 'multidimensionality' (Tsui, 2011) of professional identity and examine the relationship between those dimensions. Whether teacher learning should be aimed at creating harmony between one's sub-identities (Beijaard et al., 2004) or recognize the continuous struggle between them in constructing one's professional identity (Samuel & Stephens, 2000) remains a site of debate among scholars (Tsui, 2011).

The third group of studies focus on teachers' stories as a source of data (Beijaard et al., 2004). For example, some studies explore the value of ESL PSTs'

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engagement in discourse socialization activities or 'identity-in-discourse' in crafting their professional identities (e.g.,Ahmadi et al., 2013; Trent & Lim, 2010). These scholars contend that through dialogical interactions, PSTs are likely to reconsider their professional identities. Along the same lines, other scholars argue that stories told or written by teachers can reveal the process undertaken by teachers to identify themselves as professionals (Alsup, 2006; Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Sfard & Prusak, 2005). Such stories enable individuals to examine their tacit assumptions about teaching and understand who they are as teachers compared to others. As a result, they decide what is necessary to do individually and collectively to (re)construct their identity.

Others focus on the role of belonging to a teacher community in considerably shaping classroom practices and professional identity (Castañeda, 2014; Chong et al., 2011; Olsen, 2008). Prior experiences, values and beliefs that student teachers bring into their teacher preparation program and negotiate within their teacher community seemingly result in changes in their teacher identity. Observing teachers teaching at school and later at university can help them, under the effect of 'apprenticeship of observation,' to construct themselves as teachers with a set of beliefs about teaching (Chong et al., 2011, pp. 30-31; Friesen & Besley, 2013, p. 23).

The purpose of other studies is to highlight the struggles PSTs encounter while negotiating their professional identities and the sources of such concerns (Cooper & He, 2012; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Smagorinsky, Cook, Moore, Jackson, & Fry, 2004). Those concerns mainly stem from the contradictory nature of teaching and teachers' roles, classroom management, relationships (with students, mentors, colleagues, supervisors, the administration and community) (Khalid, 2014) in the practice context. These studies mainly focus on the teaching practice stage but

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neglect the role of university simulated teaching courses. Researchers contend that understanding such concerns and their sources can help teacher educators better supervise their PSTs and prepare them for real challenges in the actual teaching context.

The findings reported in the aforementioned studies present concrete evidence of the importance of a number of factors for PST professional identity. M. Varghese et al. (2005) argued that researchers rely on various theoretical frameworks (e.g., CHAT theory, positioning theory, communities of practice, learning community, to name but a few) to account for the complex nature of teacher identity. Izadinia (2013) carried out a literature review on PST professional identity and claimed that about 13 studies out of 29 make no reference to any theoretical framework.

This complexity also reflects on the methodological approaches and data collection tools that mainly include interviews, sometimes supported by observational data, reflective journals and other documents (Izadinia, 2013; Varghese et al., 2005). Narratives, storytelling, and reflective journals give voice to STs to vent their concerns and perceptions of the changes happening in their professional identities. However, Rodgers and Scott (2008) assured that scholars still need to thoroughly explain how teachers transition from students who are learning to teachers who are constructing professional identities.

Another gap encountered in the current literature review is the context of such studies. The majority of studies on PSTPI construction have been conducted in developed countries like the USA, the UK and Australia. Izadinia (2013) raised the question of why work on identity emphasizes the western cultural contexts but is almost absent in other contexts (e.g., developing or underdeveloped countries). She

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considered this is a significant gap for researchers to address in other contexts. Izadinia contended that such research on teacher identity can produce local knowledge that may significantly add to the literary work in this area. Hence, the present study is informative and significant as it yields more understanding of teacher identity development in developing countries.

In summary, previous studies contend that teacher identity construction mainly resides in the social context or the community of practice. Moreover, earlier studies have primarily focused on the role of prior or present experience in informing student teachers' identity. Rare are studies that consider self-future image (Cross & Markus, 1991) in developing teacher identity. In addition, researchers seem to poorly incorporate related notions of psychology and sociology in their attempts to understand teacher identity development (Friesen & Besley, 2013).

Another trend is to focus on the individual's role in negotiating identity by adopting, rejecting or modifying the different teaching identities or practices offered in their learning environment (Grossman et al., 2009; Horn et al., 2008). Such studies argue that the student teacher is not fully autonomous nor completely dominated by the sociocultural context around (Olsen, 2008). It is contended that exploiting the tension arising from the gap between the university and practicum contexts, as well as the personal and professional selves, can productively help STs develop their pedagogical reasoning and adaptation processes.

In line with this new "developmental and social psychology" approach of exploring PSTs' learning, it needs to be further understood how PSTs approach their student teaching experience and how they respond to the different personal and socio-contextual factors that affect PI construction.

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Previous studies have highlighted the importance of the social context and different factors in PSTPI construction. There is still a need to understand why and how PSTs under the effect of such factors decide to become what they become. Hence, my goal is to understand ESL student teachers' learning from a situative perspective (i.e., the role of the complex surrounding context at a university and at a practice site) and psychological theory of adaptation processes. I precisely want to capture how the teacher education program constitutes a learning environment for ESL student teachers and, at the same time, how they employ personal processes of dealing with the tensions and opportunities in such environment.

This study springs from the need to document the unheard stories of ESL Malaysian PSTs in exploring the impact of the interaction between the individual and sociocultural contexts in the teacher education program (TEP) on PI construction. An attempt is made to understand teachers' conceptualization of their PI and perceptions of themselves as ESL teachers through the journey of learning to teach.

Study Goals and Questions

The study goals. This study is exploratory in nature, as the aim is to understand what salient personal and contextual factors in the teacher education program (TEP) contribute to the development of pre-service teachers' professional identity (PSTPI). The aim is also to particularly understand how PSTs use personal adaptation processes in response to the surrounding social context to negotiate their PI. While moving through the simulated teaching and practicum stages, PSTs are offered different possible selves to negotiate and from which to select what will be part of their core teacher identity or what to discard. Hence, the major goal of this study is to understand how the sociocultural context and personal adaptation

processes contribute to ESL PSTPI construction. It is hoped this integrated lens of exploring the problem under study will provide better complementary explanations of PI development.

The study questions.

The overarching question that addresses the topic under study is:

How do ESL pre-service teachers (PSTs) develop a professional identity (PI) through simulated teaching and practicum in their pre-service community of practice (CoP), when understood with reference to context and adaptation processes?

The sub-questions are:

RQ1- What professional identity (PI) shifts do pre-service teachers (PSTs) experience during their student teaching practice (i.e., simulated teaching classes and teaching practicum stage)?

RQ 2- What personal and/or interpersonal factors contribute to pre-service teachers' (PSTs) professional identity (PI) construction?

RQ3 - How do pre-service teachers (PSTs) employ adaptation strategies to develop their professional identity (PI)?

Rationales for the study. Teacher education programs still face the challenge of preparing pre-service teachers to be able to cope with the changing contexts of schools. PSTs find that moving from a university to a school context is a stage full of tensions and conflicts. The main rationale for this study is thus to explore the experiences PSTs encounter in the initial professional preparation programs (including simulated teaching classes and practicum) in the Malaysian context. This study contributes towards unfolding such complex experiences teachers undergo along their learning to teach journey. The dense description of the study context and the participants' experiences may enlighten stakeholders in this context

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per se and in other similar contexts about how PSTs construct their professional identity.

The overarching question addresses the topic of constructing teacher identity as a product of the interplay between contextual factors and adaptation processes within a pre-service teachers' community of practice represented by a simulated teaching course and the practicum stage. To attain greater focus on the components of this general question, it is split into three questions that are more specific. The first question is aimed to probe semi-structured interview and observation data that follow the developmental line of PSTPI construction. It explores the different PI shifts that PSTs experience throughout their journey. The second question attempts to probe data regarding PSTs' perception of personal and contextual factors affecting their PSTPI construction. PSTs' practices and forms of participation are key to understanding how they construct their PSTPI. As PSTs approach the learning to teach journey, their practices and forms of participation evolve, transferring them from the students' to the teachers' arena. Getting involved in the community of practice context in the simulated teaching classes and practicum means getting involved with different activities, relations and forms of participation.

The third question highlights the role of PSTs' adaptation processes of observing, experimenting and evaluating the different images of a good teacher and good teaching practices in their context. This strategy is meant to enable them to decide what to be and how to be a teacher. Through these questions, it is argued that feedback from the context and one's own principles can guide teacher identity development.

What affects PSTs' identity development and how, either contextually or individually, are the main goals of these questions. Answers to the three questions

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were obtained from analyzing the qualitative data collected. Credible narratives based on semi-structured interviews and observation help clarify the answers and support the study goals.

Frameworks for the Thesis

Theoretical Foundation

The Sociocultural and Psychological Approaches. This study is an attempt to capture the complexity of constructing ESL PSTs' identity from a holistic point of view involving both sociocultural and psychological approaches. Guided by three interrelated theoretical frameworks, I approached the literature, created the study questions and goals, and decided on the approach and method to achieve the study goals. This thesis draws on the work of Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning, Cross and Markus' (1991) possible selves and Ibarra's (1999) adaptation process. These three theoretical frameworks are briefly introduced in this chapter, and a more detailed explanation is presented in Chapter 2, the Literature Review.

Situated learning. Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning represents the ideas of community of practice and peripheral participation as part of the theoretical framework that captures the role of the contextual factors that direct PSTs' learning to teach. It shows how a teacher preparation program can serve as a space where PSTs try out different identities and practices to construct their own teacher identity. Notions of sharedness, belonging and participation are key to supporting PSTs' learning and scaffold progress towards their professions. The situated learning framework explains the role and nature of social relations and forms of participation that could support or hinder the formation of PSTs' professional identity.

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The possible selves. Placing individuals in their context may not be sufficient to understand the transformations they encounter in identity development. From a psychological perspective, Cross and Markus (1991) possible selves framework suggests that individuals, under the effect of their contexts, construct a repertoire of selves to negotiate the changes and transitions faced. Those selves can represent the desired future image of one's identity.

The adaptation process. Up to this point, it is clear that the professional education program context facilitates emerging patterns of participation (e.g., practices and roles) and relations. In such a learning space, PSTs have the opportunity to construct and adapt possible selves (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). The key word to be explained is "adapt." How do PSTs adapt in such contextual environment and with different selves they construct? Hence, Ibarra (1999) adaptation process is used hereby to clearly describe how PSTs go through a cycle of observation, experimentation and evaluation.

The three conceptually related theoretical frameworks thus support the argument that individual identity is a product of the social context and personal expectations. As mentioned earlier, a more interpretive argument will demonstrate how these frameworks are connected to establish the frame of the current study.

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Nature of the Thesis

In the previous discussion, the aim was to establish the complexity of teacher identity development. This section will briefly introduce the current research approach and method as well as the rationale behind using them, along with the appropriate data collection tools. However, a detailed discussion of the philosophical

background of such approach, and the justifications and drawbacks of using it, will be introduced in the third chapter entitled Research Methodology.

The present research subtitle is "On becoming ESL teachers within the Malaysian Context." The "ing" indicates that as a researcher, it is necessary to engage in the study context. I want to understand the process through which student teachers build professional identities through simulated teaching classes and teaching practice period. Since the intention is to describe, understand and interpret (Merriam, 2009) the students' journey of constructing their identities as ESL teachers, the qualitative interpretivisit approach is a more realistic lens for this research. A positivism quantitative research suggests using controlled variables and fixed theories upon which to base studies. Such recommendation may not hold true to the goals of this study. Rather, the data gathered will lead to the emergence of theory construction, however crude it may be. That theory corresponds to the peculiarities of the context and people studied. The research relies on the participants' views of the situation under study (Creswell, 2009).

Why was a case study chosen? A case study is a qualitative research strategy utilized to explore changes in a complex phenomenon over time (Creswell, 2009; Lier, 2005; Merriam, 2009). Yin (2008) argued that where it is impossible to separate the phenomenon from the context, the case study strategy is desirable. The present theoretical discussion showed that teacher identity is a complex, ongoing process formed under the effect of the sociocultural context around individuals. The bounded system in this study is the teacher preparation program (simulated teaching and practicum) at a Malaysian university. The case comprises a group of 8 ESL PSTs, drawn from three groups of about 24 female STs. Hence, the number of participants

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and time for observation and data collection were finite (Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009).

Two phases were undertaken to collect data. The first phase started at University of Malaya (UM) when the PSTs began their simulated teaching. The second phase commenced as those PSTs moved on to different schools for their practicum. Bounded by time and activity, I sought to collect (generate) detailed information of how the 8 ESL PSTs handled different tensions/obstacles and opportunities in the social context of their learning and practice community. To gain such deep understanding and copiously describe how they approached teacher identity using adaptation processes of observation, experimentation and evaluation, two data collection procedures were employed: interviews and observation.

A semi-structured interview is essential to understand how PSTs construct identities by negotiating possible selves in the context of their professional preparation program. The open-ended questions allowed the researcher to listen attentively to the PSTs and the subjective meanings generated through interaction with others. Hence, this method reflects social constructivism notions (Creswell, 2009). Interpreting the meanings shared by the PSTs with theresearcher helped understand the complex processes they undergo in constructing their identity.

In addition, the researcher gained better insight into the contextual factors that affect the becoming process. The interviews were conducted three times in each phase (i.e., beginning, mid-stage and end of the stage). These juncture points in the journey of learning to teach enabled following PSTs' developmental line while they were progressing in the teacher education program.

Observation is the second strategy used in this study. I observed the PSTs' interaction and teaching in the simulated teaching program and practicum stage.

Since I was not familiar with the Malaysian university and governmental school context, attending all simulated teaching classes helped me better understand the PSTs' sociocultural context -- a natural setting (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) where the PSTs construct their identities. Informal conversations while observing the classes added to my understanding. I observed two teaching practice classes for each candidate (middle of practice and the end). Later, the observation notes were compared with the data gained from the participants. These observation notes helped verify the PSTs' claimed identities. Using different research tools (interviews, observation and field notes) resulted in data triangulation, which led to in-depth and multiple insights to the analysis. The aim here was to enhance the research validity and credibility.

What is left to explain is my role as a researcher and the data analysis strategy. My role in this study was 'participant-as-observer.' As the term suggests, I was "part of the social life of participants … document and record what is happening for research purposes." (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 310). Once the PSTs move on to schools, my role shifted to entirely an observer of them in class. The data from this stage was supported by extensive interviews and informal talks.

Regarding data analysis and interpretation, Creswell (2009) and Merriam (2009) suggested considering data analysis as an ongoing process (i.e., collecting and analyzing data simultaneously). This approach enabled me as a researcher to reflect on the process, ask analytical questions and decide what other steps to take, data to collect or people to interview or observe. Following Saldana (2009), I used inductive analysis or open coding of data to underline data segments that are relevant to, or answer the research questions. The next step was to compare those segments with

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each other (axial coding/analytical coding) to discover any regularities and create categories for use in the final report.

Definitions of Terms

Identity is the key aspect of this study. The dictionary states that "identity is who you are, the way you think about yourself, the way you are viewed by the world and the characteristics that define you" (yourdictionary.com/identity). Though this definition establishes the relationship between the one-self and the world in defining individual identity, it still does not capture the complexity inherited by identities; it presumes that identities are stable and unchanged.

For the purpose of this research, Olsen's (2008) argument of how to define this term is taken into consideration. Olsen argued that traditional, psychological identity framing is envisioned as autonomous and directed by the individual. Social scholars respond to such traditional understanding by revering to 'cultural identity.' However, this term broadly defines identity in terms of gender, class, race, religious beliefs, ethnicity, etc. It assumes that individuals gain the characteristics of the culture to which they belong as distinct from other cultures.

Such narrow or broad understanding of the meaning of identity is not the focus of this thesis. Rather, a more 'inroad' sociocultural perspective serves as a lens through which to frame identity. Olsen (2008, p. 4) explained that the sociocultural theory proposes a more practical understanding of identity as "the self in practice." It offers a comprehensive approach that interrelates the personal characteristics, social and cultural contexts and nature of what has to be learnt. These aspects are not separate but are integrated with each other (Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, I interpret identity as a dynamic, ongoing process, a process of interpreting oneself as a "certain

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kind of person" and being recognized as such in a given context."(Gee, 2000, p. 1). This understanding of the identity concept includes three aspects: roles individuals occupy in society (e.g., student, worker, son, etc.), membership in a particular group (here the teaching/learning community) and personal characteristics (identifying oneself as unique) (Burke & Stets, 2009).

For the purpose of this study, the terms "teacher identity" (TI) and "professional identity" (PI) are used interchangeably to refer to the identity PSTs construct during their teacher preparation program.

Community of practice (CoP): Wenger et al. (2002, p. 4) defined a CoP as a group of people who have a shared interest or passion. CoP members are self-selected and choose to participate voluntarily. However, as long as a teacher preparation program is organized and monitored by a university and instructors, the conventional definition of CoP may not be fully applicable to this situation. Saint-Onge and Wallace (2003, cited in Li et al., 2009) suggested a new classification of CoP based on organization and structure. First are 'informal groups' that represent a forum for its members to discuss a topic. This form may go along the lines of the traditional definition of CoP. Second, 'supported groups' are set by organizations to equip members with the necessary knowledge and skills in a specific field. Finally, 'structured groups' are developed by management to advance business. The 'supported group' definition is more applicable to this study, hence this CoP is referred to as supported CoP (SCoP). Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004, pp. 6-7) articulated the same position by focusing on the narrower meaning of CoP to study the unique interrelations of members "within small coherent subject departments."

Student teachers (STs) and pre-service teachers (PSTs) are used interchangeably in this study to refer to university education department students who are preparing

to become teachers in the future. In this study, participants have no prior teaching experience and have never assumed any other profession in their life. This is an important aspect of prior experience that needs to be highlighted, as such experience may affect how identities are developed. With this clarification, the aim is to eliminate this type of prior experience from the theoretical discussion later in Chapter 2.

English as a Second Language (ESL). According to the traditional linguistics definition, the ESL context is where English is used widely for official purposes. However, the unique context of Malaysia is different from where English is used with groups of people as a second language in the English target community. It also differs from contexts where English is used as a foreign language. Darmi and Albion (2013) noted that English could be L1, L2 or FL based on who uses it in Malaysia. It depends on the individuals' localities (urban or rural) and reasons for using English. It could be considered as an ESL or EFL in public universities and schools, which are the sites of the study. However, for the purpose of consistency, ESL is used to refer to the different cases of English usage in Malaysia.

Research Assumptions

A number of assumptions are made in connection to this study regarding the teacher preparation program, complexity of the process of constructing one's professional identity and the proper methodology, to understand and capture this complex process. First, teachers-to-be must be prepared professionally to become effective teachers; consequently, the teacher preparation program is a crucial stage in STs' professional life. For researchers including myself this stage can be a starting point to evaluate and test one's assumptions about teaching. It provides the necessary

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environment for STs to translate theory into practice. This preparatory stage is assumed to enable STs to form a professional identity and prepare them to move on smoothly to their future career as teachers (Friesen & Besley, 2013; Khalid, 2014).

Second, professional identity is not a final, fixed product of a learning to teach process. Rather, it evolves and requires stakeholders to be aware of factors (social or personal) that affect and expose it to different tensions. Novice STs may not be aware of the significance and effect of their professional identity on shaping who they will become as teachers. Bringing these matters to light can enhance STs' ability to cope with the changing teaching context during their preparation program and later, profession.

Third, assumptions regarding research methodology can guide the study journey. For this work, a case study is a proper methodological strategy to capture the complexity of the process of constructing teacher identity. Following STs through their micro teaching classes and subsequently in their practicum contexts can help capture the various tensions they encounter during training, juggling different possible selves emerging and altering adaptation strategies to construct their PI. A lengthy engagement with the participants makes them feel comfortable to disclose their concerns and ways of handling such challenging period. Their need for support and the opportunity to talk about their experiences (positive or negative) may encourage them to engage in this study. On account of these three assumptions, it is now apt to discuss the scope and delimitations of this study in full.

Scope and Delimitations

Contextually, this study focuses on ESL STs as they undergo simulated teaching classes and field experience during the practicum stage. In this case study,

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eight ESL STs were followed through the third year of their undergraduate study. This study is delimited to STs with no prior professional experience, considering that some STs might be career changers or in-service teachers. This population was selected because they are usually the ones taking the first steps towards constructing a professional identity. They mainly rely on their sociocultural context to construct a self-image of 'good teacher and good teaching practices.' Being novices requires using their own adaptation process and referring to their context intensively to reach a kind of stable professional identity to which to refer upon attaining their actual profession.

Another delimitation of this study is that it is devoted to the local Malaysian context, as the participants are non-native English speakers drawn from one public university. For teaching practice, they went to public schools scattered around the urban area of Kuala Lumpur. The participants were subjected to a range of forces (culture, university, school, peers, supervisors, cooperating teachers/mentors and school students) that affected and guided the development of their professional identity. The tensions and opportunities that arose in the context of their professional preparation are part of the focus of this study.

This study explores the roles of both context and personal adaptation process in forming professional identity. Unlike other studies that focus on the psychological side of forming one's identity or on the social context, this study follows an integrative frame to understand the process of constructing teacher identity from a holistic perspective (i.e., contextual and individual factors).

It is essential to mention that this study does not treat the macro-structural elements (i.e., race, class and gender) that dominate many studies conducted in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia. Being a non-native English teacher or having

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multinational students in an English target community is not applicable in the context of Malaysia. Multinational students are students of different origins but who are not necessarily citizens of the country. Hence, the study does not focus on such topics. Focus is rather on the immediate social context and its role in helping or hindering teacher identity development.

The previously stated delimitations lead to the potential generalizability or transferability of the study. This research seeks to address the issue of ESL STs' professional identity development in the local context of Malaysia. Under the term definition section, it is argued that the status of English is an ambivalent topic in Malaysia. English could be L1, SL or FL based on socioeconomic areas (urban or rural) or the purposes of using it. The sociocultural factors that affect ESL Malaysian STs may differ from those that affect ESL STs in other contexts. Therefore, readers are cautioned to consider such peculiarity of this context when interpreting the results and considering their applicability to their own contexts.

What are the notions of generalizability in qualitative research? How can researchers enhance the transferability of their research results to other settings? These questions are answered in detail in Chapter 3 (Research Methodology).

Limitations

This study aims to add to the literature on exploring the process of constructing teacher identity, specifically ESL STs. However, some limitations are to be considered when interpreting the results. One of the limitations stems from using a case study as the research methodology, whereby the results may not be generalizable to other populations. As suggested by Merriam (2009), the present sub cases were selected purposefully to understand in depth how this particular group of

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Malaysian STs construct their teacher identity. However, to enhance the transferability of results, a 'thick description' of the setting, participants and findings is used. This strategy can enhance the potential fit between the study context and other similar contexts.

Another limitation could stem from the researcher's identity as an outsider. The researcher is a foreigner studying a case in the Malaysian context. On one hand, this may establish greater study reliability since the data are handled through a more objective lens. However, a kind of distant relationship may develop due to my unfamiliar face. A formal and unequal relationship with participants could result in reluctance to disclose their views thoroughly.

Goffman (1959) warned that researchers may face participant performances, who might reflect more positive views of their institutions or superiors. Koh (2014) suggested that with such limitation, a researcher must admit that interviews are not necessarily a transparent window of what participants think. To bridge this gap between participants and the researcher, I spent adequate time building a rapport with the participants. Prolonged engagement in the study context helped collect closer-to-reality data (Merriam, 2009).

A third limitation of this study may be pointed out. Teacher identity starts developing at the point when an individual decides to become a teacher and even long before that. However, this study focuses on the final year of the teacher preparation program. This narrow focus may result in more limited data that could be collected through a longitudinal study starting from the entry point up to the exit point of the preparation program. Even extending this study to cover the first professional years can cultivate a deeper understanding of STs' journey of learning to

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teach. Inviting participants to talk about their prior experiences may help remedy part of this limitation.

Furthermore, the gender distribution may not be applicable in this study. The majority of ESL STs at the selected university are female. The number does not exceed 8 students, as the total population is 25, which was divided into 3 groups.

Significance

Teacher identity development is one of the fundamental matters for the future of teaching. This study adds to the body of work related to ESL STs' professional identity construction. Along with previous literary work, it is sought to understand what factors contribute to, or hinder the process of teacher identity development. The study also seeks to explore how the social context and the self, interact with each other during such process. The local knowledge created by this study can contribute to the wider educational field with focus on teacher preparation programs and teacher identity (Izadinia, 2013).

For example, in the educational context of Malaysia, the status of English is controversial. This results in many changes in educational policy, which swings between using English as a medium of education and diminishing it to merely a school subject (Darmi & Albion, 2013). Such turbulence may create tensions that a teacher needs to deal with. During their journey of learning to teach, STs will develop identities that will serve as bases to build upon during their future career. Well-developed identities can help teachers handle and interact with the continuous changes in educational sites/policies (C. Fairbanks et al., 2010). Thus, studying this area of teachers' professional preparation is important to understand what identity they develop and how this progresses.

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Understanding PSTPI construction during the teacher preparation program can better help program designers to base their programs on activities that enhance and support teacher identity development (Beijaard et al., 2004; Olsen, 2008). Focusing STs ' attention not only on the contextual factors that affect their learning to teach process but also on the adaptation processes on which they can rely to develop their identities is recommended as part of professional development programs. As discussed earlier in this chapter, designers need to consider TI as a major component of teacher preparation. Drawing STs' attention to the importance of TI and how it could shape their practice as teachers and be reshaped by sociocultural contexts can empower and enable STs to adapt to their changing contexts.

Overview of the Thesis

In this chapter, literature related to PSTPI development was reviewed. The general trends in studying the process of learning to teach or forming one's professional identity were introduced. The discussion showed that studies generally neglect integrating the notions of psychology and sociology in exploring the PI construction process. It was proposed that this integrated framework can culminate in a better understanding of this process.

Based on Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning, Cross and Markus' (1991) possible selves and Ibarra's (1999) adaptation processes, the present case study was designed to capture the complexity of PSTPI construction in a teacher preparation program. Through semi-structured interviews and observation, the aim is to gain deeper insight into how contextual factors and personal adaptation processes interplay in forming teacher identity. Though limited in scope, this study should

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nonetheless contribute to theory and practice in the ESL educational context significantly.

Chapter 2 provides a review of previous literature related to PSTPI development. The current literature research strategy is introduced, followed by an argument from literature to introduce the problem and discuss the theoretical frameworks to address the current study questions.

Chapter 3 describes the study methodology. It represents the rationale for the study design, sample and data collection tools. It includes the data analysis process with examples of coding phases. This chapter concludes with the trustworthiness and ethics of the study.

Chapter 4 presents the findings to the three research questions. Data excerpts are included to support the subthemes.

Chapter 5 consists of a discussion of the study findings in answer to the research questions and a connection of the findings to literature on teacher identity and the journey of learning to teach. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the current study contributions and implications for practice and future research.

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CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This thesis explores ESL pre-service teachers' professional identity (PSTPI) construction during the teacher preparation program at University of Malaya, a Malaysian public university. Drawing on the work of Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning, Cross and Markus' (1991) possible selves and Ibarra's (1999) adaptation processes, an attempt is made in this study to understand how contextual factors and one's adaptation processes guide the development of PSTPI. This study adds to the literature in this field by providing detailed descriptive accounts of what factors affect PSTPI construction and how pre-service teachers (PSTs) develop professional identities.

In addition to providing questions for future research, this study can guide future policies on consolidating PSTPI construction at universities and practicum sites. Researchers argue that PSTPI development can directly impact PSTs' future decisions to join and remain in the teaching profession, as well as their practices and motivation to teach and seek development (Beijaard et al., 2004; Izadinia, 2013; Lerseth, 2013).

This chapter comprises three main parts. The first part provides a discussion of conflicts and tensions that PSTs face during the transition from being students to becoming teachers. The chapter explains the basis for such tensions, as debated in the literature. The second part is devoted to the theoretical frameworks that address the problem of understanding the roles of the context and adaptation processes in PSTPI construction throughout the journey of learning to teach. The third part represents

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studies with different research approaches in exploring teacher identity construction with a focus on PSTPI construction.

Context of Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education programs are aimed to equip students with the content and pedagogical knowledge they will put into practice later (Dowling, 2009). However, becoming a teacher is a journey that carries a number of conflicts, challenges and sometimes disillusionment (Danyluk, 2013; Merseth et al., 2008). Cooper and He (2012, p. 98) studied and explored "the struggles and confusions that teacher candidates confront during their professional identity development." They reported a number of contradictory perspectives their participants encountered during the journey of becoming teachers.

One of the contradictions is between being a facilitator of content knowledge and interactive teaching methods on the one hand and being authoritative and effective managers of their classes on the other hand. Another difficulty faced is in demonstrating PSTs' ability to respond to students' different needs. Prior school experience may affect teacher candidates' image of ideal teachers and teaching. However, the changing reality of schools and 21st century students can be shocking for student teachers. What used to be perfect and proper in teaching when they were school students may not be appropriate in today's world. This issue reflects another challenge for student teachers according to Cooper and He (2012) study.

More importantly are the dissimilar value systems between the university context (e.g., focus on innovations and student-centered practices) and the school context (e.g., focus on content and subject matter that needs to be covered within a specific time) (Anagnostopoulos, Smith, & Basmadjian, 2007). Brown (2006) used

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the psychoanalytical theory to explore the confusion teacher candidates encounter along their becoming journey. Brown argued that the emergence of different selves or identities (e.g. as student, teacher, supervisee, son or daughter, friend) can provoke anxiety and uncertainty about the nature of the desired self as a teacher.

Another challenge researchers have investigated is with the power relationships within the social context of the practicum stage. Notably, STs conform to the 'authority of experience' (Munby & Russell, 1994, p. 10), considering mentor teachers' pedagogical practices as the most appropriate for the class context. STs abandon the practices advocated in their teacher preparation programs, perceiving them as theoretical and not responsive to classroom reality (Bullough & Draper, 2004; A. Clarke & Collins, 2007; C. Fairbanks, Freedman, & Kahn, 2000; Slick, 1998a, 1998b; Veal & Rikard, 1998) .

Such power relationships rearrange once the university supervisor becomes part of the context and attempts to impose university perspectives on both intern and mentor teacher. A relationship characterized by tensions and conflicts may prevail as mentor teachers believe in their abilities to better prepare student teachers for their future careers (Veal & Rikard, 1998).

On the other hand, teacher educators wish to see their candidates use "the constructivist teaching models" (Cooper & He, 2012, p. 102), which are models that support learner-centered practices and interactive activities. Kayi-Aydar's (2015) participants opposed their mentor teachers' strategies for teaching; however, they hesitated to perform differently or even share dissimilar ideas with their mentor teachers. Similarly, Ronfeldt and Grossman's (2008) candidates reported dissatisfaction with their mentor/cooperating teachers' practices. Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008, p. 48) noted that:

> Often their displeasure with cooperating teachers existed, at least in part, because of the disparity between their program's vision for the kind of teacher they should become and what they observed in the field. Even amidst the more positive examples they encountered, novices rarely described cooperating teachers who exemplified the kinds of practices and ways of being promoted in their coursework.

The dysfunctional power relationships within the internship setting can seemingly hinder student teachers' ability to act differently or to innovatively try out new pedagogical strategies. The passive resistance of what they oppose in the training context may create an identity of 'non-powerful' teachers who lack the ability to achieve any changes in the teaching context later in their professional life (Kayi-Aydar, 2015, p. 101).

Resultant conflicts and tensions (e.g., roles as teachers and students, different value systems between university and school, power relationships and emerging selves/identities) can be traced to two contradictory learning metaphors in literature: the acquisition and participationist metaphors. These metaphors reflect "how knowledge is generated and understood" (Sutherland, Howard, & Markauskaite, 2010, p. 456) in the two different contexts of universities and practicum sites.

The following discussion illustrates that STs' knowledge of how to teach at university is based on theoretical principles. Such knowledge that is delivered in a sophisticated academic language is believed to be generalizable and decontextualized. By contrast, knowledge at school is practical for focusing on day-to-day teacher duties; it is claimed to be tacit with a focus on daily class challenges (Sutherland et al., 2010).

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Two Learning Metaphors

The acquisition metaphor. Traditionally, researchers adopt the 'acquisition metaphor' in interpreting the human learning process, whereby learning is perceived as an internalization of knowledge within individual cognitive structures. Learning is a gradual process that starts with the transmission of knowledge (i.e., concepts, principles, facts, skills and ideas about language and language teaching) for students to acquire and assimilate in their cognitive structures (Sfard, 1998). The whole process of learning resides with the individual, isolated from the social context.

In their education program, student teachers may encounter this metaphor. Instructors and supervisors are expected to pass on a reasonable amount of study subject content. Upon gaining such knowledge on how to teach in the simulated teaching course, it is hoped they would apply what they acquired in new contexts. Dowling (2009) described traditional initial teacher education as an educational space where experts present received knowledge (e.g., abstract or theoretical knowledge) as objective and non-negotiable. Dowling said, "learners are given sets of rules or procedures for doing things and are expected to follow them." (ibid, p. 2). Pagis (2010) stated that received knowledge is delivered through linguistic channels, such as writing and speaking.

However, Shoffner and Brown (2011) assured that equipping pre-service teachers with all the required subject content knowledge, teaching theories and effective practices is not enough to assume they will be able to handle classes by themselves. Johnson (2006, p. 240) articulated the same position: "the cumulative effect of studying what language is and how it is acquired may not necessarily translate into effective L2 teaching practices." Experiential knowledge is thus also valuable to developing STs' teaching skills.

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The Participationist Metaphor

Active participation in sociocultural communities. In response to 'decontextualized learning' and the concept of an 'isolationist learner' (Sfard, 1998, p. 6), a new paradigm began to dominate research and learning. 'The participation metaphor' (Sfard, 1998) and the social learning theory, which emphasizes the role of the social context rather than the individual mind in developing one's knowledge and identity, propose new ways of perceiving the learning process. A more detailed discussion of the new paradigm will be introduced later in this chapter. Active participation in sociocultural communities requires the learner to participate actively in authentic activities (M. L. Anderson & H. E. Taylor, 2013).

Researchers including Dowling (2009) suggested transforming received knowledge into experiential knowledge through reflection. Experiential knowledge is considered "knowing-in-action" or active knowledge, as termed by Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 48). Pagis differentiated between theoretical knowledge that leads to 'knowing that' and experiential or embodied knowledge that results in 'knowing how' (2010, p. 471). As long as experiential knowledge is generated by learners themselves it is subjective and not fixed; it changes according to the sociocultural contexts in which the learner is involved (Dowling, 2009).

Constructing learners' experiential knowledge requires interaction, which is simply referred to as conversations in which learners partake (Gass & Mackey, 2015) with the others in a context. Interactions are important to help (re)construct this knowledge in iterative cycles as they receive feedback about the impropriety of their teaching strategies. For STs, interacting results in learning (Gass & Mackey, 2015) and adds to their understanding of their learning and professional identities

(Sutherland et al., 2010). Two aspects are emphasized here: relationships and participation (or non-participation) in activities within the practical social context.

Attributes of knowledge in CoPs. Wenger et al. (2002, pp. 8-11) attributed four main features to knowledge generated in communities of practice. This knowledge "lives in the human act of knowing;" it "is tacit as well as explicit;" it "is social as well as individual" and it "is dynamic." Examining these features and reflecting them on a teacher preparation program indicates that knowledge is not a possession an individual seeks to accumulate or gain. Rather, it is an evolving, dynamic process that is (re)constructed as a result of interaction among members. Though Knowledge is collectively produced, individual personality and contribution are still emphasized. Through activities of storytelling and informal conversations, student teachers can combine their tacit and explicit knowledge collaboratively to build a better understanding of their learning and identities as teachers (Sutherland et al., 2010).

Situated Learning and Legitimate Peripheral Participation

Along the lines of the participationist metaphor, Lave and Wenger's theory of situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation is considered an influential trend in this field. This theory defines learning as engaging in the context of learning or the community of practice in which it takes place. Hence, engaging PSTs in a teacher education program with meaningful and contextualized activities to negotiate their understanding, beliefs and ideas about teaching can result in learning (Smith, 2006).

Lave and Wenger (1991) re-conceptualized the meaning of learning through the legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) concept. Once student teachers enter the

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teacher preparation program, they actually acquire 'the legitimacy of participation' as one of the characteristics of belonging and part of the learning journey. Their peripheral position at the beginning will change over time and with experience. The STs will sometimes have peripheral positions as newcomers to the course, and other times, their positions may become central as they gain experience and knowledge.

According to Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 36), "changing locations and perspectives are part of actors' learning trajectories, developing identities, and forms of membership." LPP is not an educational form or strategy. Rather, it entails learning that occurs with or without intentional teaching. This perspective implies that PSTs not only learn from their instructors or educational opportunities organized for them. What they gain through observation, reflection and imitation of others' actions can play a vital role in constructing their identities.

To develop practitioners' expertise, Wenger et al. (2002, p. 9) recommended that "practitioners need [to be offered] opportunities to engage with others who face similar situations". If we perceive the teacher preparation program as a community of practice, then the learner is not the conventional one who accumulates knowledge within their cognitive structures. Rather, they are active learners who evolve as participants within their communities of practice (Johnson, 2006; Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The previous discussion signifies the shift in perceiving learning to a focus on the context in giving it its meaning. The next section will discuss Lave and Wenger's approach of communities of practice as learning spaces to examine learning as identity construction and relate this understanding to the current study.

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Communities of Practice

Definition of CoP. The question is now how Wenger et al.'s (2002) communities of practice can serve studying the context of a teacher preparation program. Wenger et al. (2002, p. 4) defined a CoP as "a group of people who have a shared interest or passion." Their identities are defined within those communities according to their participation and relationships with the others (Wenger, 1998). Learning in a CoP is an individual's responsibility, but not isolated from the other members, through observing, modeling and reflecting (Floding & Swier, 2012; Li et al., 2009).

Banadura (1977, p. 27) contended that "learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do". The idea is that the learner is not left alone within the learning community, but the members are there to support and offer experience (Dowling, 2009). Li et al. (2009, p. 3) articulated the same position that a strong learning community "creates a social structure for individuals to share ideas and artifacts (e.g., stories, documents, recordings) that support community activities and help individuals make sense of new knowledge." The role of other community members' support in PSTPI construction will be explored in this study, in addition to the different learning experiences PSTs encounter in the university context and at school.

Characteristics of a CoP. A CoP is characterized by three interrelated dimensions: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise and a shared repertoire. Mutual engagement refers to the interaction among a group of people to create shared meaning of a topic. A joint enterprise entails the process of negotiation, leading members to an outcome of which they have ownership. A shared repertoire includes

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the shared resources and language used by the community members to facilitate learning (Floding & Swier, 2012; Wenger, 1998).

The three dimensions of CoP can be connected with the simulated teaching course and practicum stage. Student teachers and their instructors, supervisors and cooperating teachers work together to build student teachers' professional abilities/identity (i.e., joint enterprise). The interaction and collaboration to construct and reconstruct knowledge of teaching methods is a mutual engagement. Meanwhile, developing ideas and resources to adapt their practices to the educational environment in which they work is a shared repertoire.

Such idealistic image of a CoP was questioned by Li et al. (2009) in terms of whether CoP members interact regularly or use the available CoP resources to improve practice; if not, how can it still be called a CoP? This dilemma may arise in a workplace or teacher preparation program that is supposed to be based on collaboration and interaction. PSTs need to understand that becoming a teacher means becoming a member of a certain community of practice (Dillon & Maguire, 2011).

Wenger et al. (2002) developed the CoP construct by building a complete model that can facilitate the facilitator's job in cultivating a CoP. The following part is an outline of the different stages that can be followed to construct a CoP and cultivate the best for its members. While some notions of this model occur through this thesis and the data analysis and discussion sections, the model itself was not referred to directly. However, the model can represent a clear guidance to other researchers who may want to use it in their studies.

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Cultivating a CoP. As discussed earlier in this section, a CoP consists of a group of people who have the same passion, interest or problem. These people meet regularly for discussions and information and insight sharing (Wenger et al., 2002). The values gained through participating in a CoP range from exploring ideas to creating resources, tools and stories that can develop skills and abilities. While interacting to solve problems and develop tacit knowledge, members also gain more mutual understanding of each other's perspectives. This can enhance the sense of belonging and identity. Under such circumstances, members feel they own their learning and are empowered through their relationships and interactions to construct knowledge (Wenger et al., 2002).

Cultivating a CoP consists of five stages: potential, coalescence, maturing, stewardship and transformation. Similar to individual development, a CoP encounters challenges and opportunities while moving towards maturation and transformation. Tensions can result from having two opposing tendencies that require individuals to make choices to find their way to construct knowledge. Variations apply even when a developmental model exists.

The model has three basic elements: domain, community and practice. Domain refers to common ground issues in which members are interested. A well-defined domain can induce member collaboration and participation. Community refers to "the social fabric of learning" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 28) that is based on trust and mutual understanding. Interactions and relationships within the community can encourage sharing ideas, solving problems and constructing new relevant knowledge. Practice refers to what the community produces as a result of interactions and the sharedness of knowledge. Practice is "a set of frameworks, ideas, tools, information, styles, language and documents that community members share"

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(Wenger et al., 2002, p. 29). When these three fundamental elements function well together, they can result in an appropriate environment for constructing meaningful knowledge. Through the life of a CoP, these elements experience some shifts and changes to suit each stage of CoP development.

The following figure (2.1) shows the five stages representing the evolution of a CoP. It illustrates the developmental tensions connected with each stage. The subsequent section will discuss the different stages, main features, opportunities they represent to learners and, more specifically, the tensions they provoke.

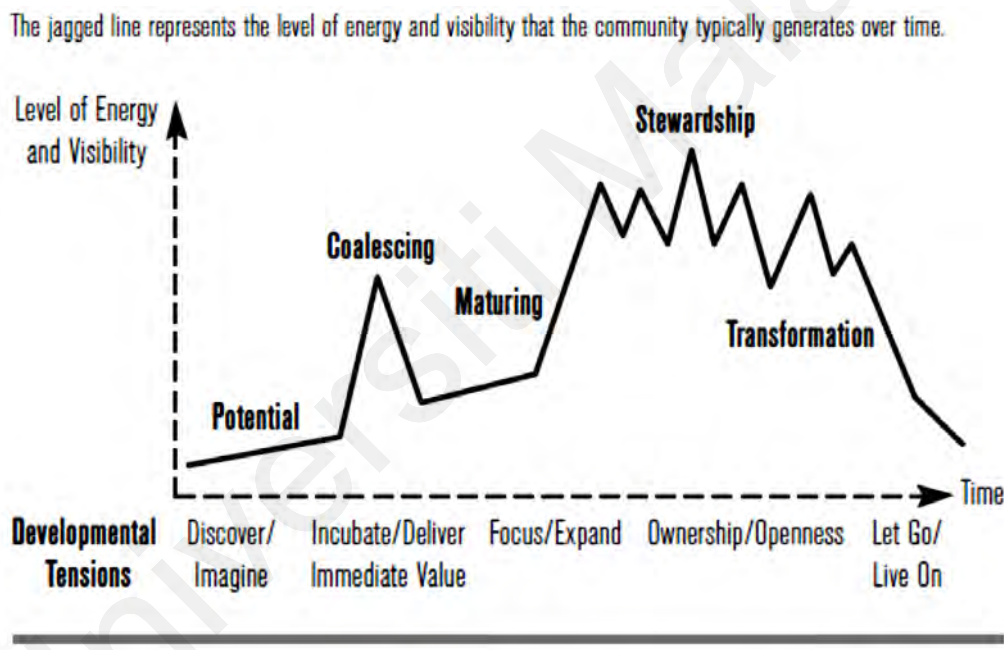

Figure 2.1 Stages of community development, adopted from Wenger et al. (2002, p. 69)

A. The beginning stages of cultivating a CoP

Stage one: Potential

A shared domain or interest encourages people to form a potential community. The practice dimension enables members to identify their knowledge needs. For PSTs, the domain is learning to teach. Their common needs within a CoP are learning how

to teach, what to teach, and how to manage classes and time effectively. How to tailor lessons to cater to their students' needs is a knowledge need. The community can help PSTs discover and imagine how to solve problems and share knowledge. The challenge in this initial stage is with PSTs discovering what possibilities their CoP has to support them and imagining how this may enable them to evolve as teachers. Such understanding can provoke formal and informal interactions between PSTs.

Stage two: Coalescence

In this stage, the challenge is with participants developing a sense of trust between each other. Trust emerges from understanding the dilemmas and ways of thinking and the problem solving skills each member has. Trust helps PSTs see the gaps in their own approaches; hence, they seek to consult with other members. They start to discover what knowledge (e.g., teaching techniques or class management) is important to share. Such trust and reciprocity help members appreciate the value of knowledge sharing within their CoP.

B. The mature stages of development

Stage three: Maturing

Here, a CoP experiences a shift from identifying its value to clarifying its role and boundaries. The challenge is with keeping the main goals and practices focused on the initial intent while the CoP is expanding. At this stage, membership expands to include more people. Practice surpasses the issue of sharing ideas and insight. Rather, focus is on organizing the CoP knowledge. Now that the CoP has its own identity, members can identify themselves in relation with it. The members appreciate each other's contributions and perspectives, resulting in stronger relationships. Their intimacy, in turn, enhances interactions among them. The CoP

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needs support at this point to survive. It becomes more dynamic with continuous gatherings and consultations. Materials, information and stories need to be accessible to practitioners.

Stage four: Stewardship

A number of challenges persist in this stage. The CoP needs support to stay alive. Members need to find a voice and have an impact on their context. The theme of efficacy (F. M. Jamil, Downer, & Pianta, 2012) is key in this stage. Members should be kept engaged and focused on learning. Practice enhances their knowledge, making it explicit to them and the others. Experiential or practical knowledge is appreciated more (Dowling, 2009). What members learn via socializing with others in the respective CoP can help them overcome tensions in this phase.

Two concepts that may conflict at this stage are ownership and openness. Members develop their own practices and approaches to solve any problems that may arise. They have their own identity with a strong sense of ownership of their knowledge/learning. PSTs have more confidence and pride in what they have achieved in the CoP. They believe in their voice to make changes where they work. However, tensions might arise when faced with new ideas or different approaches and insights from other new members. The role of CoP coordinators or facilitators is important at this point to help members be open to new ideas and to seek new perspectives from others. Negotiating their assumptions with new perspectives can lead members to develop their own understanding.

Through the CoP, PSTs can be empowered and given a voice in what and how they learn. Provoking more discussions and negotiations of knowledge among members can inject life to the CoP. Supervisors and cooperating teachers as CoP

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facilitators can create activities and sessions for PSTs to allow them to tell their stories and reflect on the training in classes.

Stage five: Transformation

A CoP comes to an end naturally due to changes in its cultivation circumstances. One reason is the departure of members from the work site. Otherwise, problems that initially attracted members get resolved and they no longer participate in the CoP. By closing the community, members may regret missing out on opportunities they should have taken. They may feel they could have contributed more to their CoP or that they should have developed deeper relationships with others. The challenge is whether to let the CoP die or try to rejuvenate it. Coming up with changes and developments can foster member participation and sustain the "practice-based value" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 110) of the CoP. However, the point is that being aware of the CoP eventually coming to an end should urge members to extract maximum benefits from it. What is more important is to take the lessons and stories shared with others to build on for their future development.

After introducing the strengths of Lave and Wenger's perspective of learning and forming professional identities, the discussion proceeds with some limitations of their approach. It will be shown that these limitations at the theoretical level may need to be supported by another theory (e.g., possible selves, provisional selves, the adaptation process) to clearly pave the way for investigating STs' journey towards becoming teachers.

Limitations of Lave and Wenger's Approach

Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004, p. 3) believed in the importance of Lave and Wenger's work because "it offers us a starting framework from which to address

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some of the major challenges faced by the workplace learning literature." However, they discussed a number of limitations in connection with Lave and Wenger's approach. One of the drawbacks that (Hodkinson & Hodkinson, 2004) referred to is that Lave and Wenger emphasized informal learning more than formal learning. This can be controversial in the context of teacher preparation programs where formal learning is valued. Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004, p. 5) believed that the term of learning in communities of practice "is ambiguous … in relation to scale and applicability." They found that the definition is based on and related to specific examples of CoPs described by Lave and Wenger.

Second, dealing with learners as part of the social context may not respond adequately to their individuality. In this study, constructing identities of individuals within a supported CoP (SCoP) is investigated; hence, clearer criteria need to be followed. The trajectories that learners go through or develop to learn and become what they become at the end of the training journey are context-specific. According to Lave and Wenger's perspectives, individuals need to belong to learn better within the social context. Gee (2004) argued that belonging and personal ties among members are not necessarily applicable where the CoP notion is used. Being a CoP member refers to different ways and degrees of participating in such a community. This interaction within a CoP involves the processes individuals follow to engage in their CoPs and create strong attachments that encourage identities and actions to evolve.

Cho (2014) contended that CoP is based on the apprenticeship notion, which implies a joint effort between experts and apprentices. Novices participate with a master in joint activities and then move on to a part of the practice. The teacher education program (TEP) could be based on such master (i.e., teacher)-apprentice

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(i.e., learner) relationship. However, PSTs change masters when they change the context of practice from university to school. University supervisors will not be part of the school context; hence, apprenticeship will no longer exist at this level.

Another criticism of the CoP construct is that it surpasses the matter of power relationships among members in the sociocultural context where they are situated. The assumption is that within a CoP, harmonious relationships prevail between novice and expert, by working towards developing the novice's abilities and skills and guiding that novice from a peripheral participation position to full participation (Moore, 2006). The assumption that PSTs have positive and collaborative relationships with their university instructors and school mentors should not be taken for granted. This assumption does not reflect the actual nature of the master-apprentice relationship that could be conflicting and dissonant.

This research explores the CoP perspectives 'in situ' (Cho, 2014, p. 3) (i.e., at the local level of practice) by listening to novices' voices in that context. Unpacking the power relationships in a PSTs' CoP can reveal one of the sociocultural factors that affect PSTPI construction.

Now that some of Lave and Wenger's approach limitations have been introduced, the second theory that is incorporated in the current study will be discussed, to better examine identity construction within a teacher preparation program.

The Identity Concept and its Features

In its denotational meaning, identity refers to how we see ourselves or who we are (Luk, 2008). The emergence of the social theory stance has geared the understanding of identity construction to include the individual and the society in

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which one lives as well (T. Farrell, 2017). Scholars agree that identity development is dynamic, relational, multiple and mostly conflictual (Tsui, 2007). Similarly, Varghese et al. (2005) contended that identity development is subject to the influence of many factors on an individual's life, be they social, cultural or political. In response to the complexity of identity construction, M. Clarke (2009, p. 189) framed identity as "a complex matter of the social and the individual, of discourse and practice, of reification and participation, of similarity and difference, of agency and structure, of fixity and transgression, of singular and multiple, and of the synoptic and the dynamic." This framework of identity indicates that it is not easy to define the identity concept, since it entails various elements. The following paragraph represents a discussion of the factors/elements involved in the identity construction process.

The first feature of identity is that it entails both the individual and the society. Understanding one's identity regards how the individual sees her/himself and how others see her/him (Burke & Stets, 2009; M. Clarke, 2009; Tsui, 2007, 2011). A teacher, for example, needs to identify him/herself as a teacher as well as the students, colleagues and community where he/she lives. In line with this view of identity, Richards (2017) believed that identity is neither fixed nor static, since it is subject to social influences where the individual interacts with people and takes part in different activities. Hence, one's identity is not only constructed personally, but also relationally and socially.

Secondly, identity emerges from discourse and practice, i.e., language and social interactions within a group (Burke & Stets, 2009; Hoffman-Kipp, 2008; Varghese et al., 2005). Gee (2000, p. 107) believed that an "interpretive system" of identity recognition originates from the cultural, institutional, and historical contexts

and the discourse of others. Based on such an interpretive system, one can recognize themselves as a "kind of person" (Gee, 2000, p. 99). Since the interpretive system depends on the type of social group the person is involved in, multiple identities may emerge for the same person. Gee (2000) connected identity with performance as well. How a person behaves, talks and walks reflects their beliefs and values of being that kind of person. For example, PSTs become involved in the culture of a teachers' community. They need to learn from others' norms and talking how to behave as teachers. Their newly developed identity may differ from their other identities whereby they interact with other groups of people, such as university peers, family, social clubs, etc. Gee (2000) and Pennington (2015) argued that people construct multiple identities based on the discourses with which they interact.

The third feature of identity is that it consists of reification and participation. Wenger (1998) asserted that identity is part of the socialization process. It is considered as "an integral aspect of a social learning theory and separable from issues of practice, community and meaning" (Wenger, 1998, p. 145). This framework connects identity with practice, suggesting that a person negotiates ways of being a person in a specific context of a community of practice (CoP). Within communities of practice, engagement in practice either by participation or non-participation, "gives us certain experiences of participation, and what our communities pay attention to reifies us as participants" (Wenger, 1998, p. 150). Such conceptualization of identity suggests that identity is developed socially by participating in CoPs. "An identity then is a layering of events of participation and reification by which our experience and its social interpretation inform each other" (Wenger, 1998, p. 151). PSTs need to participate in their student teaching CoP to experience teaching; they

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need also to negotiate their practices, understandings and beliefs with others in their CoPs to grow professionally.

The fourth feature of identity regards similarities and differences. This feature is directly related to engaging in a CoP, associating oneself with its members to define who one is. As indicated by Burke and Stets (2009), identity can be viewed as representing the social part of ourselves. This premise suggests that we compare ourselves to the others in a certain social group and to those in different social groups to identify ourselves. McKinlay and McVittie (2011, p. 4) agreed with such understanding by considering that identity is "the social part of ourselves, the bit of ourselves that we think about when we are considering whether we are the same as the other members of some social group or other." This premise suggests that identifying one's identity relies on how similar or different we feel compared to others. PSTs in an ESL context, for example, can claim a teacher identity when they act and behave as typical ESL teachers in that context. Throughout the learning to teach journey, ESL PSTs will keep trying to increase their sense of sameness to the ESL teacher community in order to be identified as teachers.

Scholars including Norton (2017), M. Clarke (2009) and Varghese (2017) conceptualized identity in relation to agency and structure. Bucholtz and Hall (2004) perceived agency as the individual's ability to shape the identity he/she wants within the context he/she lives. Similarly, Donato (2017, p. 26) framed identity, or the teacher identity in Donato's definition, as "the simultaneous enactment of an agent's subjectivity in real time discursive (semiotic) processes situated in local, social and historical circumstances." This conceptualization highlights the idea that identity is a social and personal product at the same time. M. Clarke (2009, p. 187) asserted that "our identities are thus partly given, yet they are also something that has to be

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achieved, offering a potential site of agency within the inevitable social process of becoming."

In line with this notion, Bucholtz and Hall (2004, p. 376) argued that "identity inheres in actions, not in people. As the product of situated social action, identities may shift and recombine to meet new circumstances." Our identities shape our practice, and our practice shapes our identities (Wenger, 1998); hence, Varghese et al. (2005, p. 23) believed that identity is "transformational and transformative." Varghese (2017, p. 44) extended the argument of identity and agency by referring specifically to language teachers contending that language teacher identity is developed "within the co-evolution of agency and structure: how as individuals and groups they can develop and 'make things happen' within structure opportunities and constraints."

This conceptualization implies that PSTs' journey of becoming teachers is not linear and feasible. They may be offered opportunities to develop through the teacher education program; however, they may face other constraints and obstacles during the training stage. They will have to make choices and adopt different strategies to be able to construct the teacher identity envisioned for themselves. In other words, individuals (here PSTs) have an agentic capability in constructing their identities (Norton, 2017), therefore contributing to any new reforms or changes in their context.

The sixth feature regards identity as fixed and transgressed. With this notion, identity can be perceived as both fixed and changing. Some aspects of identity, such as gender and ethnicity may be fixed while others are constantly changing (Burke & Stets, 2009; Tsui, 2007, 2011). The arguments in the previous paragraphs showed that we may gain different identities based on the social group in which we identify

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ourselves as members. Some of these identities may overlap with each other. A teacher identity, for example, may entail different dimensions, encompassing personal, social and professional aspects (Tsui, 2007, 2011). Again, this notion connects with the argument that one's identity is social and personal. These overlapping dimensions contribute to the complexity of identity construction. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) claimed that identity complexity stems from the unclear boundaries among one's different identities. For example, the personal aspects of a teacher's identity overshadow his/her professional identity.

Related to the previous feature is the notion that identity is both singular and plural. The individual can have a number of identities and sub-identities simultaneously. For example, a teacher may have different identities at the same time, such as a son/daughter, a parent, a friend, a partner, etc. Reeves (2017) contended that the different positions a teacher identity may inhabit can also have different sub-identities in the same position. A teacher who perceives themselves as an advocate of student-centered activities may also claim the identity of a teacher who is concerned with grammatical accuracy. Some teachers may claim they are efficient in class but non-agentic in the general school context. Reeves (2017) argument suggests that identities can be multiple and in some cases contradictory. A PST needs to juggle multiple identities in trying to respond to the contradictory nature of sub-identities when necessary.

Related to the notions of fixity and agency, M. Clarke (2009) described identity as synoptic and dynamic. Based on such conceptualization, identity is both static and open to change and negotiation. Morgan (2004, p.172) went along the same lines on understanding identity by asserting that "identity is not a fixed and coherent set of traits, but is something complex, often contradictory and subject to

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change across time and place." Tsui (2011) noticed that scholars debate whether an individual should seek coherence among contradictory identities. It is contended that tension rising from contradiction may lead to identity construction. Another point related to the dynamicity of identity is that such changes are subject to the capability of individuals to exercise their agency to bring about change.

So far, the different features and conceptualizations of identity in general with occasional references to teacher identity were discussed. The argument will be taken one step further by focusing mainly on teachers' professional identity (PI).

PI Construction as an Ongoing Process. Similar to the notion of identity in general, a review of literature demonstrates that scholars from a range of disciplines agree that crafting teacher professional identity is an on-going process or a journey of becoming in a specific context (Battey & Franke, 2008; Cooper & He, 2012; Hoffman-Kipp, 2008; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Merseth et al., 2008; Smith, 2006; Varghese et al., 2005; Wang & Lin, 2014). Being a member of a CoP allows the individual to have different roles that can shape, construct and reconstruct their identity. Through relationships and interaction with other members, they can acquire or discard features of their main identity and sub-identities (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wang & Lin, 2014).

Pennington (2015, p. 17) framed teacher identity as "a construct, mental image or model of what 'being a teacher' means that guides teachers' practices as they aim to enact 'being a teacher' through specific 'acts of teacher identity.'" This framework of teacher identity is based more specifically on how teachers portray themselves and how their views of themselves are manifested in the PI enacted within the classroom settings, in addition to how they view their future identities. Pennington (2015) further elaborated on the PI conceptualization that a teacher

construct affects that teacher's self-image of the kind of teacher one is or aspires to be and affects the teacher's choices of roles in the classroom and teaching practices.

Teacher identity also influences one’s positioning in relation to others in the profession context and one’s reactions to students, colleagues, administration and larger teaching community. Beijaard et al. (2004); Beltman, Glass, Dinham, Chalk, and Nguyen (2015); Olsen (2008); Tsui (2007) agreed with Pennington's (2015) conceptualization of teacher identity being multidimensional, encompassing how teachers view themselves in the present and future. The scholars also agreed that teacher identity entails teachers' relationships with others in the social context of their CoP, such as students, colleagues and administration, and the larger teaching profession.

The following two quotations summarize the conceptualization of teacher identity and its different features and components that lead to its complexity. Barkhuizen (2017) believed that:

> Language teacher identities (LTIs) are cognitive, social, emotional, ideological, and historical -- they are both inside the teacher and outside in the social material and technological world. LTIs are being and doing, feeling, imagining, and storying. They are struggle and harmony; they are contested and resisted by self and others and they are core and peripheral, personal and professional; they are dynamic, multiple, hybrid and they are foregrounded and backgrounded. LTIs change short term and over time, discursively in social interaction with educators, learners, teachers, administrators and the wider community and in material interaction with spaces, places and objects in the classroom, institutions and online (p.4).

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Another simpler but invaluable quotation was obtained from Wang and Lin (2014, p. 6), who contended that "considering that identity is socially-constructed means it is constructed relationally via individuals' interaction with others who offer a mirror showing them how they are similar to, different from or related to others participating in a similar given context." This idea will be connected later to the theory of possible selves and provisional selves that an individual employs to develop a professional identity in response to one self's principles and others' implicit or explicit reactions.

PI Construction and the theme of belonging. A salient feature of Wenger's social theory regarding professional identity construction is the theme of belonging. This concept consists of three modes: engagement, imagination and alignment. Engagement entails on-going participation and negotiation of meaning, forming pathways to becoming full participants (Williams, 2013, p. 36). Imagination, as Smith (2006, p. 260) stated, "refers to an open minded disposition that requires a willingness to explore, take risks, and make connections in order to create new images of the world and ourselves."

Williams (2013, p. 37) perceived alignment as individuals' ability to find their place within their CoP, or their ability to coordinate different perspectives to find their own professional identity. Based on Wenger's argument, William emphasized that for a student teacher to construct their professional identity as a teacher, they need to participate actively within their CoP and develop a sense of belonging that can strengthen their identity.

These modes can serve as a conceptual lens to explore the nature of teacher learning. They can also help understand how ESL student teacher identities and practices evolve while proceeding from the simulated teaching course to the

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practicum at school. The way ESL student teachers engage, imagine and align their actions through participation to construct a professional identity can be understood in light of the CoP features.

Possible Selves and Identity Construction to Further Develop Lave and Wenger's Approach

For Cross and Markus (1991, p. 231), the self-concept is "active, forceful and capable of change." Their definition corresponds with Wenger's definition of identity as changing and evolving. Self-conceptions as images of ourselves are important in the process of becoming. This indicates a reason beyond using the self-conception theory to interpret how a person functions and develops within the social context to acquire new characteristics and construct a more responsive identity. Identity is constructed by unifying perceptions of past, current and future selves.

Cross and Markus (1991) proposed a possible selves framework as psychological resources (i.e., motivators and defendants of the now self) to explain the continuous changes across life. Such psychological perspective can be connected to the social context where the individual is located. Lave and Wenger (1991, p. 50) proposed "the relational interdependency of agent, world and activity." The social and cultural context around a person directs them to decide what selves to keep and develop, what selves to discard and for what selves to opt. Student teacher identities evolve according to the social participation with other people with whom they get involved over each stage of the journey to becoming ESL teachers.

By taking a developmental approach of the individual and placing it within the social context, it is possible to better understand the transformations individuals undergo to build a professional identity at the end of the teacher preparation

program. Cross and Markus (1991, p. 234) indicated that "in the process of successfully negotiating the changes and transitions … individuals must construct possible selves that help motivate toward desired ends and away from undesired outcomes."

In their developmental perspective, Cross, Markus, Lave and Wenger, considered the individual as an active participant. Cross and Markus (1991) focused on the inner psychological processes of adaptation, while Lave and Wenger (1991) highlighted the legitimate social peripheral participation within communities of practice, as discussed earlier.

Ibarra's Adaptation Process Framework

An influential study that was conducted by Ibarra (1999) forms the basis of integrating a social and psychological approach to investigate identity construction through the teacher preparation program. The possible selves are standards that are formed during the journey within a specific CoP. They represent trajectories that one goes through to construct an identity. Such standards help calibrate the professional identity to match personal and social context expectations (Ibarra, 1999). Going through a cycle of trying out, revising and rectifying the possible selves can help construct new identities (Ibarra, 1999). As long as this process takes place within a supported CoP, student teachers may have the chance to negotiate their identities to shift from a student to a teacher in the process of becoming a teacher (Oruç, 2013).

Within the developmental framework of constructing professional identity in a SCoP, three adaptation strategies/processes are investigated. Through the adaptation processes of observation, experimentation and evaluation, Ibarra (1999) suggested that using the possible selves concept can guide novices to construct their

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own professional identity (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Though it appears to be a linear process, the cycles are recursive as repetition will continue under the effect of one's experience within the social context (Ibarra, 1999, p. 767) .

The first strategy of observation is aimed to build "a repertoire of possible selves." This repertoire is affected by student teachers' prior experience as school students, their experience with university courses and with the simulated teaching course and practicum stage (Chong et al., 2011, p. 31). The observation strategy includes two sub-strategies: role prototyping and identity matching. Novice practitioners observe professionals in action to learn more about role model traits. PSTs may have their supervisors, instructors, cooperating teachers and classmates teach in front of them. They can compare and contrast different teacher roles or practices to decide what role model to follow in their teaching. Once novices build role models, they go through a process of matching the roles observed to their own identities. They decide on the feasibility, attractiveness and suitability of those roles to their own identities and personal traits (Ibarra, 1999).

The second strategy is experimenting with possible selves, which may be provisional or transitional selves. Two types of strategies characterize this stage: imitation and true-to-self strategies. Imitation strategies include wholesale imitation, in which a learner copies the model style without much amendment. Imitation strategies also include selective imitation, which implies being eclectic in selecting bits of identities from different models to create one's own style. Observing different role models including those of their supervisors, instructors, cooperating teachers and classmates may enable moving more confidently to selective imitation to create their own professional identity.

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True-to-self strategies are used next by learners to craft a provisional self that corresponds to their authentic personalities. The provisional self will "be refined with experience and internalized as enduring aspects of a coherent professional identity" (Ibarra, 1999, p. 778). At this stage, teacher educators need to be aware that PSTs' insistence to focus on 'existing routines' rather than 'new alternatives' may limit their growth. This may result in constructing a thin repertoire of selves (e.g., styles and tactics) to select from during the practice stage (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008).

The last stage is evaluation using internal and external feedback (implicit or explicit) in the learning community to decide on an acceptable professional identity. Teacher educators and supervisors are recommended to handle this stage cautiously. Conformity to the practicum environment and the power authority within may not construct the agents of change aspired by the teacher preparation program (Fairbanks et al., 2009).

The following figure (2.2) adopted from Ronfeldt and Grossman provides a summary of the different interfering elements within the supported community of practice in a teacher preparation program. The diagram depicts TEP as a community that with different social and psychological factors that may impact the PSTs development as teachers. The PST enters the TEP with earlier images of who the teacher is and what the teacher does. They bring such images from their previous experience as learners at primary education levels and higher education levels at university. Once they are involved in teaching practice, they will be directly affected by a number of social factors such as the coursework contexts, the fieldwork placement contexts and the supervisory contexts. Those contexts reflect to PSTs different patterns of participation including practice and role expectations to try while constructing their PI. It also shows the three stages in the adaptation process

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that learners follow to advance in participation, moving from the periphery to the center. TEP community of practice provide the learners with opportunities to construct and adapt possible and provisional selves. The diagram also indicates that learners go through a repetitive cycle of interaction with the context including observation, experimentation and evaluation. They keepexperimenting with the different possible selves reflected to them from the others, either instructors or other PST peers, and adjust provisional selves to develop their professional identity.

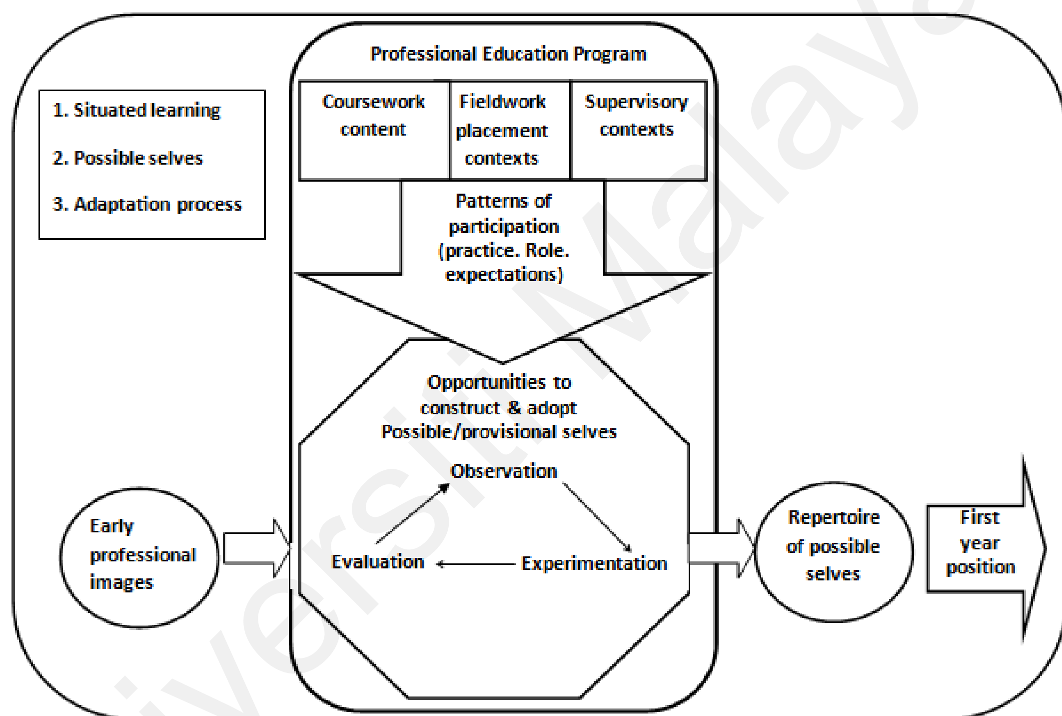

Figure 2.2 Components of PSTs' journey of learning to teach. The figure is adopted from Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008, p. 43).

Previous Studies on Teacher Preparation Programs that Explore the Process of PSTPI Construction

A number of researchers have investigated PSTPI construction within the teacher preparation program with specific focus on the teaching practicum stage. The sociocultural theories have encouraged researchers to "focus on how identity

develops across time through the interplay between the self and the others in a social community of practice." (Freedman & Appleman, 2008, p. 111). The studies examine how multiple components of a teacher's professional program interplay to develop that identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009, p. 184). The studies also explore the effect of such components on professional identity aspects, including teachers' perceptions of their roles and practices, voice, agency (i.e., the person's ability to act and affect their context), efficacy (i.e., one's belief in his/her ability to succeed as a teacher) and commitment to teaching.

Moreover, Oruç (2013) conducted a case study of a 21-year old female trainee teacher in her 3rd year of a four-year teaching program in Turkey. To collect data about the trainee's teacher identity development, Oruç used the reflective journals written by the trainee and the researcher after observations of each other teaching at university and at school. She reported positive results for the development of teacher identity aspects through the program, including the trainee's perceptions of the teacher role, classroom management, future profession and colleagues, instructional approaches and practices, commitment to teaching and self-efficacy.

A limitation the researcher found was difficulty to understand teacher identity by only observing one trainee for two years. Another limitation resulted from the researcher's claim that her study shed light on the challenges faced by a student teacher through the teacher preparation program; the researcher only reported positive and optimistic outcomes without mentioning any challenges.

Another study was conducted by Kayi-Aydar (2015, p. 95) who used the positioning theory as a theoretical framework to examine how pre-service English language learners/teachers "position themselves and (re)negotiate identities in

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relation to their social context" in the USA. The positioning theory presumes that identities are constructed socially through discourse (i.e. language in use). In her study, Kayi-Aydar used multiple selves and multiple identities interchangeably, arguing that our discourse shapes our multiple selves and is shaped by our multiple identities. This type of interrelationship, from a post-structural perspective, replaces the self as a noun (static and stable) with the self as a verb (in a constant process of changing).

The study showed how identity (re)negotiation reacts with PSTs' agency. Not only were positioning themselves in relation to English language learners and mentor teachers reported, but so were the conflicting positional identities those PSTs ascribed to themselves. It was noticeable that her participants exhibited more effective and sensitive personalities than their mentors in the study. They showed a great sense of agency and attempted to make a change in the context.

However, they repeatedly reported feeling powerless and unable to affect the teaching practice context. Kayi-Aydar's study gave those PSTs a voice, as all reported outcomes were based on their narratives, leaving out other sources of data like the views of other stakeholders. The study missed observing the "performance of a claimed identity in classroom interaction" (Kayi-Aydar, 2015, p. 102).

Chong et al. (2011) explored the changes in STs' professional identity based on comparing their beliefs and perceptions about the teaching profession at the entry point and the exit point of their teacher preparation program. The study replicated the concept that identity is changing and subject to reevaluation by individuals. It highlighted the importance of the professional teacher program in altering STs' beliefs and perceptions about teaching.

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The authors believed that preparation programs can give STs' the chance to alter "their idealized images of teaching and teachers that they aspire to be" (Chong et al., 2011, p. 34). The researchers claimed to be aware of the reality of the classroom context and its unpredictable situations that STs may encounter. However, their study did not capture the complexity inherited in crafting one's professional identity merely by comparing two separate points in one's life.

Approaches to the Study of Teacher Identity

The literature review indicates that researchers use various research approaches, like quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods, to explore the teacher identity theme. The dominant approach is qualitative, which is represented by a basic qualitative method (e.g., Castañeda, 2014; Olsen, 2008; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010) case studies (e.g., Cooper & He, 2012; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Oruç, 2013; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Smagorinsky et al., 2004), ethnographic studies (e.g., Freedman & Appleman, 2008; Horn et al., 2008), the grounded theory (e.g.,Merseth et al., 2008) and qualitative meta-analysis (Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014; Varghese et al., 2005) to capture the complexities of constructing PSTPI. However, rare are the studies that employ quantitative methods (e.g., Chong et al., 2011; Friesen & Besley, 2013) or mixed methods (e.g., Hong, 2010) to investigate what factors affect what aspects of PI during a teacher preparation program.

Quantitative studies. Both Friesen and Besley (2013) and Chong et al. (2011) used questionnaires to collect data. In the respective studies, 109 and 105 PSTs (mainly female) participated. Chong et al. aimed to understand the complexities of PSTPI emergence by exploring PSTs' "attitudes towards teaching and their understanding of teaching at two time points" (2011, p. 32): entry point and

exit point of a teacher preparation program. Since Chong et al.'s study was elaborated previously, Friesen and Besley's study is hereby introduced.

Friesen and Besley collected data from a first-year university course in New Zealand. As a way of incorporating psychology and sociology, the researchers aimed to understand the process of how PSTs view themselves as teachers and how PSTI is developed by the connections between PSTs, personal identity and social identity (i.e., student identity and ethnic identity) (Friesen & Besley, 2013, p. 23). The 5-point Likert scale questionnaire depicted teacher identity as a dependent variable with three subscales of self-categorization as a teacher, confidence in becoming a teacher and participation as a teacher. Personal identity development, student identity, ethnic/cultural identity and generativity (i.e., desire/motive to make difference in students' lives) were used as independent variables. The study was based on Erikson's identity theory (psychology) and Turner and colleagues' self-categorization theory (sociology) to provide complementary explanations of teacher identity formation.

The hypotheses of the abovementioned study were scattered around the report with no clearly stated section for them. The first hypothesis was that the greater the personal identity development, the more positive the professional identity development is. Those who explore their values and beliefs and gain better self-awareness are more capable of exploring the values and roles of the teaching profession. The second hypothesis also anticipated a positive correlation between student identity and professional identity formation. Through course work and teaching practice, PSTs are introduced to the values, beliefs, roles, and social norms of the teaching profession. Skills of identifying themselves as university students of education may positively guide self-identification as teachers.

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The third hypothesis also positively associated ethnic identity categorization with teacher identity formation. Understanding personal, student and ethnic identities can facilitate self-emergence as a teacher (Friesen & Besley, 2013, p. 25). The same positive relationship was predicted between a high sense of generativity and a highly developed teacher identity.

Friesen and Besley's study results proved that PSTs in a first-year teaching cohort exhibit higher teacher identity perceptions than other study variables. The study also indicated a positive correlation between personal identity, social identity and generativity and teacher identity formation. However, a stronger positive association between personal identity, student identity and teacher identity resulted from data, compared with a more modest relationship between ethnic/cultural identity, generativity and teacher identity.

Despite the positive results reported in the study regarding relationships between variables, it cannot be neglected that it only focused on the beginning of a teacher preparation program. The socialization and learning-to-teach process that PSTs would undergo while proceeding in a preparation program were not fully examined. The study focused on what PSTs brought with them from previous experience, which could result in a more idealistic and naïve understanding of teacher identity, as demonstrated in Hong's (2010) study. Such understandings and beliefs may go through a number of revisions and reshaping cycles over the course of the teacher education program.

Qualitative studies. On account of the complexities involved in studying PSTPI construction, researchers have also adopted a qualitative approach to understand this process. For example, Lerseth (2013) used the case study method to examine PSTPI development among four PSTs during their student teaching

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experience. The study intended to answer two related questions. The first question explored what factors contribute to, or hinder the participants' identity formation. The second question focused on how their professional identities develop through the student teaching program. To collect the data, Lerseth interviewed the PSTs, their mentors and supervisors, in addition to using artifacts and work samples.

Lerseth's results highlighted that multiple factors affect PSTPI construction, including past and present experience of relationships with mentors and students. PST awareness of their identities, their knowledge of subject matter and teaching practices and classroom management affect identity development. The participants experienced a kind of tension resulting from differences in views between them and their mentors and supervisors. Such tension may influence their identity development positively or negatively depending on the situation. However, tension resulting from dysfunctional relationships between mentors and supervisors left limited opportunity for growth and identity development.

The participants noted that the student teaching period was stressful and draining. However, each developed a professional identity in a unique and interesting way. This difference implies that both contextual factors and individual abilities guide the formation of a professional identity. Hence, more studies need to focus on those two sides (i.e., contextual and personal) of constructing PSTPI to capture the complexity of such interrelationship.

Among the key tensions mentioned earlier in this chapter are the varying belief systems between university and school, and the effect of such complexity on constructing PSTPI. Smagorinsky et al. (2004) case study of a female PST focused on this aspect of tensions in the American school context. The researchers collected data through interviews with their PST participant prior to student teaching as well as

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interviews with the university supervisor and cooperating teacher before and after each classroom observation. In addition to interviews, field notes and artifacts were collected in the PST's first year of full-time teaching.

The study was an attempt to understand the social practices that guide PSTPI construction, especially at student teaching sites. The findings of the study reported conflicting teaching conceptions between the PST and her mentor teacher, who adopted the "mimetic mentoring approach" (Smagorinsky et al., 2004, p. 17), leaving the PST little opportunity to develop a personal teaching style. The participant reported frustration in this situation and fear that in the end she would conform to the authority of experience and abandon the methods she learnt at university. Moreover, the PST encountered contradiction between what university instructors teach regarding constructivism and what PSTs actually practice. With the absence of a supervisor and a clear agenda to foster university values, PSTs tend to comply with the most powerful forces in the student teaching environment (i.e., mentor teachers and school values.)

In the same vein, Afrianto (2015) investigated PSTPI construction on Sumatera Island. The study findings showed that PI construction is not a linear process and is subject to the influence of a number of factors, including motivation to become teachers. Afrianto (2015) framed the study with Wenger's communities of practice features. Ten participants were recruited for individual interviews before and after their teaching practicum stage. They also participated in focus group discussions about their motives to become teachers and other factors that affect their PI construction. The participants reported three different reasons for wishing to become ESL teachers. First, they believed that being a teacher is a respected profession in their religion. Second, the participants stated that they chose teaching

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as a profession due to social influences. Their families and friends encouraged them to become teachers since society values such profession. Additionally, the participants thought that becoming ESL teachers can be financially rewarding. As they progressed through the student teaching stage, the participants found they juggled a number of conflicts and challenges due to the changing context from university to school. They felt the school context was harder to deal with. The study recommended directing much more attention to the process of integrating PSTs in the school context.

Hsieh (2010) conducted a study to explore the complexity of teacher PI construction. Hsieh (2010) used a case study of 8 ESL pre-service teachers practicing in an urban secondary school in the USA to investigate the different factors affecting the professional identity components of agency, power and discourse. The study findings classified three factors that affect PI construction in the study context. First are individual factors, such as previous personal experience as students at the K-12 stage and university. The second group of factors relate to practice and the classroom, for instance subject matter, lesson planning, and curriculum and classroom management. The third group of factors relate to external discourses regarding the teaching/learning process. External discourses are derived from theoretical, policy, contextual, collegial and expert models of practice.

According to the study, the three types of factors prove to be influential on beginning teachers' classroom practice and their sense of what it means to be a teacher. The participants oriented by external discourses displayed a better sense of agency. They believed their professional practice could influence those discourses and make changes in the teaching/learning process. Those participants were able to negotiate professional growth and practices with others in their training context.

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They were also able to negotiate others' practices and teaching/learning policies. Hence, it was concluded that policy makers need to design TEPs that foster a dialogically-oriented stance to teaching.

Taşdemir and Seferoğlu (2017) conducted a qualitative case study to understand how EFL PSTs become teachers. The researchers collected data using reflective journals and focus group interviews from EFL PSTs enrolled in a practice teaching course at a state university in Istanbul, Turkey. The study findings showed that it was a complicated process for PSTs to understand who they were as teachers. It was also a dynamic process of negotiation among the participants who believed that being subject content experts, pedagogical experts and didactical experts are constituent parts of the teacher professional identity. The findings also revealed that the participants experienced shifts in their professional identities from cue-based and exemplar-based identities to rule-based and schema-based ones. Such professional identity shifts emerged as the participants moved from the imagined identity arena to the practiced identity one. The PI transition experienced reflects how the actual teaching practice made them abandon their ideal imagined professional identity to respond to the classroom complexities.

Another qualitative case study was conducted by Chien (2016) in Taiwan. The researcher used written metaphors, PSTs' final projects and interviews as data collection methods. The written metaphors were used as a reflective tool to examine the PSTs' understanding of their identity and teaching. The data results were interpreted in terms of identity before instruction, identity after instruction and identity transformation. Before instruction, participants imagined themselves as teachers and big brothers or sisters or teachers and friends to their students-to-be. Such emotional view of teaching shifted after designing and delivering lessons to

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sixth graders. They depicted their identities to be more professional as English teachers, lesson designers or learners to teach English. The written metaphors showed that the participants’ PI changed because of their actual experience in designing and delivering lessons to actual students and how they interacted with and learnt from experiences in teaching in that specific context. According to Wenger (1998), "Identity…is an experience and a display of competence" (p. 152).

Participants reported a number of factors and sources that helped them equip themselves with teaching expertise. University courses, pertaining to lesson planning, methods and theories of teaching and educational aids, contributed to participants’ knowledge of teaching. Additionally, observing elementary school teachers' instruction and classroom practice was helpful in constructing their PI in practice. Other factors included sixth graders' learning and attitude, mentor teacher and supervisor's comments, peers' sharing of their teaching experience and group work on educational aids.

Based on the results, the study revealed two main findings. First, the researcher contended that professional identity is dynamic because PSTs interact with a variety of settings and experiences during their teaching practice. The second finding pertains to PI transformation and construction in the process of designing and delivering English education, engaging with learners, instructors, mentors, and peers, and self-practice teaching, lesson planning and teaching aid designing. Hence, the study recommended that teacher education programs should provide PSTs with opportunities to explore their personal identity in conjunction with learning the values and norms of the teaching profession. As Chien (2016) claimed, "such a self-categorization process could lead student teachers to develop their professional identity" (p. 21).

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Riyanti (2017) recently conducted a multi-case study in the context of Indonesia. The study was aimed to investigate how ESL PSTs develop their PI while learning to teach during microteaching classes and the teaching practicum stage at secondary schools. Riyanti (2017) framed the study with two theories of the sociocultural approach: the activity theory and the positioning theory. Riyanti was specifically interested in understanding how university and school settings contribute to ESL PSTPI development.

Riyanti (2017) collected data using different qualitative tools, such as interviews, observation, focus group discussion and document analysis. The study findings proved that the diverse sociocultural factors in university and school settings contribute to PSTPI development. The findings signified that PI is changing and dynamic over student teaching contexts. The PSTPI in Riyanti's (2017) study developed from a regimented to a more flexible arena. The participants used multiple languages and methods to adapt to the changing contexts and teach real students. During the microteaching class, the participants used English as the only medium of teaching. However, the participants found that using English and Indonesian in their classes helped reduce the tension of teaching a foreign language to local students. They also altered their teaching strategies to be more flexible and respond to their students' low English levels. These findings prove that context greatly influenced participants' decisions of what kinds of teacher they wished to be. Though the study included interviewing six mentors and three university instructors, the data were mainly reported from the PSTs' perspective while neglecting other voices.

Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) conducted another informative case study to explore the factors affecting professional identity formation. In the study, Ronfeldt and Grossman considered the professional program's significant role in providing

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novices (here PSTs) the chance to negotiate their self-images as professionals and images reflected by their program. The authors explored the challenges novices encounter during their journey to teach and how they experiment with their possible selves to adapt to such challenges. The researchers drew the study from Cross and Markus' possible selves (discussed earlier in this chapter) and Ibarra's adaptation process of forming professional identities.

Data collection included case studies of two PSTs, three seminaries (religious interns) and three clinical psychologists. The participants were part of programs with solid reputation. The researchers used different data collection methods, such as student focus groups, individual interviews, and field observations of coursework and fieldwork. In the focus groups and interviews, the interns were invited to talk about "the kind of professional they hoped to become and … the kind of professional they believed their programs wanted to prepare" (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008, p. 44). They were also asked about what they considered to be 'significant influences' in forming their professional identities.

The findings in Ronfeldt and Grossman's study support what was previously discussed in this work as challenges to forming one's professional identity. As a product of learning to teach at university and from prior experience, students build a repertoire of possible selves to try out within their coursework and later during their teaching practice. Novices face a number of contradictions and tensions at the practicum sites. This results in them attempting to reconcile what they hoped to become with what they are expected to become. Again, the theme of conforming to the power of experience recurs in this study.

What is important to note about Ronfeldt and Grossman' participants is that the psychologists and clergymen had adequate chances to "encounter, enact, and

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evaluate their provisional/possible selves" (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008, p. 51). That facilitated the process of developing professional identities despite the obstacles encountered in the practice setting. However, the case of PSTs is complicated further. Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008, p. 57) admitted that tensions in teacher preparation are greater due to the differences in value systems between what universities hope to prepare and what is expected at school sites. PSTs may not be given opportunities to try out possible selves and obtain good feedback to enable developing their professional identities.

Notably, Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) focused more on reporting the results from the two other cases, leaving more space in their report. Meanwhile, the PSTs' case still needed further investigation to provide sufficient space to express ideas and perceptions regarding professional identity development. Hence, the current study focuses on PSTs in hopes of identifying what influences them and how they adapt within the context of the journey to become teachers. The status quo of schools may hinder the process of experimentation with various selves, as Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) suggested and promoted the accommodation of PSTs.

Understanding PSTPI construction, what influences it and how individuals proceed through the tensions encountered can result in more effective preparation of future teachers. Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2010) based their case study on Wenger's concept of learning and community of practice. With the help of semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews, the researchers emphasized the contradictions present in the teaching preparation context (i.e., between school and university and between social context values and one's beliefs and values). Similar to Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008), they highlighted that learning to teach is experimental.

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Again, such complexity of the juxtaposition of contextual factors and the individual side in developing one's professional identity is explored using the grounded theory approach. Merseth et al. (2008) conducted a study aimed to understand the motives and evolving identities of a group of 65 PSTs (65% female, 35% male) at an Ivy League university. The participants were invited to respond to "Who am I as an effective urban educator?" and write an essay of any length. A number of reviews of the collected essays helped the researchers assign codes and categories for emerging themes. Additional codes were assigned after refining the themes and sorting them into personal and professional identity categories.

In an effort to unveil the changes in identity and the factors that guide such changes, the researchers applied the grounded theory method to uncover what motivations, beliefs and personal characteristics (e.g., personal identity) are essential to learning to teach. They also endeavored to find out how PSTs understand their beliefs and motivations, and how they describe their professional identities as urban teachers. The researchers concluded that PSTPI development is influenced by the personal identity brought by PSTs to the learning-to-teach process and their experiences with the teacher preparation program.

The qualitative interview approach has been employed in other studies on the topic of PSTPI construction. Khalid's (2014) findings were based on semi-structured interviews with three PSTs. The study explored the factors that affect PSTPI development. Khalid's study indicated that school students are of great influence, followed by assistance from mentors, supervisors and colleagues. It also showed that family, past wishes and friends are the main sources of motivation to become a teacher. The participants reported growth in self-confidence, emotions, feelings and attitudes during their teaching practice. The researcher emphasized the importance of

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teaching practice in fostering PSTs' sense of becoming effective teachers. The researcher recommended that ensuring positive experiences through teacher preparation programs is not the responsibility of universities alone but it also needs to be tackled carefully by schools as real practice settings.

Qualitative portfolios and reflective journals are other popular data collection tools (Antonek, McCormick, & Donato, 1997; Ilieva, 2010; Kuswandono, 2013). For example, Antonek et al. (1997) examined the portfolios of two ESL PSTs to trace how they construct their PI. The participants were asked to write reflections on their student teaching over an extended time period. The data were analyzed thematically to detect changes in PI experienced by the participants. Antonek et al. (1997) reported that portfolios represent a valuable tool, whereby PSTs can reflect on the development of their teaching abilities and PI. Such reflections display how individuals react differently to their training context. While one of the participants felt that teacher-student interaction has a major role in her PI development, other participants thought that evaluation and self-assessment are more influential.

Ilieva (2010) conducted a study in the Canadian context. The participants were a group of ESL PSTs in a TESL program. Ilieva (2010) framed the study with Bakhtin's theory of identity and ideological becoming processes and utilized the grounded theory method to analyze the data drawn from the participants' portfolios. The participants' reflections demonstrated that they constructed a PI through negotiating their program discourses. They linked their sense of being a teacher with the act of teaching.

Kuswandono (2013) conducted a research on English teacher education in the Indonesian context. To recognize how PSTs understood their PI as prospective teachers and how they interpreted and brought meaning from their learning to teach

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and experience, Kuswandono collected reflective journals from thirteen PSTs on Java Island, where most of the Indonesian population resides. The researcher explored the relationship between PSTs' reflective practices and teacher identity development. While the study shed light on how participants understood and interpreted their identities through experience and reflective practice, it did not explain how they enacted such identity in their classroom practice. The study showed how PSTs perceived shaping their identities through practice, but it did not show how those shaped identities reshaped their practices and affected teaching performance.

Another research method scholars utilize to explore PI construction is videotaped classroom observation (Reis, 2011; Vetter, Meacham, & Schieble, 2013). Although Kuswandono's (2013) study could not demonstrate how PSTs enacted teacher identities in the classroom, Reis (2011) and Vetter et al. (2013) used videotaped classroom observation and managed to portray how PSTs enact their PI in the classroom. For example, Reis (2011) investigated the construction of an ESL teacher's PI. The study traced how his beliefs and attitudes pertaining to the native speaker myth, i.e., native English speakers are superior to non-native English speakers, were connected to his PI and teaching practices. The primary data collection method was videotaped classroom observation in addition to other qualitative tools, such as interviews and a dialogic journal between scholar and teacher. The study findings indicated that the participants' beliefs and attitudes shifted from being blind believers in the native speaker myth to challenging it. The participant attempted to empower his students as expert speakers and users of English.

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In a similar vein, Vetter et al. (2013) conducted a study to investigate how power positions contribute to the PI construction of the study participants. The researchers utilized a number of data collection techniques, among which teacher's explanations, lesson plans, video analysis assignments, field notes and informal conversations with the study participants over a period of one year. Data analysis involved the grounded theory and discourse analysis. The study findings signified that the participant's ability to enact their preferred PI depends on how the participant negotiates power positions with students.

Mixed-method studies. In response to the complexity of PI construction, other scholars have conducted mixed-method studies (Flores & Day, 2006; Hong, 2010) . In (2010), Hong conducted a study to explore PSTs' perceptions of their professional identity. Hong employed mixed methods of surveying 84 participants and interviewing 27 participants (pre-service and novice teachers) at different stages of their teaching profession. The rationale was to use quantitative surveys to get an overview of PSTs' perceptions of their professional identity in relation to their stage in the teaching profession. The qualitative interviews gained more elaboration and depth regarding differences in perceptions according to stages. Although primarily using such approach is aimed at gaining a complementary understanding of the phenomenon, the researcher considered it as a means to add to the validity of her study. Still, Hong considered the qualitative approach of 'greater weight' (Hong, 2010, p. 1532).

The study compared the perceptions of four groups of participants regarding a number of sub-factors or themes of professional identity. The themes included intrinsic value (i.e., interest and enjoyment resulting from an activity), commitment to profession, self-efficacy and emotion (here, emotional burnout). Other sub-factors

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included knowledge of subject matter and pedagogy, beliefs about teaching and being teachers, and micro-politics with focus on power relationships within the teaching practice context.

Interestingly, the study findings pinpointed the naive and idealistic perceptions of teaching held by PSTs. At the beginning of teaching practice, the PSTs felt strong enough to withstand any difficulties they may face. Meanwhile, at the end of the stage the PSTs were less idealistic in their views and showed awareness of the complexities inherited in the student-teaching context. One of the study implications is the need to set a long-term agenda of teaching PSTs how to teach by creating better plans that explicitly foster constructing professional identity. Hence, they can avoid emotional burnout and abandoning the teaching profession (Hong, 2010).

Flores and Day (2006) aimed to investigate the interplay between different factors in PI construction. The researchers used mixed methods to collect data from a group of fourteen new teachers during their first two years in various school settings in Portugal. Data were gathered via semi-structured interviews, annual reports written by the participants and a questionnaire. Data analysis was intended to identify evidence of how teachers' identities were shaped and reshaped during their first two years of teaching. The study findings demonstrated that a number of factors, such as professional histories, pre-service training, school culture and leadership contribute to the stability of teachers' PI.

The previous section introduced the different approaches used by researchers in the education field to explore PSTPI formation. A number of studies were discussed, which are good examples of how the present research problem has been tackled in the literature. Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that the

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qualitative approach is widely employed and recommended to handle the current research problem; such approach enables capturing the complexity of forming one's professional identity. The qualitative method can help understand the role of the contextual factors and individual adaptation processes in forming a professional identity within the community of practice of the simulated teaching course and teaching practice at school. It will give the study participants a voice to describe their lived experience while learning to teach.

The last part of this literature review chapter is devoted to introducing the context of this study in Malaysia.

Profile of Malaysia (the Study Context)

Malaysia, a major Asian country, is located in Southeast Asia over 127,355 square miles of land. It is divided by the South China Sea into two regions, i.e. Peninsular Malaysia and East Malaysia. Malaysia consists of thirteen states and three federal territories (Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan). The capital city is Kuala Lumpur with a population of 1,448,000. Putrajaya, a recently constructed city, is considered the administrative capital. Malaysia's population is about 30 million, distributed unevenly across and within the thirteen states. About 73% of the total population reside in urban areas, such as Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia’s multi-ethnic communities characterize its demographic composition. The Malay and the indigenous (Bumiputera, or the sons of the soil), represent about 68% of the total population. The Chinese make up about 24%, the Indians 7% and other races about 1% of the total population. In addition, Malaysia accommodates a number of migrant workers and refugees (*Education for All 2015 National Review Report: Malaysia*, 2015). Sixty percent of Malaysian people are

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Muslims, 19% are Buddhist, 9% are Christians, 6% are Hindus and 3% believe in Chinese traditional religions. Tourism is considered one of the main income sources with 20,972,822 tourists visiting Malaysia per year (Darus, 2013).

After attaining independence from Britain in 1957, Malaysia has undergone vast changes in different fields. Some of the major changes include the implementation of a national educational syllabus and a change in the medium of instruction at national schools to Bahasa Malaysia (Malay) instead of English and other languages like Mandarin and Tamil. By using a unifying national language, Malaysia aims to overcome linguistic segregation, a divide-and-rule system inherited from the colonial era. English was established as a second language for administrative matters and to keep abreast of global scientific and technological developments and international trade. Following the 1969 race riots, the government instructed all English medium schools to phase it out in order to accelerate the implementation of a national integration of all different ethnic groups.

In 2002, the government announced that a bilingual system would be set up with English as a medium of teaching science and mathematics in national schools. Urban children who used English as their first language were able to adapt to the new changes in educational policies. However, the majority of children, especially those from rural areas, encountered a number of difficulties with understanding English text in science and mathematics (Darus, 2013). Another challenge concerning stakeholders in Malaysia was whether there were competent English teachers to teach English. English teachers were being held responsible for the success of the English teaching policy in Malaysia; hence, they needed to be equipped to perform well on their mission (Darus, 2013).

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Teacher Education in Malaysia

Upon gaining independence in 1957, Malaysia engaged in a number of educational reforms including teacher professional development and preparation. The perception of teachers as the most significant subjects and objects of change has prompted the government to devote more attention to creating effective teachers. It appears essential to prepare teachers who understand their role in improving society. Teachers also need to have motivation to continue learning and gaining knowledge to respond to the needs of their schools, students and society (H. Jamil, Abd. Razak, Raju, & Mohamed, 2011, p. 85) .

In an effort to cater to the needs of a multicultural and multiethnic population, the Ministry of Education has formulated a philosophy of teacher education that emphasizes teacher quality. H. Jamil et al. (2011, p. 88) stated that:

> The philosophy gives emphasis to the desire to educate and produce teachers who are noble and caring, knowledgeable and skillful, creative and innovative, resilient and competent, scientific in outlook, committed to upholding the aspirations of the nation, proud of their heritage and dedicated to the development of the individual and preservation of a united, progressive, and disciplined society.

Training colleges and universities are expected to prepare teachers to be able to realize the philosophy and survive the continuous curriculum changes. Teachers with a clear and solid professional identity can adapt to the tensions and turbulence occurring in the school context due to reforms imposed through the Malaysia visionary policy.

The roadmap of the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025 includes 11 shifts, one of which focuses on transforming teaching into a profession of choice. A

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starting point will be recruiting the best teacher candidates. To ensure the production of effective teachers, the ministry intends to ensure that public and private universities are guided by the same high standards of preparing teacher candidates. The standards include the curriculum, faculty and graduation requirements of those universities. Being aware of the importance of teaching practice, the ministry also intends to increase the time spent at the practicum site (*Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025: Executive Summary*, 2012, p. E14).

Notably, much of the Ministry's strategic plan to upgrade the education system deals with in-service teachers' continuous professional development and school students' abilities and skills. Less attention is given to pre-service teachers who are considered part of a continuum in the education system (Olsen, 2008, p. 23). H. Jamil et al. (2011, p. 98) contended that "the government faces the challenge to ensure that all its graduate teachers are quality teachers and are able to face their curriculum delivery challenges efficiently." This seems to point to the need to explore PST training to understand what facilitates or hinders professional identity development. How they learn to teach and how they juggle what they encounter on this journey can help set more feasible policies that would eventually pave reform roads.

When consulting the literature, it appears that a limited number of studies focus on PSTs' concerns. For example, Khalid's (2014) study, which was discussed earlier in this chapter, explored the contextual factors that affect PSTI formation during teaching practice at three secondary schools. Based on the study findings, Khalid recommended that PST training ought to be a shared project between universities and schools. Automatic affiliation to a community of practice is not

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enough for PSTs to learn how to be effective teachers. Hence, further exploration of this stage in the Malaysian context can enlighten stakeholders and policy makers.

Another study conducted by Goh and Matthews (2011) examined the concerns and experiences of Malaysian PSTs during their teaching practice period. The fourteen PSTs who participated in the study were asked to keep reflective journals throughout their practicum period with focus on their concerns with, and confidence to teach. Based on the data collected, the researchers identified four areas of concern for their participants: a) classroom management and student discipline, b) institutional and personal adjustment, c) classroom teaching, and d) student learning. The study aimed to cast light on underlying reasons for these concerns expressed by PSTs. The researchers recommended their findings be incorporated in future management and development of teacher education. They also believed that their study enabled participants to assess their learning to teach process. This kind of self-awareness can promote understanding of professional identity construction and the surrounding influences.

I believe such studies represent basic foundations of the entire body of literature that could be devoted to exploring PSTPI construction and enlightening the preparation of future teachers.

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Summary

This chapter was aimed to establish the theoretical framework for this study to gain a holistic understanding of the PSTPI construction phenomenon. To realize this major goal, Lave and Wenger's theory of situated learning was selected, which is represented by communities of practice and formation of identity within the social

context. In addition, this study is framed by the possible and provisional-selves concepts and the individual adaptation process.

First, the general context of teacher education programs was introduced. Subsequently, tensions faced by PSTs while learning to teach were discussed. The discussion reverted to the literature to explain the sources of such tensions. Then the present frameworks were introduced as solutions suggested to understand the nature of the PSTPI construction stage. Connections were established between those frameworks and the present study. Later, studies that focus on PSTPI construction in education as a general field and in TESOL were discussed.

The last section was devoted to introducing the context of the Malaysian education system. Though policies have been drawn to upgrade teachers' skills as part of a holistic reform movement, it seems that PSTs are not at the core of those policies. Hence, studying this stage of teachers' professional experiences can bring attention to its important role as a success factor in the Malaysian system.

Existing research works have used mainly the qualitative approach to understand different aspects of PSTPI construction. The case study can serve as an appropriate method to understand how PSTs juggle the varying tensions they encounter on their journey of learning to teach. It can help understand the role of contextual factors and adaptation processes in assisting with the emergence of PSTPI. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology that is utilized to handle the problem under study.

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to explore how ESL pre-service teachers (PSTs) construct their professional identity (PI) using personal adaptation processes through a preparation program including a simulated teaching course and a practicum stage. The previous two chapters answered two major questions (i.e., WHAT and WHY). The problem and what is known in the literature about it were introduced. It was also argued how this study contributes to literature on teacher education in general and to PSTs, teacher preparation programs and policymakers in the Malaysian context specifically. This chapter aims to answer the HOW question (i.e., how this study has been conducted).

This chapter thoroughly describes the procedures followed in exploring the interplay between the contextual factors and individual adaptation processes in PSTPI construction. The first section provides the philosophical stance of the empirical study aspect and the rationale for choosing the qualitative case study approach. Subsequent is a description of the participants, data collection techniques, data analysis approach and strategies of improving the study trustworthiness. The chapter closes with a discussion of ethical considerations.

Approach and Rationale

Paradigms and assumptions. A Paradigm is considered as overarching philosophical systems (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is "the net that contains the researcher's epistemological, ontological and methodological premises" (Denzin &

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Lincoln, 2011, p. 22). Researchers approach the social world mainly from two perspectives: positivist (represented by the quantitative approach) and anti-positivist or interpretivist (represented by the qualitative approach). Others prefer to be more pragmatic by finding an inroad approach to achieve research goals, so they use a mixed methods approach. To decide which to utilize in this study, I revised ontological assumptions (on the nature of reality), epistemological assumptions (on the nature of knowledge) and human nature assumptions (Cohen et al., 2000). Understanding these assumptions or philosophical stances can help the researcher draw clearer borders between positivist and interpretive research and subsequently select a research methodology.

The ontological stance. At the ontological level, the interpretive stance presumes that social reality is internal and produced by individuals' consciousness. Such reality is thus not external nor imposed. This assumption contradicts the objectivist/positivist orientation that "reality exists out there and it is observable, stable, and measurable" (Merriam, 2009, p. 8). Bryman (2001) used the analogy of organization and culture to illustrate how positivism regards social phenomena as independent and separate from the individuals within. Bryman stated that the organization is a tangible object with pre-established rules, regulations and divisions. The cultural norms within an organization are well-defined and applied by charismatic leaders. Hence, employees conform to such rules and norms that stem from an outside reality. The social environment under such token has a restraining nature that acts on and inhibits the members within.

On the other hand, the ontological perspective of constructivism along with the theoretical perspective of interpretivism argues there is no single social reality that can be observed like natural science phenomena. "While the natural sciences are

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looking for consistencies in the data in order to deduce 'laws' (nomothetic), the social sciences often deal with the actions of the individual (ideographic)" (Bryman, 2001, p. 23). How individuals interpret their experience and what stories they tell can reveal the multiple realities of a single event (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Given a voice, PSTs can introduce real interpretations of experiences lived during preparation to become teachers.

The epistemological stance. At the epistemological level, knowledge gained by studying the positivist reality, which is single and observable, is scientific and inclusive of establishing general laws (Bryman, 2001). By contrast, reality in 'interpretive research' (Merriam, 2009) or 'anti-positivism' (Cohen et al., 2000) is relative, multiple and not absolute. Through interaction with the world, people create truth and meaning, albeit in different ways. Consequently, "multiple, contradictory but equally valid accounts of the world can exist." (Bryman, 2001). This principle is not only applicable to the present research participants but also to me as a researcher. "Researchers do not find knowledge, they construct it" (Merriam, 2009). Two verbs of key importance to this study are thus 'construct' and 'interpret,' which are explained in the next section.

Social constructivism. Unlike positivism's ontological view that reality is one, external to the mind and possible to be studied in parts, constructivism proposes that reality is relative and multiple. These multiple realities are constructed and co-constructed by the mind(s) and need to be studies as a whole. Interpretivist constructivist epistemology delve for subjective beliefs that are co-constructed between the researcher and the study participants. Hence, "the knower and the known are interactive, inseparable" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 37). Instead of the scientific explanation, prediction and control of the world reality, interpretivism or

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Constructivism seeks out understanding, meaning and action (Carr & Kemmis, 1986, p. 83). The interpretive inquiry adopts the methodologies that are ideal to come to understand the lived experiences of the participants. Some of these methodologies are phenomenology, ethnography, case study and participant observation.

Interpretivism and constructivism were the underlying theoretical paradigm of the current study due to the nature of the phenomenon under the study and the researcher position. Thus, the inquiry is constructivist- interpretive in nature. Everything about TEP invloves people. The outcome domains compromise people (e.g., individuals, groups, organisations). The TEP professionals and trainees are people; the work carried out involve changing people (e.g., PSTs change instructors, supervisors and monitors when changing contexts of training).

Interpretive inquiry can be more amenable to inquiries in TEP and PSTPI construction because it consist of humans whose behavior cannot be predictable or controlled. Those participants themselves are context and time sensitive (Lincoln & Guba, 2013). The questions that were raised in the current study concerning PSTPI construction aimed at learning about the lived experiences PSTs encounter while going through their journey to learn to teach. I assumed there would be multiple realities, where one PST's experience would be different in some way from another. The study does not strive for an objectives truth but expected that through subjective interactions between me, as the human instrument, and the PST, the researched, together we could co-construct some understanding which could help inform meaning and action. The current study did not aim to generalize the findings or to provide cause-effect explanations. Instead, it aimed at providing thick description enough to make transferability possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

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Creswell (2009, p. 8) discussed the two actions (i.e., construct and interpret) under the term "social constructivism." Influenced by social constructivism, I seek to understand the complex phenomenon of developing one's professional identity. Creswell suggested using open-ended questions to enable participants to share stories and views of their experiences instead of relying on few categories and ideas driven from previous scholarship. Meanings are constructed socially through interaction with other people in their context. As a researcher, I interpret such subjective views to inductively generate the meaning of PSTs' journey of learning to teach. Only by interacting with participants is it possible to construct knowledge of the topic under study.

In addition to the nature of the phenomenon, my position as a researcher, my experiences and biases directed this study towards the constructivist interpretivist paradigm. Before discussing the selected study approach, my personal background and experience that have influenced my interest in this qualitative study are introduced.

Researcher's position, experience and biases. In a qualitative research, the questions and paths that emerge mainly depend on the researcher's lens of interest. Prior experience and interest in the study problem direct the researcher's decisions and choices before and while collecting data and throughout analysis and interpretation (Tufford & Newman, 2012). Bracketing preconceptions does not mean abandoning them; rather, it helps the researcher set aside previous knowledge and assumptions and stay open-minded and sensitive to the participants' own experiences (Merriam, 2009). Hence, the researcher must maintain self-awareness throughout the project.

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My interest in teacher identity stems from my own experience transitioning from a university student to a school teacher. Being a distinguished student during my university study did not exempt me from the struggles and tensions of the journey of becoming a teacher. I consider my first year of teaching difficult and challenging. Managing a class of 50 students, meeting administrative duties and life burdens were far more challenging than I expected. My new colleagues, who suffered the same tensions, and I considered that our teacher preparation program was inadequate. We thought it did not prepare us for the real context of governmental schools.

To overcome that period, I had to consult other experienced teachers at the school. Observing them teach, trying out their strategies and evaluating what worked in my own classes enabled me to slowly approach my first year as a teacher more confidently. That stage inspired me to learn more about how PSTs learn to teach. Understanding the becoming process of PSTs may help future PSTs undergo this process with greater ease. My experience motivated me to gain deeper understanding of being a teacher. It was not about succeeding in gaining knowledge during my undergraduate study but something else that I did not have when I started teaching.

Another inspiration for this study was the Master dissertation I did in 2007 at the University of Manchester. That study was aimed to investigate the relationship between the EFL student teacher, university supervisor, and cooperating teacher. The question to answer was "What are the perceptions of the EFL student teacher, the cooperating teacher, and the university supervisor on practicum teaching regarding their relationship with each other?" The results of the study proved that the dysfunctional relationships among the three practicum teaching members were challenging for PSTs (El Masry, 2007). Due to the stress of time and scope limits, it

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was not possible to proceed in that study to better understand the role of contextual factors in the becoming-a-teacher process. Consequently, I considered furthering my education with a PhD study.

Adding to the previous two motives, another was starting to work as an English supervisor for in-service teachers, including experienced and novice teachers and a number of PSTs. My experience with the three groups allowed me to simultaneously see the different stages of PI development. PSTs specifically were eager to teach in real classes but doubted their own abilities. Their PI was evolving over the practice stage to become more like teachers. Still, I could not ignore the tensions and struggles they faced while teaching in government schools. I had to return a couple of times to sort out some problems my PSTs encountered with the school principals and teachers. I myself struggled with such difficulty in my first year of teaching. This motivated me more to examine PI construction during the pre-service teaching stage.

Working with novice in-service teachers and seeing them suffer from similar problems I encountered myself when I was a novice proved to me that no real reforms took place in teacher education programs. Additionally, the way experienced in-service teachers gained different identities that affected their practices and decisions in class was also thought provoking. I assumed that not being aware of a PI when they were PSTs reduced their abilities to cope with the educational context tensions. Being up to transitioning from student to teacher would help them develop personal adaptation processes with the help of the surrounding context elements.

My experience as a student, school teacher, teacher educator and English supervisor served to filter my understanding of my participants' experiences. Although I have perspectives on each stage, I identified the pre-service stage as the

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most significant to examine in this PhD study. As mentioned earlier in this section, this study is developed from the ontological understanding of reality as complex and socially constructed (Cohen et al., 2000). As a researcher, I embarked on this study with guiding questions and methods; however, I remain flexible to allow emergent and interactive design processes based on the participants and the developing situation.

Positioning myself as a researcher in the new context of Malaysia required me to follow a number of procedures in conducting this research in a reflective and transparent manner (Creswell, 2009). I have already acknowledged my experiences, motives and professional identity. I began the study by practicing reflexivity about ESL PSTPI. It was necessary to reflect on how my own feelings and beliefs might influence the data collected, analyzed and interpreted. Writing reflective and analytical memos through the process of the research helped achieve transparency (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006).

The Qualitative Approach

Driven by the goal of understanding how PSTs approach the learning process to become teachers, the qualitative approach is appropriate for this study. I am particularly interested in describing how PSTs adjust to their SCoP during their simulated teaching classes and later on practicum sites. How they view this stage of professional development, the process in which they engaged when moving from being a university student to a schoolteacher, and handling the tensions arising during such transitional stage are key topics in this study.

Understanding, describing and interpreting experiences calls for a qualitative research (Merriam, 2009), especially with the little research done on this

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phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, this research is exploratory in nature and is aimed to unveil the important variables that affect PSTPI construction in the Malaysian context. In spite of framing this study with community of practice features, possible selves and adaptation processes, the intent is to leave the study design flexible enough to respond to what I face in the study (Merriam, 2009).

Adding to the research problem significance in selecting the current research design, personal experience (Creswell, 2009, p. 19) foreshadowed my choices. First of all, my MA study in teacher training was qualitative in nature. Another point is that I work as an English supervisor familiar with making close observations and doing pre- and post-discussions/interviews to better understand teachers' practices. Additionally, the qualitative approach leaves room for the researcher to be innovative and add to the theory body and practice, especially when working with marginalized groups like PSTs. Though by having highly systematic procedures, the quantitative approach may impose on participants meanings and ideas concluded from different contexts and groups. Consequently, I gravitate toward the qualitative approach.

Characteristics of qualitative research. Qualitative research has a number of characteristics that can help researchers understand the nature of this type of research. The qualities include focus, the data collection instruments, the data analysis process and the final product. First, a qualitative study takes place in a natural setting where behaviors and events occur. It focuses on comprehending the phenomenon based on the participants' understanding and interpretation of what they experience. The emic (e.g., insider/participant) perspective is more important than the etic (e.g., outsider/researcher) view. What the PSTs say and do is critically informative in revealing how they develop a professional identity.

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Second, as a qualitative researcher, I cannot separate myself from the context of the study. As suggested by Merriam (2009, p. 15) and Creswell (2009), "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis." A human being, not a machine, can interact with people and understand their stories and actions. I can thus immediately react to situations and adapt my procedures to suit the context and participants. It is possible to even check immediately for accuracy and benefit from verbal and nonverbal data for more understanding. The subjectivity resulting from using human instruments should not be eliminated but celebrated (Merriam, 2009). Through their subjectivities, each researcher can make unique contributions by interpreting the collected data, hence creating multiple realities.

Third, the qualitative approach process is inductive. When theories available in the literature are inadequate to explain a phenomenon, then a qualitative research enables data collection to build concepts and theories rather than test hypotheses or theories as in quantitative research. By using observation, interviews, documents, artifacts and engagement in the field, researchers pile up bits of information. Later, they group the data into themes and categories, thus forming concepts, tentative hypotheses and theories.

Merriam (2009, p. 16) claimed that even with such inductive process, a research begins informed by a specific theoretical framework, which enables creating a focus for the study. However, the framework is not tested deductively (or a priori) (Creswell, 2009, p. 195), but inductively (a post-priori) by what is discovered in the field. Similarly, Baxter and Jack (2008) suggested that researchers avoid getting caught by the conceptual framework and its limitation of the inductive process. Sharing thoughts and ideas with peer researchers may help scholars avoid being

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driven by the theoretical framework. Hence, peer review is utilized to analyze the data in this research.

The last main characteristic of a qualitative research is that its product is 'richly descriptive.' It does not offer numbers or statistics like quantitative research does. Thorough description includes detailed presentation of the context, participants, actions and procedures in conducting the research, data analysis process and findings. The description is supported by quotes from field notes, interviews, observations and documents. Such detailed description may not lead to the generalizability celebrated by the quantitative approach; however, it is crucial to the concept of transferability, so the work will be considered a worthy contribution to literature (Merriam, 2009, p. 226). "Generalizability is less important than understanding the real workings behind ‘reality’" (Bryman, 2001).

Being aware of the qualitative research characteristics, including strengths and drawbacks, the rest of the study design is presented next. The discussion will describe the context and population, sampling and participants, ethical issues, data collection procedures, data analysis, and the trustworthiness and transferability of the study.

The Case Study

A case study research is undertaken, according to anthropology, sociology and psychology. By the 1980s, writers started referring to ‘case study’ as a methodology (Merriam, 2009). Yin (2008, p. 18) defined a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." This approach corresponds to the notions of constructivism, which

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implies that the researcher can better understand participants' actions by listening to their stories (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

A case study acknowledges the multiple realities of the participants, the researcher and others involved in the study. For a holistic account of the phenomenon of PSTPI construction, multiple perspectives of the participants and myself, the researcher, are reported to identify the factors (personal, social or institutional) involved (Creswell, 2009, p. 176). This exploratory (Yin, 2008) case study includes in-depth interviews and observations of the case in an attempt to capture the complexity of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2008).

Bounding the Study

Setting. This study was conducted at two sites in Malaysia: the University of Malaya campus, and Malaysian public schools in the urban area of Kuala Lumpur. The university is an urban public research university with about thirty thousand local and international students. This university was selected for two reasons. First, research is highly valued at this university, so the researcher had easy access to conduct this study there. Second, it is considered one of the top universities in Malaysia according to a current assessment released in 2017 of global, Asian and Malaysian universities.

Teacher preparation programs at this university have a number of objectives to better prepare future teachers. The Bachelor of Education in teaching English as a second language (TESL) aims to prepare graduate teachers who are competent and skilled in teaching English. Being good communicators in English with excellent social skills is another objective of the TESL program. Such skills could help PSTs negotiate their understanding and development in the professional context. In

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addition, program designers declare being aware of the significance of developing PSTPI during the simulated teaching course and teaching practice stage.

The following table (3.1) represents the Bachelor of Education - Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESL) at UM. The Bachelor of Education program (TESL) began in 1989 with the aim to provide academic preparation and professional training to English secondary school teachers. The program integrates English language skills and English literature with professional components, which emphasize knowledge in education and classroom teaching practices. A student must complete 133 credits to be awarded the Bachelor of Education – TESL. The core specialization courses include units in English phonetics and phonology, sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics in teaching language, English morphology, syntax and semantics and selected literary topics. Other courses focus on teaching English methods, such as methods in TESL, and teaching writing, speaking, listening and reading skills in the ESL context. This sample of courses offered shows that designers aim to equip learners with the content and pedagogical knowledge necessary to become good English teachers in the future.

Table 3.1

TESL Program Requirements

Component		Credit
University Courses		14
Core Faculty Courses		30
Core Specialization Courses		48
Professional Practice		10
Elective	Specialization	22
	Faculty	9
Total		133
Duration: Minimum 8 semesters	Maximum 12 semesters	

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As part of the academic plan, PSTs are required to have subject-content and methodology classes. After the end of the second year, they are required to attend one week at a school of choice. They are expected to observe teachers teaching and learn from them how to employ various teaching strategies and class management techniques.

During the second semester of the third year, TESL program student teachers join a simulated teaching class. The class builds on the different TESL method courses on teaching diverse language skills (i.e., reading, listening, speaking and writing). During this class, PSTs have the opportunity to practice teaching in the safe environment of their university. The course aims to provide PSTs the occasion to link theory with practice.

The course starts with an overview of secondary school syllabus. PSTs learn about the syllabus learning outcomes, themes, topics, and areas of language use and language skills. They then engage in hands-on sessions to plan and implement lessons at the secondary school level. They are also urged to use technology and a range of student-centered activities. After each micro teaching lesson, PSTs partake in reflection sessions on good and poor practices in their peers' teaching. By reflecting on experiences, PSTs can explore a variety of teaching situations they may encounter in actual teaching practice. The feedback from their supervisor and classmates can direct their learning to teach and develop a PI.

The second chance PSTs have to practice teaching is during placement in a secondary school assigned by the faculty. Now they are in a real context, working with real students under normal public school conditions. Each class has about 32 students, including Malay, Chinese, Indian and a minority of other nationalities.

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PSTs are expected to teach 10 periods of English a week and two periods of a second method subject (moral class).

PSTs are encouraged to keep a teaching practice folder and a record book. The folder includes the teaching schedule, lesson plans, teaching aids, a record of peer observations (4 times), problems faced, reflections and suggestions. Moreover, the syllabus, work scheme, weekly plans, tests and marks are added to this teaching folder, which the principal signs weekly.

'Guidelines for Teaching Practice' (see appendix A) is the most interesting document that can help compare what is planned for PSTs to achieve and what they really encounter during practicum. For example, it is stated that PSTs will have support from supervisors, mentor teachers, the principal and peers in school, who comprise the sociocultural context of the SCoP. Their actions, words and standards will direct how PSTPI is developing. The relationships between PSTs and those parties could facilitate or hinder professional identity construction. Hence, relationships with supervisors, mentors, school administration, peers and students were investigated.

This booklet can guide data collection and analysis during the simulated teaching class and teaching practice stage. The aims highlight creating a comfortable teacher-student relationship, improving PSTs' evaluating skills, building skills pertaining to extra-curriculum activities and building self-confidence. Most importantly, teaching practice is expected to enable them to observe and appreciate teachers' roles in class. With the opportunity to link theory to practice, PSTs are expected to enhance their knowledge, skills and attitude to teaching.

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The Malaysian school education system is represented in the following table according to the website:

http://www.classbase.com/countries/Malaysia/Education-System.

The study participants trained at the middle secondary level, where they taught students in forms 1, 2 and 4.

Table 3.2

Malaysian School Education System

Education	School/level	Grade		Age		Years
		From	To	Form	To	
Primary	Primary Year 1 to Year 6	1	6	7	12	6
Middle	Level one	1	3	13	15	3
Secondary	Level two	4	6	16	17	2

Participants. The population for this study consists of undergraduate ESL student teachers from the University of Malaya (UM), a public Malaysian university. About 24 students were divided into three cohorts (8 participants each) for simulated teaching classes. For teaching practice, they were divided into groups of four to be distributed around urban public schools in areas near the university. The supervisors of their simulated teaching classes were expected to change during teaching practice. As such, PSTs would be exposed to different teaching philosophies.

The present study participants were 8 student teachers in one of the simulated teaching classes taught by my PhD supervisor. The participants come from various places in Malaysia. Two are from urban areas, three are from suburban areas and three are from rural areas. The age range is 22-25. Purposive sampling was employed to choose these participants. They may not be representative of the entire population of PSTs. However, they were selected because they have something to say regarding

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PSTPI construction. I joined this class from the beginning of the semester until the end.

Since the group was under the supervision of my supervisor, I neutralized a great deal to reduce doubts concerning my genuine reasons for being there. I excluded myself from any formal assessment of their work, so as not to arouse fear of my judgment. As an outsider, I needed to engage fully in their practices and dialogues. I observed these PSTs, attended their microteaching lessons and interviewed them. Informal talks were also important to build a rapport with them, thus bridging the gap between us and increasing their confidence level. In addition, I held group interviews to reflect on the classes and what they had learnt. At this stage, I also got a report of their satisfaction with my comments on their lessons. I noticed their satisfaction added to their desire to disclose their understandings of PI development. I also found they would ask for my feedback after the interviews, in case I had not given any yet.

Subsequently, I followed the same group to schools and attended their classes. I also interviewed them three times each over the 10 weeks of their teaching practice. Prolonged engagement (Merriam, 2009) with the group in the real context where they learnt to teach helped me construct an understanding of their lived experiences. Besides the PSTs, their supervisors, mentors and principals were also informally interviewed to perceive how they guided the PSTs. This particular interview data served for comparison with the interview and observation data obtained from the main participants (i.e., PSTs).

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Table 3.3

Demographic Information of Participants

Participant Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Place of origin
Noor	25	Female	Kuala Lumpur/urban
Suzan	23	Female	Kuala Lumpur/urban
Iman	22	Female	Kedah/rural
Huda	24	Female	Sabah/rural
Muna	22	Female	Penang/suburban
Fulla	23	Female	Taiping, Perak/suburban
Asmira	22	Female	Kuala Selangor/rural
Elisha	22	Female	Terengganu/suburban

Descriptions of participants:

Noor

Noor, 25, was the eldest in the group. She comes from an urban area in Malaysia. She went to a school where the official language was the mother tongue, Bahasa Melayu. However, since the school consisted of mix-race students, teachers would use English in the classroom -- not only for English lessons but also for other subjects and during weekly assembly. Most subjects were taught in English and the students spoke English to communicate with one another. In such a context, her English proficiency and motivation to learn English were very high. She practiced using English at school and later with classmates at university. However, in the dormitory, Noor's friends could not use English comfortably, so she had to adjust her language to suit them.

After finishing secondary school, she had no clear vision of what she wanted to study. Her father, who noticed her interest in English from reading English stories, watching English movies and listening to English songs, suggested she study TESL. She was not a big fan of the idea because she hated being at school and considered

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that working in a school environment would be a horror. However, owing to her school results, she did not have many options. She took TESL as a diploma course, which is when, to her surprise, she felt she liked TESL.

She viewed her methodology class lecturer as her teaching role model. Noor liked everything about her lecturer: the way she spoke, explained content and engaged students in the lessons. Noor was impressed by her lecturer's teaching to the extent that she wanted to become a teacher like her. She wished to be a teacher with whom students would feel comfortable and students would not feel any barriers between them and her. She thought she would be firm but at the same time, there would be room for compromise. Her perspective students would not be afraid to voice out ideas and opinions. She would collaborate with students to find solutions to problems. She would be a teacher who takes the job seriously and she would build rapport with students. However, at the beginning of this research, she was afraid she would be unable to help students understand the lessons and they would gain nothing from her. Essentially, she did not highly value her abilities as a TESL teacher.

Noor believed she was not completely prepared regarding subject content. She admitted that she needed to work independently to develop mastery of content knowledge. At the pedagogical knowledge level, she contended that she knew the theory. However, she could not evaluate whether she could apply it in practice. She thought she needed to undergo the practicum stage to decide. Noor felt confident regarding her technological knowledge and assured she would use technology widely in her classes because that would capture students' attention.

She expected the simulated teaching class to prepare her for the practicum stage. Noor found it as an opportunity to learn on what to focus in her teaching. More importantly, she would practically learn how to prepare meaningful lesson plans and

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use appropriate methods. Later, the practicum would be a real environment to put to test and practice all the theories and methods she learnt at university.

Suzan

Suzan was a 23-year old Malaysian PST in the third year at university. She comes from an urban area of Kuala Lumpur. She valued her university experience more than the school experience. Compared to school, university offered more freedom of making choices. Even from an academic aspect, understanding was more important than memorizing exact answers to questions. As long as students can justify the answer, they are considered correct. However, that also depends on the subject. For TESL, most courses are more geared toward developing students' own understanding. Most are subjective, with no right or wrong answer. At school, lessons tended to be more exam-oriented compared to university. The grades in each semester at university were divided accordingly for assignments or presentations, class participation and final exams. Suzan felt that such strategy is better than focusing only on examinations. She believed different students have different perspectives.

Originally, she hoped to further her study in dentistry or something related to biology. During her foundation in matriculation, she did not manage to achieve the average points to apply for dentistry. Anything related to English was a second choice. In her opinion, students nowadays consider English as a tough subject, especially in rural areas. Some students may even view English as a burden that is required for exam purposes. She wanted to change students' perspectives so they would appreciate English as much as she does.

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Suzan thought she had no specific role model in teaching. She recalled different teachers who presented something she considered unique. For example, her English teacher at the primary level (4th grade) used games, which made the class enjoyable. In addition, her teachers of English and science in the 8th grade encouraged student participation and creativity. At university, a number of lecturers focused more on students' understanding rather than memorizing information. They encouraged presentations and public discussions of ideas. However, Suzan complained that many other teachers followed traditional ways of teaching with mere focus on lecturing. They were exam-oriented teachers who wanted to train students to pass major exams.

One of her expectations from the simulated teaching class was to learn how to teach students in the teaching practicum. Suzan wished to focus mostly on time management and flexibility with potential free time. Another expectation was to be able to share ideas and teaching methods with the rest of her classmates as a means to improve herself. Besides, she wished to learn the correct ways of selecting materials to use for teaching. She also hoped to learn how to recognize the most suitable resources for teaching certain items of English. Suzan's main concerns were her ability to teach students and keeping calm while teaching a full class. She would like to be less nervous when presenting in front of a crowd.

At the beginning of the simulated teaching, Suzan did not believe she was ready to teach. Based on her previous Simulated Teaching in Literature Education, she still had a long way to go. Regarding her knowledge of English, she believed she needed to improve herself in subject content knowledge, while she was sure she grasped all teaching theories regarding pedagogical content knowledge. All she needed was to apply what she had learnt in her classes. She believed she knew what a

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teacher should and should not do during a lesson. She was not worried about technological knowledge because she was very familiar with technology and how to use it. She expected for teachers to normally use computers in lessons, which is not a problem for her.

Iman

Iman was a 22-year old third-year university student. She comes from a rural area in a northern state of Malaysia. Initially, it never crossed her mind to go along the lines of education. After secondary school, she chose to do a degree in TESL, considering it the best choice based on her school results. She thought that if she took TESL, she could pursue her degree overseas. Apparently, only IPG (Institute of Teacher Education) students were eligible. Hence, she decided to pursue a degree at her current university because she did not like the idea of having to bind to the government and serve as a teacher for at least 5 years had she gone to IPG. She wished to have choices upon graduation, so she thought her university was the perfect choice.

Looking back at the time she was in school, she felt she was pampered. All she had to do was go to school and prepare to learn whatever the teacher taught. In English language classes, she thought she could be an 'ace' in this field, because back then, she thought English came naturally to her. She had no idea of the importance of all four related skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) to learning English. What she knew was that if she understood what she read, it would be enough. Coming to university and taking TESL, she found that being a student is not actually a walk in the park. She needed to look for her own sources to learn to add to whatever notes the lecturer provided. She also had to learn how to manage time.

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Before the university stage, she had a school timetable and was restricted to some ‘unwritten rules’ at home under her father’s supervision. Later, living far from home, she had to manage everything on her own and try not to neglect her studies while doing other activities. She loved spending time with friends, joining games and watching movies.

Entering the current semester and looking at the course list, Iman set some aims and expectations. In the simulated teaching course in particular, was where she expected to be in the last stage of being ‘groomed’ into an English language teacher. She expected to learn how to present herself as a teacher, how to tackle students’ interest in lessons and how to manage a class full of young and active people. Albeit cliché, Iman only wished to be a teacher who would inspire her students. She hoped to become a soul that would not just pass once through students’ lives but also be someone who would come into their lives, teach them valuable lessons and stay with them in remembrance. She did not want to become a teacher loathed by students. Basically, she did not want students to see her only because she was put in class to teach a certain subject.

Her role model was her English teacher in Form 4 (16 years old), whose methods she liked very much. Although Iman liked English since she was much younger, she had never really liked the language technicalities (e.g., grammar), probably because she simply did not like the ways her previous teachers approached content knowledge. That particular Form 4 teacher, whom she named Mrs. A, approached content knowledge in a more acceptable way for students. Moreover, Iman really appreciated that her teacher never shut out anyone’s ideas during discussions on certain topics but accepted thoughts and ideas from every student. If the class went slightly off topic, Mrs. A would not shut them out. Instead, she would

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rephrase ideas to connect them to the topic under discussion. In a way, as Iman thought, the teacher gave students a chance to speak without worrying about being wrong or right. Iman said that surely boosted her confidence in language abilities.

Regarding her preparation on subject, pedagogical content and related technological knowledge, she reported not being 100% prepared in any of these areas. For instance, she felt she did not fully master subject content knowledge to be ready to teach students, despite what she had experienced with grammar, the four skills, literature and so on. She felt she needed to gain more knowledge in these areas to be able to teach without referring to many resources each time for teaching.

The following four participants were not as responsive to the questions as the previous ones. They were laconic in answering and gave a holistic picture of their background.

Huda

Huda, a 24-year old student, started her academic life in the hopes of becoming a doctor. However, an illness prevented her from pursuing this dream. Her parents and a previous secondary school English teacher suggested she join a TESL program to become a teacher. Since English was her passion (i.e., a language to which she felt a sense of belonging when using it), she considered it a good choice and went to university to study TESL and prepare to be an English teacher. Up until the first interview of the current study, she did not regret this choice.

Huda's experience as a school student was very different. At school, things were either white or black. There were rules and strict regulations to follow. Teachers tried to discipline students all the time. They had similar teaching styles as they were committed to the syllabus and preparing students for the major exams. At

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university, students had more freedom to be themselves, to be independent and construct their own identity. Lecturers had unique styles to help students gain knowledge in the most engaging ways. These differences were shocking for Huda in the first semesters at university. She was expected to depend on herself rather than on lecturers to build knowledge. She was assigned several tasks to handle by herself, to collect information and synthesize the data to represent and discuss with others. Gradually, she got used to the new culture and she felt better.

She believed her role models during the K12 years were those teachers who built human relationships with their students. Through a positive attitude towards students, teachers managed to attract their attention to love the subject. They cared about student differences, so they altered their teaching styles. For example, her English teacher in a Form 3 class used many games and songs, which was very interesting and enjoyable for the students. Huda hoped to be just like this teacher: loving, caring and creative. She wished to leave a permanent, positive mark on her students.

Regarding the simulated teaching class, Huda was not completely satisfied with how the class was managed. Returning to theory rather than practice was not what she expected. She thought the class would be a good chance to practice teaching and try out different procedures she had already learnt. Constructing her teacher identity could start in that class; hence, her expectations of the current course were high. Unlike the others who focused on teaching technicalities, she hoped the course would increase her sense of belonging to the teachers' community.

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Muna

Muna was a 22-year old from the Kuala Lumpur suburbs. Her passion for English started long ago when she was a young student. She developed enthusiasm for, and an interest in teaching while doing her TESL degree. She often talked with her cousin who taught English, who encouraged her to pursue her ambition to become a teacher. Her family also supported her decision and felt proud of her.

At school, her teachers mainly focused on finishing the syllabus in the allocated time. Being exam-oriented, those school teachers followed traditional teaching techniques, such as drilling and repetition. Study at university was rather student-centered to some extent. Students were encouraged to engage in class activities to understand what they were learning with less focus on exams.

Her role model was her Form 4 (10th grade) English teacher. That teacher had great faith in her students and believed that through interactive activities, they could build strong foundation in language. She was enthusiastic and motivated her students to work. What Mona liked about her teacher most was that she was smiling all the time and she accepted different student opinions. However, due to the stress of time and exam preparation, there were times when her teacher had to move quickly and skip some of the more engaging activities. At these times, this teacher would focus more on drilling information and testing students' memorization of concepts.

Mona expected the simulated teaching class to give her the chance to bridge the theory-practice gap. She believed that classroom and time management were two aspects difficult to enhance through that course. The PSTs would mainly work with a small number of excellent students and use the technology available all the time. However, Mona found the course to be a good opportunity to practice class planning

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and preparing audiovisual material. Feedback from her supervisor and classmates helped improve her teaching practices.

Apparently, she did not feel confident with her content, pedagogical or technological knowledge. She thought she needed more knowledge of the subject. Moreover, unless she put such knowledge into practice, she would not be able to judge her teaching abilities. In terms of technological knowledge, she expressed fear that browsing the Internet for suitable video or audio material could be exhausting. This would result in trainees like her avoiding to incorporate technology in class. Although they might not exclude technology from teaching in the simulated teaching classes, she was afraid that at the practicum site they might not rely on technology, albeit appealing to students.

Fulla

Fulla was a 23-year old from the Kuala Lumpur suburbs. At first, it was not her intention to take TESL. However, because of her love for English and because she did not like science and mathematics, she decided to enroll in the foundation classes for TESL after high school. After the foundation stage, she had a few choices related to English. TESL was her first choice, since it was the only course that required an interview (there was no interview option if the course was not marked as first choice). She did this so she would have a better chance of obtaining the English courses. TESL candidates had to sit for a personality exam and those who passed would be called for an interview. She did not have much hope of passing the exam and the interview but she tried anyway. Her success at that stage was quite surprising actually, because she was unsure whether her English proficiency qualified her to enroll in the course.

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Fulla’s life as a school student was not different from the others. Her school teachers were exam-oriented and focused on subject content and the syllabus. She thought it was boring in many of her classes and hoped she would find another way to teach her students. She met a couple of teachers who were different and managed to create a more interesting learning atmosphere. The university culture was definitely different, as many lecturers encouraged students to be independent learners. They wanted students to be responsible for learning and own what they gain. Through presentation and collaborative assignments, much of the teaching/learning process was empowering and supportive of students' learning.

Her role model was one of her university lecturers, who first taught how to collaborate on assignments. That lecturer believed students could learn better from each other. Setting goals for group activities made the tasks challenging but enjoyable at the same time. Fulla perceived that her lecturer's teaching style was the best among the others. She hoped to become a teacher who would manage to teach in the same way, and she most feared becoming a burned-out teacher. She thought that considering teaching as a formal duty would kill her creativity for lesson preparation and conducting. She did not wish her relationships to be formal and distant.

For Fulla, content knowledge was sufficient at that stage. Nonetheless, she realized that content knowledge was a life-long learning process and students cannot gain all that knowledge at once. She was not worried about her technological knowledge either. What she already knew would scaffold her teaching practices, especially since technology is part of life today. However, she was concerned about her pedagogical knowledge and felt that learning teaching methods and theories could not be judged until one practiced teaching. She was highly motivated to start

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the micro teaching lessons and wanted to assess herself before going on to field practice.

Fulla expected the simulated teaching course to prepare her for teaching practice. She hoped she could learn as much as possible about being a good English teacher so she could use the knowledge gained at university and apply it to teaching students. She also hoped the course would help her gain confidence to deliver lessons well. However, she was quite scared to face the teaching practice since she felt she was not qualified or ready enough to teach. Still, she had high hopes to improve in all areas in the simulated teaching course. She gained an acceptable level of content knowledge, though she still needed to focus more on English technicalities like grammar and vocabulary. Theories of pedagogy did not make real sense until applied in a real context. Hence, she was unable to assess her pedagogical knowledge. According to the 21st century, she thought her technological knowledge was satisfactory, provided she found resources to use technology at school.

Asmira

Asmira was a 22-year old Malaysian from a rural area of Kuala Selangor. She used to be a shy student who kept class participation to a minimum. She always preferred a quiet environment in class to be able to learn. For this reason, she thought a teacher's first task would be to manage the class and maintain discipline. When she went on to university, no major changes occurred in her personality. Over time, she built good relationship with friends, but she did not have the courage to develop relationships with lecturers. She kept those relationships formal and based on respect. Compared to noisy school classes, university classes were quieter and with much focus on knowledge transmission. Some lecturers encouraged students to present

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ideas or collaborate on projects as they found such environment more learning-conducive.

At first, Asmira did not expect to get into a TESL course because she was from the science stream. She expected to study other science courses for which she had applied. She only applied for TESL because her parents wished she would be a teacher. Another reason why she chose TESL was that she wanted to improve her English. There was no chance to improve her English at home because the family's first language was Malay and they rarely used English.

A role model was her Form 4 (10th grade) English teacher, who saw them as children into adulthood. This teacher encouraged students to engage by being active and energetic herself. Asmira liked how this teacher managed classes and engaged students in activities. Personally, Asmira most liked the games and drilling activities. She liked how this teacher made students laugh about simple and funny things that happened in class.

Asmira hoped that through the simulated teaching class she could improve her teaching skills and learn how to manage her future students. She also hoped to build confidence, because sometimes she was nervous when presenting in class. She believed that in the simulated teaching class, she would transform her theoretical knowledge into practical knowledge and gain more self-confidence.

She hoped to become an informative teacher. At the time of this study, Asmira feared her subject content knowledge might not be sufficient to give her confidence to speak in class. Although she learned teaching/learning theories, trying them out would be the sole judge of her abilities. Though technology was a feature of her era, she was not comfortable to use it, especially at schools where technology

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resources are not always available. Employing technology for teaching, besides power point and video downloads from the internet, was not a focus at university.

Elisha

Elisha was a 22-year old from a suburban area in Terengganu. She used to be a quiet student at school and loved her friends. Her teachers also liked her and viewed her as a model student. Generally, she thought her school teachers focused a lot on delivering much content at the expense of engaging activities such as group work, demonstration, games and songs. They preferred writing, reading and drilling grammar points, for they considered these skills the best to help students pass general exams. Upon moving to university, she discovered other teaching styles. University lecturers preferred that students depend on themselves more. Assignments urged students to cooperate and help each other find answers. However, games and songs were missing in the university environment.

Her father was a secondary school English teacher in Terengganu. He taught her English at home during her school years. He always talked about his students at teatime. Those talks inspired Elisha to become an English teacher. She noticed how people respected her father and that he had a mission in life. She also wanted to have a mission, which would be to teach students and help them attain good English levels. Her role model in teaching was her father. She perceived him as a competent and qualified teacher who never stops searching for knowledge and exchanging experience with others. He used appropriate activities for the students' levels, including drills, games and collective activities.

She hoped to be an innovative teacher who would be loved by all students. She would like to be active and cheerful at school, and to be a facilitator and tolerant

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of students' mistakes. Efficient class management is another skill she wished to improve through practice. One fear is that she might face difficulties in delivering accurate information to students. She seriously considered her ability to prepare suitable activities for classes. However, what she feared most and considered creativity-destructive was burnout. In her opinion, administrative and curriculum burdens, besides tensions and conflicts in the work context can lead to burnout.

She saw the simulated teaching class as a platform to begin teaching in the belief it would strengthen her teaching skills and classroom and time management. She expressed displeasure at having more talks on theory in the simulated teaching class. She was highly motivated to start real practice and preferred her supervisor skip the theory part. She was eager to get feedback from the supervisor and classmates. Nonetheless, she felt underequipped with teaching skills. In terms of subject content knowledge, she believed she needed to improve English grammar, vocabulary and writing technicalities. Meanwhile, her technology knowledge was not directly related to teaching young students but she believed she could enhance such knowledge through experience. In addition, using technology would depend on availability in the context in which she would work.

Data Collection Process

Initial procedures. Prior to attending the simulated teaching class sessions, an approval letter was obtained from the Faculty of Education, UM. In the first session, I introduced myself to the group and explained the focus, objectives, procedures, benefits and significance of the research. They welcomed the study as potentially helpful to become more aware of how PSTs construct PI. Thus, the study findings can serve as useful input to improve PSTs' preparation to become teachers.

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A voluntary participation in the study was sought through a signed consent letter (see appendix B). The consent letter included consent to be interviewed, to participate in discussion groups and to be audio recorded. They accepted to participate in data collection and analysis by offering suggestions and amendments to the process. The participants consented to have the study findings published as long as their names were kept confidential. Therefore, pseudonyms were used to preserve anonymity. Moreover, the schools where they practiced were also not named for confidentiality.

In addition to confidentiality, the participants were promised that their participation would pose no risks to their assessment at university or school. In addition, they were reassured that only the researcher would have access to the data, but not our supervisor who would have to wait until after they had graduated from university in July 2016. Moreover, they were told that participation was voluntary and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time they wished.

The first research phase began with eight participants. But as teaching practice started, the number of participants dropped to five: Suzan, Iman, Muna, Fulla and Asmira. The other three participants expressed their desire to withdraw from the research. It was Ramadan, the holy month when Muslims fast from sunrise to sunset, and the three participants felt it would be difficult to devote time to interviews or discussion groups. They also mentioned they were posted to schools far from their places, which meant spending considerable time on the road. Hence, their desire was respected and they were asked for permission to use their data collected during the simulated teaching classes, to which they had no objection.

While Iman and Asmira were sent to an all-boys secondary school, Muna, Fulla and Suzan were sent to a mixed secondary school. The five participants were followed to the schools to observe their classes and interview them. Though a class

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for Suzan was observed and she participated in one of the group discussions, she was not interviewed individually because she had no time and later, it was Ramadan. When she finally expressed intention to withdraw from the study, the data collection process continued without interviewing her. She gavethe permission to use her data from previous interviews, group discussions and observations. This chapter includes a table (3.4) of the participants, observation data, interview timing and other data, to reflect the data collection process. By providing detailed information about the study and the researcher, it is believed that the researcher gained the participants' trust and built a good rapport with them to facilitate collecting rich data.

Data collection techniques. Two types of data collection for qualitative studies were used in this work: interview and classroom observation (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2008). Interpretive researchers emphasize understanding the world through first-hand experience, truthful reporting and quotations of actual conversations from inside perspectives (Merriam, 2009). These data gathering methods were employed in this work because they are more likely to enable rich and detailed, or thick descriptions of the role of the social context and individual adaptation processes in constructing PSTPI. These methods have the potential to encourage participants to speak freely about their lived experience regarding the phenomenon under study. Data collection was done in two phases and all interviews were audio taped to be transcribed and analyzed.

One of the issues that was encountered before even starting collecting data was the odd position as a researcher and an outsider in the Malaysian context and the context of the TESL department at UM. To engage in the phenomenon and the participants (Merriam, 2009), I joined the participants' CoP that began with them

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attending simulated teaching classes. I attended all their weekly classes (12 classes, 3 hours each).

At the beginning, there seemed to be a kind of formal relationship between the participants and the researcher. I was also older than the participants and I was a foreigner connected to their supervisor. I decided not to start interviews, though my supervisor encouraged this on first meeting. He also encouraged them to participate actively in my study but I did not feel this was sufficient.

Therefore, in the first part of the course (3 weeks) I only took field notes and had informal talks with the participants. It was in the fourth week of the semester when I started the initial interviews to gain a general background about them, their motives for taking TESL and their role models among teachers. The in-depth interviews about learning to teach were delayed until after mid-semester (week 8) to give the participants the opportunity (1) to build an understanding regarding their training and (2) to build mutual trust and understanding with me.

The question was how to respond to the matter of building warm relationships with the participants. I followed Tubey, Rotich, and Bengat's (2015) suggestion of getting into personal contact with the participants over a period of time and built a partnership with them to gain deeper insight, and data richness and depth. Informal talks helped build a rapport, bridge the gap and foster confidence between us. A number of day-to-day activities helped reduce their discomfort with my awkward status as an outsider observing and participating in their classes. Informal talks about our families, life burdens and old funny stories were of great effect.

The participants were also encouraged to address me by my first name and they considered me as an elder sister *("Kakak"* in Malay, as one of the participants expressed). Our talks mainly took place in the cafeteria of the Faculty of Education

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or in class before our supervisor's arrival. I avoided talking to my supervisor/their lecturer in front of them before or after class, so they would not connect us as figures of power. Additionally, I avoided engaging in their assessment process to minimize any power relationships.

I entered the study site aware of my researcher role's reflexivity. Consequently, by adopting the strategies mentioned above, it was possible to build a rapport with the research participants. This rapport encouraged them to be open in sharing experiences, assumptions and beliefs (Merriam, 2009) when time for the interviews came. I abstained from judging their personal stories or experiences and shared my own stories from my experiences as a teacher and educator.

Later, I went to their schools, but due to the time limit and school contexts, I did not attend on a full-time basis. However, I visited the schools 10 times to attend lessons, observe, interview and have group discussions when possible. Participating in their practices and dialogues enabled gathering more insight into the constructed meanings throughout their progress.

Semi-structured interviews. An interview is a conversation between the interviewer and a participant, focusing on topics related to the research study (Merriam, 2009). The interview data represent a reality constructed jointly by the participant/interviewee and the researcher/interviewer. Hence, interview conversations are seen as "accounts" or "versions" that open windows to see the different possible ways of talking about the topic of study (Atkinson & Delamont, 2010, p. 180). Interviewing enabled me to delve deeply into the PSTPI construction issue by understanding PI transformations during the student teaching stage. It also revealed personal and contextual factors that contribute to PI construction and the adaptation processes employed by PSTs in response to their training context. In

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addition, interview data brought to light participants' experiences as K12 and university students, their motives for becoming teachers and their feelings and perceptions about the journey of becoming teachers.

The interviews were semi-structured and ranged between 30 and 60 minutes. The interview questions were broad enough/more open-ended to gain insightful responses without imposing a specific structure upon the interviewees. This type of structure is in line with the constructivist assumption that "individual respondents define the world in unique ways" (Merriam, 2009, p. 90). In line with Merriam's (2009) recommendation, I reviewed the interview questions and weeded out poor ones. Later, the interview questions were piloted with two participants, Huda and Fulla, who helped develop the questions to probe the participants' perceptions and thoughts more easily. Next, in-depth one-to-one interviews were conducted, all of which were in English.

The interviews during the simulated teaching class stage were conducted in the multimedia room where the participants practiced teaching. The room atmosphere was relaxing, with chairs that allowed sitting close to each other as if for a chat rather than a formal conversation. For the school site interviews, I sat alone with a participant in an isolated room. One of the interviews was conducted in the school cafeteria per participant’s (Iman) request. She also asked me to stop recording the interview one day and said, "I want to tell you something. You can use it in your study but I don't want it recorded. I even don't want to hear myself saying it again" (Iman, 27/7/2015). Except for that instance, all interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim. A copy of each interview transcription was sent to the participants (Merriam, 2009) to ensure credibility and validity. The participants were allowed to delete, add or amend their interview transcriptions.

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Table 3.4

Record of Interview Timing and Length During the Simulated Teaching Class Stage

	Interview 1/initial	Interview 2/after 30-minute micro teaching lesson	Interview 3/after 60-minute micro teaching lesson
Noor	10/3/2015 – 35 minutes	28/4/2015 – 30 minutes	12/5/2015 – 40 minutes
Suzan	10/3/2015 – 32 minutes	5/5/2015 – 30 minutes	2/6/2015 – 33 minutes
Iman	17/3/2015 – 40 minutes	5/5/2015 – 32 minutes	12/5/2015 – 32 minutes
Huda	17/3/2015 – 38 minutes	21/4/2015 – 30 minutes	2/6/2015 – 35 minutes
Muna	24/3/2015 – 30 minutes	21/4/2015 – 31 minutes	26/5/2015 – 30 minutes
Fulla	24/3/2015 – 30 minutes	5/5/2015 – 30 minutes	26/5/2015 – 30 minutes
Asmira	31/3/2015 – 33 minutes	28/4/2015 – 30 minutes	19/5/2015 – 31 minutes
Elisha	31/3/2015 – 35 minutes	28/4/2015 – 30 minutes	19/5/2015 – 32 minutes

The initial interview (see appendix C -- guiding questions) was conducted around the middle of the simulated teaching classes (i.e., weeks 4-6). PSTs were invited to talk about themselves and why they chose to study TESL, their expectations from the simulated teaching class, their experience as K12 students, their image of the ideal teacher and what they hoped to become as teachers. They were asked to assess their abilities as teachers on a scale of 10, prior to embarking on practical teaching.

The following interviews (see appendix C) in this stage were done immediately after each micro lesson presented by the participants in front of their classmates. The interviews were audio taped while the lessons were videotaped. This time, the interview would guide the PSTs to reveal their perceptions regarding their role as teachers, their teaching practices and their sources (e.g., previous experience at school, peers, university instructors, etc.). The participants were also probed to talk about difficulties they faced while preparing and teaching the lessons and their feelings while teaching. By the end of this stage, each participant was interviewed 3

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times to reveal the development of their professional identities. At the end of this stage, they were invited again to assess their abilities as teachers on a scale of 10 for comparison.

Table 3.5

Record of Interview Timing and Length During Teaching Practice/Practicum

	Interview 1/initial	Interview 2/after first observation	Interview 3/after second observation
Iman	2/7/2015 – 50 minutes	27/7/2015 – 60 minutes	17/8/2015 – 85 minutes
Asmira	30/6/2015 -- 40 minutes	9/7/2015 – 55 minutes	18/8/2015 – 90 minutes
Fulla	29/6/2015 -- 45 minutes	1/7/2015 – 65 minutes	19/8/2015 – 80 minutes
Muna	29/6/2015 -- 40 minutes	24/7/2015 – 70 minutes	19/8/2015 – 80minutes
Suzan	29/6/2015 -- 40 minutes	Observation of her class only.	_

The practicum/teaching practice stage began on June 23rd. After 2 weeks, I first visited the schools. At the practicum sites, the participants were interviewed at the beginning of the stage to gain insight into how they started training, what classes they were assigned and general adjustment to the school context. I also interviewed them after the observed lessons (two lessons per participant, except for Suzan whose case was explained earlier in the participants' description) and at the end of the stage. This time, their relationships at the school sites and their supervisors were the focus of the interviews. The interview questions also probed the tensions that participants encountered and how they managed.

Any changes reflected in their practice were discussed to understand how they adapted to the new context and how their possible selves evolved and helped their professional identities evolve. They were also invited to comment on their sense of commitment to the teaching profession and their goals in a future career. Finally,

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the scale of 10 was used so they could assess their becoming teachers at the end of the teacher preparation program (practical part).

In addition to the one-on-one interviews, focus group discussion was employed for greater insight and reflection. The collective interviews were conducted regularly during the simulated teaching stage. Getting the participants together in this type of conversation was meant to allow them to speak more freely about the learning to teach experience and their struggles and concerns. I hoped that being in a group would alleviate the pressure of being the only one who did not know something.

This method was piloted by conducting a group discussion after each micro teaching lesson, which was followed by individual interviews with the participants. It seemed the participants' ideas would dry up early in the individual interviews. On the contrary, after a group discussion, the individual interviews were deeper and resulted in more ideas and understanding. Despite the time required to devote to group discussions, I decided to conduct them especially since the participants requested this.

The goal of the first group discussion was to learn more about their reasons to become teachers, previous experiences as K12 students, and expectations from their simulated teaching class and practicum. The next group discussion represented reflections on the microteaching lessons. They were asked, "What did you think about your classmate's lesson today?", "What strong points did you see in that lesson?", "What parts need to be developed or reconsidered?" and "What did you learn today from her class? How would this benefit you?"

Another group discussion was held at the end of the simulated teaching classes. The goal of this final group discussion was to allow reflection on the

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progress in constructing a PI and the struggles they still faced. They were also encouraged to talk about concerns regarding their future practice at school and their ability to teach. They were invited to assess themselves as teachers. At the practicum sites, fewer group discussions were held (one discussion per school). The first individual interviews were preceded by a group discussion of the school context. However, post-observation conferences were individual.

The participants were also encouraged to write more elaborate, reflective notes to provide greater understanding of their development. Upon examining these reflective notes in the preparation notebooks, it seemed the participants did not actually understand what reflective notes meant. They only wrote about what they had achieved in their lesson plans and what remained for the next class. Hence, these were excluded from the dada sources.

Informal interviews. Informal interviews were another source of data. These interviews were done occasionally, as I had to understand the general educational and social contexts in Malaysia. For example, I had a very long chat (about an hour and a half) with Huda on the difference between Terengganu, where she comes from, and Kuala Lumpur from political and economic perspectives. She also talked about her illness, which diminished her chance of attending university.

These informal interviews with Huda and others with Muna, Fulla and Elisha took place after the simulated teaching classes ended, while they were helping save the recorded micro teaching lesson films on my external drive. Other informal interviews were done in the cafeteria at lunch after the simulated teaching classes. Sometimes PSTs from a different group would join the talk. Such talks helped achieve two things at the same time: building rapport with the PSTs and

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understanding the context through their eyes. Reading about the context was abstract while hearing about it gave it another dimension -- that of a lived experience.

Sometimes, PSTs and I would arrive to class earlier. While waiting for the supervisor to arrive, we would talk about their preparation for the class, the materials prepared for the lesson and their lesson plans. I welcomed those opportunities and stressed that I was not there to evaluate them. They said they wanted to benefit from my experience as an ex-teacher and a teacher educator. The same thing happened during the practicum while walking towards class, when we would talk more about the school context. For instance, Iman showed me the physical condition of the school. She indicated that classes were quite open and with no windows. Therefore, anyone passing by a class could disturb. When boys passed by friends' classes, they would talk to each other regardless of whether the teacher was there or not. Iman said she noticed this distraction too when she observed her mentor's class.

This makes it hard for teachers to control the students, not only the ones inside. Iman seemingly wished to convey a message of why she had class management problems. On the way from her class to the staff room, she also indicated that having two different recess times distracts students in class, as those who are on recess roam around noisily. Thus, she felt it is a harsh context for a PST to practice in.

Other informal interviews were held with some school staff. For example, I informally interviewed the school principals the first time I attended the schools. They talked about the school policy and their expectations of PSTs. I also informally talked to mentor teachers who thought I was there to supervise the PSTs. I assured them I was only there to collect data and it was not my job to assess or formally

evaluate the PSTs. During our meetings, the mentors talked about administrative burdens, the training courses they undertook and their teaching philosophies.

The mentors also talked about supervising the trainees. Generally, they would allow the trainees to attend a class from which the mentors would learn. Then they allowed the PSTs to teach classes independently while the mentors were busy with administrative work and their own training. They visited a PST twice for evaluation purposes. The mentors felt it was the PSTs' responsibility to educate themselves about how to teach. The mentors hoped their PSTs would take more initiative and learn from each other, prepare their educational aids and participate actively in the school's extracurricular activities.

Unfortunately, it was not possible to have such informal talks with the students, as their English was not good enough. Generally, these informal talks provided an opportunity to add to my understanding of the participants' backgrounds, thoughts, feelings and factors affecting their TI construction.

Observation. For triangulation, Merriam (2009) suggested using observation to support the interviews. Izadinia (2013) noted that the majority of studies reviewed did not apply observation as a data collection tool. Those studies relied mainly on PSTs' perceptions reported in reflective journals and interviews to trace changes in PI. For Wenger (1998), observing what teachers practice can reveal who they are. Merriam contended that observation can stand out as an informative data collection technique for three main reasons. First, observation can help the researcher collect firsthand data about participants' behaviors and actions that go unnoticed in a given context. With such firsthand data, the observer can better understand the context as triangulated themes emerge.

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Additionally, observation data can be informative of the interview topics. The researcher may observe the participants (here PSTs) as they are working in their practice setting, and later interview and ask them what they are thinking regarding a specific behavior. Finally, the participants may feel reluctant to share information, feelings or understanding about some topics, such as disputes between PSTs and the supervisor, mentor teachers or others in their training context. In such cases, observation is a more welcome technique.

In the simulated teaching classes, I was a 'participant as observer' (Creswell, 2009). Consequently, I established rapport and built mutual confidence by showing interest in activities and offering help on occasion (Merriam, 2009). While participating with PSTs on their journey of learning to teach I was observing. The reason I became an observer at the schools was to avoid disrupting the in-class and outside-class activities (Merriam, 2009).

Observation during the simulated teaching classes served to gather field notes on the interrelationships among individuals and the effect on their development. I observed how PSTs moved from a peripheral position to the center of their CoP and how this reflected real changes in their identities. For PSTs' teaching skills, I utilized the university evaluation sheet as observation criteria (see appendix D) during microteaching and later at the practicum sites.

Then I observed the participants as they were teaching at school. I obtained a letter from the Faculty of Education and send it to the school administration, which allowed me to attend classes. I met the principal of each school and explained the study, goals and procedures. The principals of the two schools welcomed me and did not object to my presence in their schools at any time. I also asked permission to talk informally to the mentors or any other school staff in case it was necessary, and they

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accepted. There was a point when public schools resented researchers; however, I found they felt very encouraged to have research conducted at their sites. The schools considered it a privilege that would benefit training at public schools.

The principals noticed I reported to the office every time I attended their schools, and they asked me not to and said I could go directly to the participants' rooms. Honestly, this attitude was liberating because I could go to school any time. It was only necessary to check that the participants were not absent on a given day or there were no extracurricular activities for which classes may be canceled. For example, because it was Ramadan students would attend a religious session in the mornings. Consequently, the participants requested that I attend midday classes and not the early morning ones.

The classes I attended were two successive periods of 80 minutes. The participants believed that plenty of time would allow them to do a number of student-centered activities, such as group work and projects. They asked me to call them prior to my attendance, so I had to schedule my observations to suit their timing and extracurricular school activities. In addition, I had to choose days and classes when the participants had free time after class so I could conduct a post-class interview.

On observation days, the participants would pass me their lesson plans to check. When observing the classes, I sat quietly at the back so as not to distract the students' attention. The students were welcoming and smiling, and would stand up as I entered the class and again when the class ended and I was preparing to leave. I asked them not to do so, but apparently my request was odd and contradicted Malaysian etiquette.

Even when I tried to leave the class quickly, the study participants would smile and reassure me that it was normal for students to kiss their seniors' hands for

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example. It also happened that students lined up in two lines. The female line would shake and kiss my hand and their teacher's (participant's) hand. The males would place their hands on their hearts and bow a little. I had to respect that, smile and praise their good behavior. I also looked at the work of students who finished activities in class.

At the same time, I took notes of the teaching activities and student interactions. I focused on how the teacher led the class and managed any recurring discipline problems. Though I tried to avoid playing the role of a mentor or supervisor in the post-observation conferences, the participants were eager that I help them reflect on the lessons. They wanted my suggestions on how they could develop lesson activities. That actually made the post-observation interview last more than the hour scheduled earlier. My field notes helped validate the data collected from the interviews. My observation notes served as a starting point in the following interviews. I compared the observation notes from phase one and phase two to reveal developments in the participants' identities and if they gained more confidence in themselves as teachers. My observation and experience as an English supervisor helped check on the PSTs' claimed identities and professional development.

Though it is recommended to have predetermined variables as a focus of observation, Sanjek (1991) argued that a researcher ought to approach the field with an open-minded perspective. Thus, I needed to note every aspect in the context of this study and not take anything for granted. What my participants said or did reflected their interpretation and understanding of their context or the world. Thus, I gained from descriptions of the phenomenon.

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Table 3.6

Summary of Data Collection Techniques

Data collection			
Phase 1	Simulated teaching classes at university	Interview -- semi-structured	1. Initial interview 2. After a 30-minute lesson. 3. After a 60-minute lesson.
		Observation	1. Throughout the simulated teaching classes.
Phase 2	Practicum at public schools	Interview -- semi-structured	1. During the third week 2. Mid-semester after observing a class 3. End of teaching practice after observing a second class.
		Observation	1. Observing a class in the middle of teaching practicum. 2. Observing another class at the end of practicum

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Data Analysis

It is recommended to start the process of data analysis concurrently with data collection. Preliminary analysis enables the researcher to reflect on the procedures and data collected. Self-reflection can foster understanding and deriving the meanings of emergent themes. The researcher can then decide on the next steps, other people to approach, different questions to ask, techniques to use and various themes to examine (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Cohen et al., 2000; Creswell, 2009; Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2008). With ongoing analysis, researchers can avoid unfocused and repetitious data. However, "analysis becomes more intensive as the study progresses and once all the data are in," according to Merriam (2009, p. 169).

Grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin (1990) devised a data analysis method which is inductive and comparative in nature. The constant comparative

method is used to develop the grounded theory. Merriam (2009) and Saldana (2009) recommended using it throughout a qualitative research even when the intention is not to build a grounded theory. Generally, Creswell (2009) and Merriam (2009) proposed an interactive way of analyzing data starting with preparing data for analysis and ending with interpreting the meanings of emergent themes.

The current study entails three major steps in data analysis: open coding, focused coding and theoretical or selective coding. Creswell (2009) suggested reading all data to gain a general understanding and insight. Then the researcher should read to identify segments or codes (Merriam, 2009) in data that are related to the research questions. This is called open coding, as the researcher is expansive and open to anything the data may reflect. The next step is focused coding, where the descriptive codes are examined and then grouped based on the researcher's interpretation and reflection. Comparing these segments helps identify any recurring regularities and develop categories (Merriam, 2009) and/or themes (Creswell, 2009) within each sub-case and across the sub-cases in this work. The categories "are abstractions derived from the data, not the data themselves" (Merriam, 2009, p. 181). The last analysis step entailed utilizing theoretical coding or selective coding to recognize central themes in data. The themes are interpretable and meaningful away from the data from which they are driven.

Initial data analysis. Three versions of recorded data were kept to prevent data loss: one on my laptop, one on my Google One drive and the third copy on an external hard disk. Within the first two days after recording each interview, the transcription process took place. I listened to each recording while looking at my observation notes to make sense of both types of data. I prepared a file of my field

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notes and observation data. Later, I compared emerging themes from the interviews and observation data on the same events.

According to Merriam (2009) suggestions, data analysis started with a preliminary field analysis. The first sets of data were read, notes were made and comments, reflections and tentative themes were written. The second set of data were compared with the first and so on, progressing towards building a set of themes. The participants were asked to revise the first set of themes and make any amendments.

One of the researcher's peers who was doing her PhD at Nilai University was also involved in the data analysis process. The study goals and procedures were explained and after that she was handed a copy of the initial data sets to code independently. Subsequently, the peer and the researcher met for discussion to agree on themes. They remained in contact as we reviewed the coding process systematically until the final themes emerged. Consistent with a constructivist approach, this informal analysis triangulation fostered further reflexivity and deeper questioning of data.

The initial coding of all transcripts produced a large number of codes, which denoted complex data coding and interpretation. It also reflected the complexity of PSTPI construction with all the interfering and overlapping factors. Some codes contained just a single segment of data, while others contained multiple segments.

The greater the number of references within a single code, the more dense that code would be. While the density of a code is not necessarily an indication of its importance to the research objective (Saldana, 2009), dense codes may highlight ideas, actions, or processes that are frequent in the data. Following Creswell's (2009) recommendations, data were analyzed to locate three types of codes. These codes were either common in previous literature (e.g., reasons to become teachers),

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surprising or unanticipated codes (e.g., absence of mentors from PSTs' classes) or unusual codes (e.g., PSTs' passivity to keep harmonious relationships). Examples of the initial codes and data segments that each represents are given in the following sections.

Intensive data analysis. Intensive analysis started upon finishing to collect data pertaining to the research purpose and questions. The participants were also of great help during the process and their reflections and suggestions made me reconsider the analysis lenses. My supervisor was not involved in this data analysis stage, as I promised the participants this would not happen until they graduated in June 2016. Eventually, he revised the analysis process and made comments later in September 2016.

The intensive data analysis comprised two cycles as indicated in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7

Two Cycles of Data Analysis: Categories and Properties

1. First cycle	In vivo coding	Participants' words/interview data
	Emotion coding	Interview data
	Descriptive	All data sources (interviews/observations/memos/ documents
2. Second cycle	Focused coding	Developing categories/themes
	Theoretical coding/selective coding	Interconnecting categories to explicate a story

First Cycle – Vertical. I read all data together to get a sense of them. With the research questions and theoretical framework in mind, the open coding process began. The data analysis was examined vertically and horizontally. First, I read the interview and observation data for each participant separately to grasp the themes.

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Memos of my reflections connecting the field notes with the interview were recorded. For example, I wrote a memo about one participant, Iman, whose attitude was mentioned in the interview discussion along with the request not to record her talking about her relationship with her mentor. That request immediately triggered the idea of power imbalance in my field notes. The memo explained my understanding of what Iman said explicitly on the recording and the contradiction she made off the recording.

To add to the accountability and depth of the findings, in vivo coding was used (i.e., using the participants' words). Emotion coding was also done later, because in examining the data, several parts reflected the participants' feelings, such as confused, satisfied, anxious, tense, or excited about their experiences. Descriptive coding was also applied, which is suitable to studies with different data sources. Descriptive coding summarizes the topic of a passage in a word or short phrase.

While the first two highlight the participant's voice and emotions, the second reflects the understanding of the participant and of the interviewing, observing researcher. Participants express thoughts and feelings but their actions may not harmonize with what they claimed (Saldana, 2009). Hence, observing actions can help assess claims. The following sections provide concrete examples from the data analysis process via three coding/analytic lenses: in-vivo, emotional and descriptive.

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Table 3.8

In-vivo Coding Examples

Interview log	Coding
Noor: For me, .. em…we haven't started the practice yet. But what concerns me at the school itself… I'm worried about the (1)students' proficiency level at school.. because if they are smarter than me ….(class laughs quietly).. in term of grammar.. you know.. I find grammar difficult for me. I'm (2) afraid if students ask me anything in grammar… you know what is that why we use that.. I can't answer them. That's my major concern	(1) "STUDENTS' PROFICIENCY LEVEL" (2) "AFRAID"
Researcher: During the lesson you've just done today, what role did you play today as a teacher? Suzan:: I was as (1) a friend to them. I am a teacher but I'm also a friend to them where I can talk to them and laugh with them … you know like (2) sharing their experiences (3) talk about their life… where have they travelled… where they have been… what they do when they travel.	(1) "A FRIEND" (2) "SHARING THEIR EXPERIENCES" (3) "TALK ABOUT THEIR LIFE"
Asmira: Basically here because (1) all are boys, (2) I needed first 5-10 minutes to settle them down after changing the periods. It was (3)hard FOR me to complete the lesson, all the activities I set.	(1) "ALL ARE BOYS" (2) "I NEEDED FIRST 5-10 MINUTES TO SETTLE THEM DOWN" (3) "HARD FOR ME TO COMPLETE THE LESSON"
Researcher: What about you, how do you feel now while you're teaching? Muna: I feel (1) better now, (2) more prepared than the previous lesson. I have enough time to plan. So I have (3) planned an interesting lesson for them. Researcher: What helped you become better? Muna: I don't know. I (4) got used to the school environment and to the teaching practice with time and I don't feel really scared any more or a lot of pressure anymore. (5)My colleague trainees, (6)my mentor and (7)my cousin who is an EFL teacher contributed to my improvement in teaching.	(1) "BETTER NOW" (2) "MORE PREPARED" (3) "PLANNED AN INTERESTING LESSON" (4) "GOT USED TO THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND TO THE TEACHING PRACTICE WITH TIME " (5) "MY COLLEAGUE TRAINEES" (6) "MY MENTOR" (7) "MY COUSIN WHO IS AN EFL TEACHER"

Note. Saldana recommends that all in-vivo codes be placed in quotation marks to recognize them as the participants' words.

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Table 3.9

Emotion Coding Examples

Interview log	Coding
Researcher: How do you find the training environment here? Muna: It's [1]tiring. For me it's tiring because we have mostly two classes with two periods for each class a day. That's a total of 4 periods a day. [2]I have to prepare two lesson plans and at school we have many relief classes, so don't have much time. Researcher: How many relief classes do you have? Muna: 3 or 4 per day. We [3] have to rush here and there. After we finish our class we have to go to the relief class, so we don't have much time to prepare the lesson at school. Then we have to continue preparing at college and go to sleep at 2 or 3 am. [4] So the next day we [5] feel very tired.	[1] "TIRING" [2] OVERWHELMED [3] BUSY [4] DISSATISSFIED [5] "FEEL VERY TIRED"
Researcher: So far can you describe your attitude to teaching as positive? Muna: [1]I like teaching, I really like it. Because when you get response from students, I feel very [2] satisfied and excited. And also when I ask them to do something I found that they have very creative ways of thinking, they have good ideas, they behave well.	[1] EXCITED ABOUT TEACHING [2] "SATISFIED AND EXCITED"
Iman: I was [1] nervous because I didn't know what to expect from them. I just know from what she told me on that first day because [2] I don't know how they behave, how they act when the teacher is there. That's why I was so [3] nervous.	[1] "NERVOUS" [2] UNCERTAIN [3] "NERVOUS"

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Table 3.10

Descriptive Coding Examples

Interview log	Coding
Iman: My mentor attended one class for me and [(1)] she commented on some parts of my lesson when for instance when I was conducting the lesson, there were some parts that [(1.1)]I was focusing on certain students. She took notice of that I should focus on others and encourage them. She was sitting at the back looking at me. I focused on those students who were the most active. They called me louder and wanted to answer all the time. Also she talked about my [(1.2)]voice projection. It wasn't audible for some parts of the class. Especially during the second rest time, my voice is difficult to hear. [(2)]When she taught the class, [(2.1)]her voice was clear because when I was observing her class, I was sitting at the back and it was easy to hear hers, she moved around so much, [(2.2)]she got everyone's attention I have to learn not to stay in one spot and to [(2.3)]go around. I do this sometimes but when I am at the back, the boys in the front can't hear me.	[(1)] Mentor's feedback about negative points [(1.1)] CLASS MANAGEMENT ISSUE [(1.2)] "VOICE PROJECTION" [(2)] Mentor as a good model (forming possible selves) [(2.1)] "VOICE CLEAR/CONFIDENT" [(2.2)] "GOT EVERYONE'S ATTENTION" [(2.3)] "GO AROUND"
Suzan: I had form 2 after break yesterday, [(1)] for Ramadan they had a session on religion for all Muslim students and they released them quite late, when the students eventually came into the class it was 20 minutes late. R: How did you find that? Suzan: [(2)] I don't know why they don't keep on time. I mean if they are supposed to do it during the break time, then just do it until the end of it. That's all. R: Did you find this shocking or surprising? Suzan: [(3)] No, not shocking because they used to do this act in my school and as students, we were happy because we didn't have to go to the class but as teachers, we don't like it because you have a plan to execute but we can't.	[(1)] SCHOOL CONTEXT CULTURE/ ROUTINE [(2)] DISSATISFIED WITH SCHOOL ROUTINE [(3)] PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE (HELPED HER ADAPT)

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Second cycle – Horizontal. After the first data coding cycle (i.e., vertical analysis), the second cycle was undertaken to compare emerging themes horizontally in participants' data. The second analysis cycle followed the focused coding method to pull the codes together and develop major themes within one sub-case and through the sub-cases. Saldana (2009) recommended using focused coding to classify the most significant and frequent prior codes under broader conceptual categories to facilitate theoretical development.

Focused or selective coding requires the researcher to decide which initial codes can represent the best analytic sense (Charmaz, 2006 cited in Saldana, 2009). Focused coding therefore generates analytic categories, which act as abstract umbrella concepts encompassing multiple initial codes. In other words, the lists of initial in-vivo, descriptive and emotion codes were analyzed and higher categories into which initial codes could fit were identified. Below is an example of an emerging category from initial coding.

Table 0.11 *Example of Synthesis across Sub-cases/Pattern Coding*

Participant	Motives to become ESL teachers	Sub-category	Category
Noor	1. Family encouragement 2. Good proficiency level since school.	1. Fallback choice 2. Family influence	Reasons to become ESL teachers.
Suzan	1. Secondary school grades 2. Family		
Iman	1. Family pressure 2. School grades left not many choices		
Huda	1. Inability to pursue ambition to be a doctor 2. Encouraged by secondary school English teacher 3. Welcomed by parents and encouraged		

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Muna	**1. Cousin is an ESL teacher** **2. Ambition to become a teacher**
Fulla	1. TESL was not the first intention 2. Loved English generally 3. Got sufficient scores to be offered a TESL degree
Asmira	1. Family wish. 2. Destiny despite no passion for English 3. Second choice
Elisha	1. Father was an English teacher. 2. Family talks about students and teaching inspired her.

The categorization process was challenging. It was necessary to remain aware of not forcing data into certain categories, because forcing codes into existing categories would distort the overall analysis quality. Merriam (2009) agreed with Creswell (2009) that qualitative researchers need to filter and group data into 25-30 categories, which are then further distilled into 5 or 6 main categories. Throughout the categorization process, the initial codes were revisited to ensure the categories were appropriate and representative.

Consequently, new categories were created, others were discarded and others were merged and changed, so that all relevant initial codes fit well. Eventually, the focused coding process of producing conceptual categories compressed the existing and emerging initial codes into 20 categories. The process of focused coding deepened the data analysis process, resulting in conceptual categories and other smaller subcategories. The list below is an example of focused codes. The next challenge was how to relate these categories to each other to explicate the story.

Theoretical Coding

The last stage of data analysis entailed theoretical/selective coding analysis. The aim was to find the central themes of the study. All categories and subcategories were systematically connected with the central theme; explicating a story is a typical presentation of central themes (Saldana, 2009). During the selective coding process, the intent was to recognize core categories that I felt were central to understanding the phenomenon of ESL PSTI construction from Malaysian PSTs' perspectives. Combined, the core categories included the categories generated during focused coding and links between them were exposed. Tight core categories were generated, which were later merged into three core categories.

1) PI transformation
2) Personal factors
3) Contextual factors
4) Social relationships
5) Seeking support
6) Confidence crisis
7) Identity development
8) Adaptation processes

These categories were merged into three major categories that answer the research questions:

1. PI transformation
2. Personal and contextual factors
3. Adaptation processes

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Saldana (2009) recommended writing analytical memos throughout the data analysis process. Hence, memos of my reflections connecting field notes with the interview were recorded and considered during analysis. An example is the incident mentioned earlier about Iman who wished not to record her opinion of the relationship with her mentor. My memo explains my understanding of what Iman said explicitly on the recording and the contradiction she made off the recording. This is a systematic way of capturing ideas in the process. The coding process can be stopped once something comes to mind about the coding and the memo can be written immediately.

If the memo is not written immediately, it is possible to forget about it while proceeding with the coding process. This may result in losing insightful data connections. Some of the analytical memos were deep and expressive enough to use in the final written report. An example of a memo on the impact of teachers' practices on their students' learning is provided below.

> Generally, PSTs do not believe in their abilities to teach. They think they still need to be exposed to plenty of practice before they decide they are ready. They cannot reveal such a passion towards teaching due to their inability to assess their teaching skills. They desperately express their need for real practice to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Their attitudes foster the importance of a teacher preparation program in nurturing new teachers. If teaching is to be treated as a profession, then practice should be a simultaneous part with theory, and delaying practice until students build up their theoretical knowledge does not necessarily pave the way to good practice. (A memo on the role of experiential knowledge in fostering PSTs' sense of efficacy as teachers, 7/4/2015).

Ethical Issues

Part of my concern with being a researcher in a foreign country was that I would be seen as an outsider by the research participants. Thus, formal relationships may be established. Not being a familiar face (and from a different age group) could affect the quality and quantity of data offered in the study field. One of the

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procedures to overcome such limitation resulting from my position was to follow a number of ethical aspects, which include participants' protection, data sharing, and obtaining informed consent and access permission. In this study, I took thorough practical steps to ensure decent ethical practices. The steps were presented in "Data Collection Techniques" and are introduced in the next paragraphs again.

Merriam (2009) recommended working on two levels to ensure good ethical practices. First, pre-study ethical aspects had to be taken into account. I verbally introduced the participants to this study, aims, procedures and expected outcomes. I explained how this study would benefit them as PSTs and as future teachers. Talking about their experiences would help them understand the effect of the context and others on PI construction. Such talks and reflections would help them appreciate their practices and decision-making in teaching. I also stressed using pseudonyms instead of real names. Although the name of the university was retained, the public schools' names were concealed.

The participants in the study were invited to sign an informed consent letter (see appendix B) that explained the purpose of the study, nature, length, and procedures as well as the participants' role. They had the right to withdraw whenever they wanted without being threatened or subject to any pressure. The consent letter mentioned participation in semi-structured interviews, observations and audio taping for study purposes only. It was guaranteed their data would not be shared with others whom they considered a threat, such as supervisors, mentor teachers, school principals or the university.

While collecting data I remained sensitive to the participants but not as a judge or therapist, as Patton (2002, p. 405) recommended, so as not to affect them. I built reciprocity relationships with the participants by engaging them in data

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collection and analysis. By checking the accuracy of information and interpretation with them, it was ensured that the representations of their experiences in this study would reflect their real experiences. The voices of all participants were included in the final report, even of those who represented conflicting interpretations.

At the university level, this thesis needed approval from the Faculty of Education. I received access letters (Creswell, 2009) to allow me to attend the simulated teaching classes. I got another access letter to bring to the schools where I observed the participants. I contacted the public schools who assured that I did not need any further formal letters from the Ministry of Education or Education Department in the area to be allowed to work at the schools.

Second, in-field ethical concerns related to matters that arose while observing or interviewing participants were dealt with on the spot. When the time came to work at the schools, I minimized disturbances by timing my visits. Moreover, I understood any changes that could prevent data collection on a given day. For example, if I went to a school and extracurricular activities were going on, I took the chance to have informal talks with one of the mentors, after which I left the school.

Trustworthiness, Transferability and Dependability

To improve the trustworthiness of this study, a number of strategies were adopted, as recommended by Merriam (2009), Creswell (2009) and Baxter and Jack (2008): credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility. This strategy includes triangulation, grand member checks, rich and thick descriptions, prolonged engagement and peer debriefing. Triangulation included different sources (8 PSTs) and tools (interview and observation) for collecting data. The interviews were the main source of data to comprehend PSTs'

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processes of learning to teach. What they said was checked against what I observed during the university classes and later on at the school sites.

Various scholars debate the idea of triangulation and have extended it to a 'crystallization' perspective (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 5; Merriam, 2009, p. 216). They consider the postmodern image of a crystal rather than a triangle as central to a qualitative inquiry. Inviting people to share their views on the same topic in the same context can display "multiple, refracted realities simultaneously." I did not expect the participants to tell the same story; hence, my job was to present their views as they unfolded throughout this research journey. In line with the interpretive-constructivist perspective, triangulation remains "a principal strategy to ensure validity and reliability" (Merriam, 2009, p. 216) in this study.

Grand member checking helped check with the participants whether I captured their perceptions correctly. The participants were given the chance to check the emerging themes and case analysis. Accordingly, follow-up meetings were conducted to allow them to comment on the findings.

Rich and thick data descriptions were provided, including on the context, participants, data collection procedures and decisions taken to proceed with data collection. This can help readers understand the process better and compare their own contexts for transferability issues.

For prolonged engagement, I spent long enough building a rapport with the participants to reach a saturation point in data collection. I spent 7 months collecting data (4 at the university and 3 at the schools), which were extended to 10 months to check emerging themes and for analysis. Such engagement supported the rich and thick description of the data collection process and also helped look for data that support alternative explanations. For example, at a school site, I apparently needed to

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understand the mentors' administrative burdens and training courses. I also talked to the principal about general educational policies underlining training PSTs.

In terms of the researcher's position**,** my assumptions, biases and experiences were made clear earlier in this chapter. This way, the reader can understand how my expectations and assumptions influenced conducting the study and drawing conclusions.

For peer debriefing, I invited another PhD candidate who was in the last PhD stages at Nilai University. She is a university lecturer who was working with in-service EFL Libyan teachers in her study. She independently coded the first interviews and observation data. We regularly discussed my study procedures, the analysis process and the emerging themes.

Transferability. The purpose of a small-scale qualitative research is to gain in-depth understanding of the case, and not to find what is generally true to many. Merriam (2009, p. 225) suggested using "the notion of extrapolating rather than making generalizations." Modest extrapolations (speculations), as per Patton (2002), can help recognize the applicability of findings to similar but not identical situations and conditions. The heavy description of the present case study regarding the two phases may enable the reader to transfer the study ideas (data collection process, theoretical orientation, findings) to their similar but not identical contexts. This reflects the notion of 'concrete universals' (Merriam, 2009, p. 225) or 'working hypothesis' (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 111), which are "arrived at by studying a specific case in great detail. Then we can compare it to other cases studied in equally great detail" (Ericson, 1986, p. 130 cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 225). Thus, what is learned in particular situations, can be transferred or generalized to similar situations.

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Dependability. A traditional understanding of reliability as the ability to replicate the study findings is not applicable in qualitative research, since human behavior is changing. Different interpretations could be derived for the same data if different researchers with varying perspectives handle them. However, the strategies used in this study for credibility can help make the study reliable. Dependability refers to the extent to which the research process is consistent over time (Merriam, 2009). Dependability was realized in this study by repeating the same procedures of data collection and analysis across all cases. For example, interview prompts and observation protocols were employed to cover the same major topics in each sub-case. In addition, the researcher's reflexivity can strengthen the dependability of the study. I kept an audit trail that explains how I arrived at the findings, starting with data collection, categories, data themes, problems encountered and other decisions made through the research journey. The audit trail was available to my supervisor for review as necessary.

Confirmability. The previous strategies can lead to realizing study confirmability. Others can verify, confirm or validate that the study conclusions are based on the participants' experiences and data they provided rather than the researcher's intuition or own biases and agenda.

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Chapter Summary

This chapter explained the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach from ontological and epistemological perspectives. It also explained the case study design, which is situated within the constructivist paradigm. Next, I reflected on my position as a researcher and explained how that might influence conducting the study. This was followed by a thorough description of the settings and the participants.

The procedures of gaining access to the research sites and building rapport with the participants were reported. Interviews and observations were utilized to collect data on two sites: UM and two public schools. The chapter then described how the main principles of the constructivist grounded theory informed the data analysis process. Initial coding, focused coding, selective or theoretical coding and analytical memos were utilized to build the central study themes. Finally, the criteria used in this study to ensure trustworthiness and ethical considerations were presented.

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CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter aims to present the study findings in answer to the research questions that guided this investigation. The overarching question in this study was:

How do ESL pre-service teachers (PSTs) develop professional identities (PI) through simulated teaching and practicum in their pre-service community of practice (CoP), when understood with reference to the context and adaptation processes?

The sub-questions were:

RQ1- What professional identity (PI) shifts do pre-service teachers (PSTs) experience during their student teaching practice (i.e., simulated teaching classes and teaching practicum stage)?

RQ 2- What personal and/or interpersonal factors contributed to pre-service teachers' professional identity (PSTPI) construction?

RQ3 - How did pre-service teachers (PSTs) employ adaptation strategies to develop their professional identity (PI)?

To answer these questions, two data collection techniques were employed: interviews and observation. The result presentation began with describing the different transformations that PSTs experienced during teaching practice. Then the findings pertaining to personal and social factors that either facilitated or hindered PI emergence were presented. The factors were connected with each different shift in PI. Next, the data demonstrated how PSTs employed and altered their adaptation

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strategies in their training context to mitigate challenges encountered, thus enabling PI emergence.

RQ1- What professional identity (PI) shifts do pre-service teachers (PSTs) experience during their student teaching practice (i.e., simulated teaching classes and teaching practicum stage)?

PI Shifts

The study findings revealed that PSTs experienced four PI shifts in their teaching practice stage: low PI, high PI, PI crisis and PI awareness.

Low PI. Low PI was the first tentative version of professional identity that PSTs constructed as they set out on their teaching practice journey with the simulated teaching class. The participants thought their knowledge was too abstract with a lack of experience. They felt unconfident in their English proficiency and pedagogical skills. They also lacked experience against which they could interpret their identity.

Being only theoretical. At the beginning of the PI construction journey, the PSTs had a low sense of PI because their knowledge of teaching was still abstract, lacking real experience. The PSTs came into the student teaching stage equipped with subject content and pedagogical theoretical knowledge gained during their first three years at university. The problem was that they had no real experience with their theoretical/abstract knowledge. For example, Noor revealed she gained theoretical knowledge about language and education:

> I learnt about teaching and learning methods. I took courses on language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening. We also had classes on literature and linguistics. So basically, our knowledge is theoretical; abstract about language and how to teach language (Mar 2015).

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Likewise, Iman believed that as a learner she learnt how to use language. She also gained theoretical knowledge about TESL:

> So far, we have learnt language. We were student-learners doing our preparation for our classes with our lecturers and doing our assignments. We used language to express our thoughts. But teaching knowledge is only theoretical (Mar 2015).

Muna also said that university equipped her with theoretical knowledge, "I can tell you the theories about teaching and learning. I know a lot of information about that. I learnt a lot during my university years about TESL theories" (Mar 2015).

In agreement with her classmates, Huda thought that university enabled her to gain wide theoretical knowledge regarding English language and teaching English:

> I admit that when I joined UM, my English was shallow, only for survival purposes. During my journey at university, I gained new vocabulary and structures to use when communicating in English. Writing different types of essays and short papers was another skill that I developed. More importantly, I developed my theoretical knowledge pertaining to the learning/teaching process. The psychological and cognitive traits of learners, their emotional and physical needs and the different ways of engaging them were also emphasized in our program. I think all the TESL theories we learned about at UM will benefit us, but I can't tell how I will manifest them in practice (Mar 2015).

The participants believed that a PI should involve practical and experiential components in addition to the theoretical part. Suzan did not think that PI was fully gained yet:

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> When we talk about something professional, I understand that we talk about practice not only theory. How can I donate any PI to myself while my foundations are still theoretical? I have the theoretical basis but the practical one is something I can't claim to have even though I have got exposed to many teacher's roles while studying at school. (Mar 2015).

Similarly, Elisha believed that without the practical component, she could not refer to herself as a teacher:

> The practical part in teaching is crucial for us as PSTs. We need to support our abstract knowledge with the experiential knowledge to complete the picture. The teacher should know about the subject content and teaching methods and how to deliver subject content knowledge inside the class. That is why I can't say that I'm a teacher yet. Seeing the others teaching doesn't mean that I myself can teach (Mar 2015).

Noor's following comment is in line with the previous idea, as she believed that teaching experience is critical to becoming a teacher,

> "We may know about the language, grammatical rules and vocabulary to use in context. This is something that many people may know. What distinguishes a teacher from the others is not only subject content knowledge but also his/her ability to deliver knowledge to learners" (Mar 2015).

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In the same vein, Huda found that she lacked the experiential part from her teaching basis:

> I imagine any teacher as a person in action. Theoretical knowledge is crucial to underlie the basis of any profession. However, we need to experience the application of those theories to accomplish a more comprehensive understanding of our professional identity. Otherwise, we will only be learners of English… I mean not teachers. Similar to my classmates, I can't call myself a teacher right now. I'm still a student or a learner who is not different from those who learn at secondary school. We need to experience teaching to imagine ourselves as ESL teachers (Mar 2015.

Not confident about English Proficiency and Pedagogical Skills. In the simulated teaching stage, the PSTs approached microteaching with low self-confidence as teachers due to their English proficiency and pedagogical skills. First, the PSTs were not confident regarding their English proficiency. The ideal English teacher for all participants was one who possesses high English proficiency. The PSTs were afraid their secondary school students' proficiency would be higher than theirs. Fulla revealed her concern regarding her grammar knowledge and was afraid that secondary school students might have better English competence: "I know I still need to strengthen myself in grammar … I'm afraid their (school students) English proficiency level is higher than mine" (Mar 2015). Noor added she was also concerned that school students may have higher language levels than she:

> I'm worried about the students' proficiency level at school… Because if they are smarter than I am (class laughs quietly)... In terms of grammar… You know… I find grammar difficult for me. I'm afraid if students ask me anything in grammar… you know, like, "what is that? Why do we use that?"… I cannot answer them. That's my major concern (Mar 2015).

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Similarly, according to Iman, her English competence was not sufficient to make it easy for her to teach students:

> Truthfully, I think I am not 100% prepared to teach. For instance, regarding subject content knowledge, yes, we have learnt a lot throughout the past semesters. We've learnt about grammar, the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), literature and the list goes on. However, I don't think I have all that at the tip of my hands to teach others. I still need some brushing up in some areas until I can be more prepared and don't have to refer too much to various sources when teaching soon (Mar 2015).

Participants admitted their need to upgrade their proficiency levels and subject content knowledge to build self-confidence as teachers. Huda declared her need to improve her English proficiency even before starting her practicum:

> I talked about the theoretical knowledge we had at university, but still I don't feel fully confident to teach because I know that my English proficiency is not up to the standards of secondary school teachers. Some secondary school students are better than their teachers in speaking or writing English. I know that because I was a secondary school student too. Hence, I think we need to fortify our subject content knowledge, at least regarding the classes we will teach. At the end of the day, I don't want my students to think that I am a looser (Mar 2015).

Elisha suggested a similar idea when she talked about the need to upgrade their English proficiency:

> If we want to succeed as ESL trainees, we have to make sure that our knowledge regarding the subject matter is stronger than our learners' is. Students at secondary schools embarrass their teachers a lot when they challenge their knowledge. I believe that we need to enhance our subject matter regarding each topic we will teach at

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> secondary school. It's our only way to save face in front of our students (Mar 2015).

The second reason the participants did not feel confident is related to pedagogical skills. The PSTs doubted they possessed sufficient practical teaching skills to call themselves teachers. They saw themselves as novices who needed much practice to grow as teachers. Huda, for example, could not see herself as a teacher because she lacked experience: "I'm not sure if I can say I'm a TESL teacher. I think I can teach, but on the other hand, I haven't had any teaching experience so far. I still need to practice teaching to say I'm a teacher" (Mar 2015).

Fulla also expressed that her theoretical knowledge was not sufficient to judge her practical abilities as a teacher:

> I know theories but how to communicate to students is subject to practice. I think I have a good idea about what I need to do in class. However, I'm not quite sure how to behave in class or how to communicate to my students. I can't judge on that until I experience teaching (Mar 2015).

Asmira had the same attitude, as she perceived her pedagogical skills negatively:

> Despite some weakness in my English proficiency, I find my pedagogical skills of low quality because I have never practiced teaching English. I think even if we learnt about teaching English, it's still not enough to trust our teaching abilities. I saw other teachers teaching, but I didn't teach myself. We can't improve our pedagogical skills unless we practice teaching in real situations (Mar 2015).

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Prior to their teaching practice, the participants doubted their ability to deliver a lesson in an interesting way that would capture their students' attention. Noor did not think she would be successful as a teacher with her current teaching skills:

> As a student, I can tell if the lesson is interesting or not. But to be the teacher who prepares and delivers lessons, I think I may not be able to do that. I feel it is very tough for me. Despite observing our teachers teaching during all those years, I still feel that planning lessons and designing teaching aids are skills that we need to improve yet (Mar 2015).

Iman also did not think highly of her ability to plan and deliver an interesting lesson:

> It was easy to satisfy secondary school students in the past. Today, the teacher needs to prepare highly interesting lessons to attract her students and engage them in her lesson. I doubt my ability to design such interesting lessons since I experienced many examples of traditional teaching when I was a student. Today, I need to consider the technology that my learners are familiar with. It will be challenging and tiring to prepare such attractive and educating lessons (Mar 2015).

When asked to assess their abilities as teachers, the maximum score they gave themselves was 5 out of 10 (Suzan, Huda, Muna, Fulla, Asmira and Elisha) mainly due to their limited teaching experience. For example, Suzan believed that because she was a student for many years, she could not see herself as a teacher:

> For the last three years, we always learnt about teaching skills, what to teach and how to choose teaching material. Also, we learnt how to write a lesson plan and assess learners. But we have never got a real chance to try it out. I'm still not sure where I am at right now (Mar 2015).

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Asmira also thought she needed to enhance her theoretical knowledge and teaching skills before starting to teach:

> I still need to improve my skills and increase my knowledge and gain more skills before I teach and say I'm a teacher. For the past 15 years, I have been a student sitting at my desk in class and learning from teachers. I can see myself as a student and not as a teacher at this stage (Mar 2015).

Fulla, who was reluctant to assess her teaching abilities, underestimated her pedagogical skills at that early stage of her teaching practice:

> When I tried to assess my teaching abilities, I admit that I found it difficult. I agree with my classmates. It's not only the theoretical background that can prepare us to become teachers. I feel that becoming a teacher is a long process that requires much practice and work on our behalf as pre-service teachers. It also need appropriate guidance to enable us get the maximum from our practice. At this moment, I am in the middle of the way to become a teacher. I gave myself 5 because I believe that I still have the other practical part to complete before I look at myself as a teacher (Mar 2015).

Noor and Iman gave themselves 4 and 3 respectively for teaching ability. Iman revealed that her identity as a student was stronger in this early stage:

> I think at this stage as students at university we can't teach. I see myself more as a student not as a teacher. Truthfully, I was in other classes we have to feel comfortable when we teach but I don't feel comfortable. We had courses on grammar and other language components, but I don't feel that I have enough subject content knowledge to teach others (Mar 2015).

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Noor thought that 4 was fair enough to express her real abilities in teaching:

> I don't want to exaggerate by giving myself a higher score. I feel unconfident inside regarding my teaching abilities. When I think that I will have to stand in front of my students to teach, I feel stressed out…no actually, I feel terrified about that. I'm still that student who is ready to receive information, not to send it (Mar 2015).

The participants' negative perceptions of their teaching abilities emerged when they were confronted with practical situations. After their first micro teaching lesson, they expressed feeling worried, frustrated and incompetent. For example, Elisha contended that she was worried about students' behavior and the suitability of her activities, so she felt unable to deliver a model lesson:

> I was worried … students were naughty while I was doing my first model lesson. Not sure (laughing) I felt helpless and unable to deliver the information well. I was also worried whether the activities I prepared were interesting enough for students. What confused me more was that I was very fast in my teaching and I was about to finish my activities half way in my class time. I got really nervous when I noticed my supervisor looking at his watch. It meant that I wasn't doing really well (Apr 2015).

The same feeling of nervousness and low confidence was present with Muna. When I entered the class on the day Muna was supposed to teach for 30 minutes, she appeared confused and unprepared. She was nervously cutting and pasting what she prepared for the lesson. Fulla was helping Muna organize her aids and handouts and encouraged her by saying, "Don't be nervous, Muna. Once you start all stress will go away" (Observation notes, Apr 2015).

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Later, Muna said that she continued to feel worried while delivering her class:

> I couldn't stop worrying even after I started my class. I prepared plenty of activities and it seemed that they needed more time to accomplish them. I didn't want to make my classmate's mistake when she prepared few activities and finished her class earlier than it was expected. I ended up running with my activities. I felt my students were unable to follow me and that worried me a lot (Apr 2015).

Fulla also expressed how nervous and stressed out she felt in her first teaching experience:

> I was confused, nervous and stressed out at the beginning of my first model lesson. Then, I tried to treat them like real students. I felt comfortable in the middle of the lesson. I know they are my friends and they were there to support me (May 2015).

Suzan reflected frustration with her activities, which were below her learners' level:

> I thought I prepared interesting activities. When I noticed that my students were doing them very fast, I panicked. I didn't know what to do. That made me feel unconfident and I felt I just wanted to stop the lesson (May 2015).

For Iman, her frustration was a normal result when her students complained several times that her voice was inaudible:

> I got frustrated because my students could not hear me clearly. I think I was standing far away from them. I wanted to come closer but I felt nervous. I wanted to project my voice but when I felt frustrated, I lost my ability and desire to teach. I even cancelled some of my activities (Apr 2015).

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Participants also reported feeling incompetent during their first microteaching lesson. Asmira, for example, thought that her activity sequencing and timing were not suitable during lesson delivery:

> I think I am totally incompetent in my teaching techniques. I keep forgetting my lesson steps. I even forgot introducing key vocabulary. I had a sense of low professionalism while teaching. It was really frustrating for me (Apr 2015).

For Huda, feeling incompetent prevailed throughout her first microteaching lesson:

> I felt incompetent while delivering my lesson. I just wanted to stand next to my desk and keep reading my notes to remember what step comes next. I even struggled with some vocabulary and classroom instruction language. I think I should have rehearsed more before coming to teach in front of others. I thought it was easier than that (Apr 2015).

Asmira also saw herself as incompetent:

> I think I am still an incompetent teacher. Issues such as losing students' interest, struggling to define a word that a student asked about its meaning and forgetting lesson steps were real examples for me to consider. I feel I still have a long way to walk to get rid of such a horrible feeling. Feeling incompetent was a reason for me to feel worried and frustrated while teaching my first microteaching lesson (Apr 2015).

High PI. The first microteaching lessons took about three weeks (i.e., after mid-semester including weeks eight to ten). During those weeks, the PSTs taught and watched their peers teaching. They were involved in reflections and discussions after each microteaching lesson. The second shift reflected in data was the PSTs' high PI in their second microteaching lessons, which began in week 11 of the

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simulated teaching stage. This shift to high PI was featured by participants' feelings of becoming confident, active, prepared, motivated, compassionate and innovative.

Becoming confident. The participants' attitude towards the second teaching trial of simulated teaching was more positive than towards their first microteaching lesson. They became more self-confident with their teaching skills at this stage. Exposure to a number of model lessons and discussions of peers' strategies helped improve their own skills and subsequently made them feel more confident than before. Feedback received on their lessons was also beneficial to scaffolding self-confidence. Fulla expressed her confidence and teaching skills improved:

> I still feel awkward about myself as a teacher but I'm improving from the last time, I think, for my 30-minute lesson. It was pretty awkward, I didn't really know how to give instructions or connect with students but then this time today, I've learned a lot from my friends, from the comments the supervisor gave and from peers' comments. I considered the comments my classmates gave me on the first teaching experience. I also took into consideration the others' lessons. While my friends were presenting, I took notes of their weakness, so I can improve my lesson (May 2015).

Noor also expressed having gained more confidence in her teaching performance:

> In the second model lesson, I stood in front of the class and taught confidently. I know that the discussions and feedback we had helped me a lot. I was moving around my class actively as I was not as scared as I felt the first time I taught. I think it's a matter of living the teaching experience" (May 2015).

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Suzan thought that the more they were exposed to model lessons and discussions, the more confident she felt in her teaching abilities:

> I found myself getting really confident compared with the beginning of the simulated teaching class. The model lessons and discussions were really effective. At least I didn't tremble strongly while delivering my lesson. I felt more comfortable while teaching. I even felt that I could teach more lessons with the same ease. I think the more confident I felt the better my lessons would become (June 2015).

Active Learners. Negotiating teaching strategies and personalities while teaching prevailed in the post-model lesson discussions. They not only improved teaching skills but also gained interpersonal interaction skills. The PSTs were implicitly learning how to negotiate their dispositions and assumptions. Iman, for example, displayed a better ability to reflect on her lessons and identify her strong or weak points. She became more aware of what she needed to develop, at least in the simulated teaching stage:

> The activity I conducted today was interesting and engaging for my students. For me, the attention grabber was interesting but maybe a bit time-consuming because they had to know how to properly ask and answer where the buildings were. I needed to watch my timing for the activity (May 2015).

Fulla also reported that she was engaging actively in learning to teach:

> I get engaged in the discussions. I take notes of all feedback given to the others and record that in my notebook. I found this very useful for me as I refer to such feedback points to enhance my preparation of the lesson. I also like that we use English a lot while negotiating with the others (May 2015).

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Asmira perceived herself as an active learner in her simulated teaching class:

> I pay attention to all discussions in the class to learn from the others' comments. I'm convinced that interacting within the class will eventually help me improve my teaching skills. I need to prepare myself for the practicum even if secondary school context is different. What we learn now will be the foundation to our actual practice later (May 2015).

Similarly, Huda saw herself as an active learner in her simulated teaching class:

> With every class, I learn something new about the teaching. I gain more understanding of myself, my abilities as a teacher and my aptitude

The more the PSTs participated in the community of practice (CoP) discussions and negotiations, the more PI maturity they exhibited. They appeared confident, relaxed and capable of handling their stage fright and classes. In my observations, I noticed they made progress regarding some of the difficulties and teaching strategies encountered in their first lessons. For example, activity instruction skills, voice projection, appropriate utilization of the board and technology, and activity management all improved. Examining their lesson plans indicated that their preparation was clearer in terms of timing and activity sequencing.

Prepared and motivated. At the end of the simulated teaching class experience, the participants revealed feeling prepared and motivated to start their actual practice at the secondary schools. I asked them again to evaluate themselves as teachers on a scale of 1-10. The following table (4.1) shows the different scores they gave themselves at the beginning and end of the semester in terms of teaching ability.

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Table 4.1

Scores Given by PSTs in Evaluating their Teaching Abilities in the Simulated Teaching Class.

Simulated teaching class	Noor	Suzan	Iman	Huda	Muna	Fulla	Asmira	Elisha
Beginning	4	5	3	5	5	5	5	5
End	6	6.5	5.5	7	7	7.5	6.5	7

The participants' scores and comments indicate their sense of preparedness and confidence (regarding their teaching abilities). The following comments reflect such positive feelings and high PI gained after training in their supported community of practice (SCoP). Huda reflected on her growth and gave herself a score of seven:

> My previous score was less because I thought I wasn't ready to be a teacher. Before that, I had never done real simulated teaching. I didn't know how it goes. Mostly I was nervous and afraid whether I can do or not but right now, I feel more confident after finishing two simulated teaching model lessons, I think… I still have a lot of weakness here and there but I'm still learning. With proper training and more effort, maybe I can be a teacher. I feel eager to start my school practice (Group discussion, June 2015)

Fulla also thought she had progressed through her simulated teaching. She felt confident and motivated to start secondary school practice:

> I think right now I can give myself 7.5. I gave myself 5 before. I wouldn't give myself 8 or 9 because it's too perfect for me. I have already had a little exposure on how to teach and how to be a teacher in front of the class; before this it was theoretical. Now, I am more prepared to be sent to school for my practicum. I think I

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still have a lot to improve but I feel confident and motivated to start my teaching practicum (Group discussion, June 2015).

Elisha felt proud of her progress in teaching and declared she was prepared for actual practice:

> Compared to the beginning of the simulated teaching practice when I gave myself 5, I think my score of 7 reflects that I feel I made great progress. At the beginning, I was nervous and felt incompetent, but now, I feel that I improved a lot in terms of my teaching abilities. I feel ready for my actual practice (Group discussion, June 2015).

Asmira, who suffered a lot at the beginning of the simulated teaching due to the lack of interest and confidence in teaching, declared how satisfied she felt at the end of the course:

> I gave myself at the beginning 5 and thought that I was cheating because I didn't feel confident or competent in teaching. After all the discussions and the two teaching trials, I feel that I really made good progress. I still gave myself 6.5 because I wanted to be realistic as I know I still need to grow more as a teacher (May 2015).

Suzan agreed with her classmates that she also made a kind of progress at the end of her teaching practice compared to her humble beginnings in teaching:

> I can notice that my teaching in the second microteaching lesson is much better than the first one. That's why I pushed my score up to 6.5. I didn't give myself higher score because I still need more practice to really progress as a teacher. At this stage, I feel confident enough in my teaching abilities and I really feel that I'm

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prepared to continue with my becoming a teacher journey (June, 2015).

Compassionate and innovative. Participants reported feeling compassionate and innovative at the end of their simulated teaching course. Their romanticized ideas about their roles as teachers overshadowed their descriptions of the kind of PI they constructed after going through the simulated teaching classes. Fulla described her identity as a compassionate and innovative teacher:

> I'm a cheerful teacher. I love my students and give them space to tell their opinions. I'm not teacher-centered in my activities, as I try to engage my students, all of them, by creating interactive activities. I consider myself an innovative teacher as I use technology and other audiovisual media while teaching (Group discussion, June 2015).

Mona also saw herself as a compassionate teacher:

> I feel I'm a cheerful teacher. My students won't be afraid of me but they will have to respect me too. I was a guide and a facilitator during my model lessons, and I think I will continue to be such a student-centered teacher (Group discussion, June 2015).

Huda believed she was a teacher and friend to her students:

> I am one of those teachers who likes to build strong intimate relationships with her students. I will be their friend as well as their teacher. While doing my lessons here, I always considered what would please my students and make them feel relaxed during my lessons. I tried to prepare interactive activities to make my lessons fun (Group discussion, June 2015).

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The participants had their peers' model lessons and their personally established images as standards against which to caliber their own PI. Suzan commented on her innovative self as a teacher compared to the others:

> Compared to the others in this class, I consider myself an active teacher with innovative strategies. I have a good and appropriate charisma. My first experience with presenting in front of my classmates was disastrous and I even cried on that day. But now, I feel more confident and prepared to go to school (Group discussion, June 2015).

Noor thought she was growing to be more like her schoolteachers, active and innovative:

> My school was different from the others' schools. We weren't restricted to textbooks and lecturing. We had different activities like public speaking and lots of games and activities. I see myself similar to my teachers at that school, active, energetic and with varied activities. I would like to build on that later and make strong relationships with my students (Group discussion, June 2015).

Fulla described herself as an innovative teacher because of her teaching aids:

> I see myself as innovative, as I employed technology to serve the purposes of my lesson. Not only that, but I also varied my activities to include worksheets, a game and wall charts. The ideas of my lessons were presented well using such wonderful teaching aids. I'd like to improve my skills in designing teaching aids more (Group discussion, June 2015).

Though participants expressed satisfaction with improvements made in their simulated teaching course, they considered it as "a little exposure on how to teach and how to be a teacher in front of a class" (Fulla, group discussion, June 2015). The

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participants thought they needed longer training. They felt they were making good progress and needed more training to overcome other difficulties in teaching. Huda, for instance, expressed that she needed more training:

> I know we progressed in our teaching abilities and we became more confident, but I think if we continue with our training at university, we would improve more and more. At the beginning of our simulated teaching, we would worry a lot and feel scared about how we would perform in front of the class. After overcoming such horrible feeling, I think we focused more on our teaching. Time management is a key area to develop through practice (June 2015).

The participants were right regarding the need for more training, as I noticed that some teaching problems persisted with them, such as teaching grammar deductively and time management. New difficulties surfaced as they taught different skills like writing and listening. Having come to the end of the semester meant they would leave without having solved such problems. Muna thought that she learnt from her teaching practice but believed she needed more practice in other skills too:

> I learnt from my mistakes while teaching the speaking and writing skills. I didn't teach grammar and I think I need some practice to recognize my problems and overcome them. Besides, I still need to improve my time management because it's crucial in teaching (Group discussion, June 2015).

As participation evolved over the course of their simulated teaching sessions, the PSTs' belonging to this supported community of practice (SCoP) also evolved. The PSTs expressed a sense of affiliation to a group with which they could identify themselves. The safe environment of their SCoP at university allowed them to focus

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more on their development trajectories. The simulated teaching phase closed with four major merits: sense of preparedness, appreciation of peer support and stories, sense of belonging and ownership of progress, and a high level of self-confidence. The participants were motivated to begin teaching practice to improve their teaching skills and develop their PI more.

Smooth initial transition to the practicum site. High PI continued to be present with the PSTs at the beginning of their teaching practice. Moving to the new context of a teaching practicum, the PSTs started to develop new perceptions of themselves as teachers. Initially, they felt welcome and had smooth transitions to the secondary school sites. They felt confident in their abilities and potential to grow more as teachers. All reported a welcoming attitude from the schools' staff, which made them feel less intense and more motivated. Fulla reported feeling confident and capable of teaching due to the secondary school staff's positive attitude towards her:

> After their (teachers and administrative staff) warm welcoming and encouraging words, I felt capable of teaching the students at this school. I can't deny that the simulated teaching class added to my confidence in my teaching abilities. The model lessons we performed or attended to our peers helped me understand how to plan for a lesson and how to conduct it (June 2015).

Asmira and Suzan experienced the same welcoming reception:

> Basically, the school environment was very welcoming. The principal and the teachers welcomed us warmly. Eight of the PSTs are here but the principal asked for the highest number of trainees to be at school. I think she wants new teaching techniques. PSTs usually prepare lots of materials so I guess that's why she likes us to be here (Asmira, June 2015).

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Suzan also mentioned how relieved she felt with the secondary school staff's warm welcome:

> I didn't really expect that kind of meeting with teachers and administrative staff, but then it sounded good. It was relaxing for me. Part of my concerns regarding practicum was whether the school staff would accept us or they would just consider us as a burden. In reality, I found the principal and school staff really supportive. Their attitude was such a relief for me (June 2015).

Iman saw the principal's attitude towards PSTs positively:

> She's really nice, supportive, very welcoming just like other teachers. She even told us the reason she accepted eight of us, which is the biggest number among other schools, is to accommodate us. To have more of our friends, then we can be more comfortable at school. We can cooperate and exchange ideas. Her attitude and the others' attitude really pleased me and made me feel that I would get good experience at school (July 2015).

The PSTs expected the practicum context to boost their confidence and efficacy as teachers. They felt open to learning at the secondary school sites. Their mentors and other schoolteachers gave them some details about the students and any discipline problems. They also guided them with the extracurricular activities and administrative work the PSTs were required to handle. For example, Muna mentioned that her school principal and mentor were kind to offer all the information she needed to commence the practicum:

> The principal welcomed us on the first day and distributed the classes among us. I was given the seventh and the tenth grader to teach. My mentor also was assigned immediately to me. Later, I sat with my mentor who passed the class records, the syllabus scheme

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> and the suggested helping books. She also gave me a synopsis about my students, such as the good students, the poor ones and the naughty ones. She passed her suggestions on how I can handle their discipline issues. She encouraged me to be innovative and create interesting activities (June 2015).

All guidance was given in one meeting to prepare the PSTs to start training immediately. Asmira commented on how efficient the school people were:

> Within one day, our principle assigned our mentors and identified our classes. The mentor sat with us and informed us about how work goes on at school. She invited me to her class immediately to help me get a real and practical experience of how to handle my class. She said that I would start teaching alone the second day, so basically there was no time to waste. I think they're really efficient and practical. We were like in a beehive. Everyone was offering their information and passing their recommendations while we, I mean PSTs, were taking down notes of that (June 2015).

The PSTs were invited by their mentors to attend a class to see how the mentors taught students and managed classes. The first steps through their field practice journey involved forming new images of good teachers based on their mentors' standards. Asmira's words show how she began forming new images of a good teacher based on her observation of her mentor's class:

> I observed a lesson of my mentor. It was really simple without much audio visual material. However, the students participated and interacted actively in her class. I noticed that she had prepared handouts for two periods but she actually didn't use them. Being very experienced, she could just talk to the students without any educational aids. She managed to motivate them and they paid attention during the class (June 2015).

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Iman also found her mentor a good example of a successful teacher in managing the class and projecting her voice when needed:

> When she taught the class, her voice was clear. I was sitting at the back and it was easy to hear her, she moved around so much. She got everyone's attention. I have to learn not to stay in one spot and to go around. I do this sometimes but when I am at the back, the boys in front can't hear me (July 2015).

The participants built a new model image of a teacher as one who controls students and the class. They were not exposed to interactive student-centered activities, as concluded from their descriptions of their mentors' classes. They thought if a teacher's voice is strong enough and students are silent in class, then a teacher would be good. Fulla reflected that she needed to become a class controller to be able to improve her teaching skills:

> I think if I want to improve my teaching skills, I need to be a controller of my class. I know classroom management is crucial to execute my activities. With a strong voice, I can attract their attention and keep them on track (June 2015).

Iman also considered classroom control as an indication of her professional growth as a teacher:

> I believe that when I become similar to my mentor, able to control my class, it would mean that I grew as a teacher. I need to project my voice and to show my students that I am in charge there. Otherwise, they may take advantage of me. I noticed how students sat silent throughout the whole class while their teacher was explaining the lesson. I sensed a kind of fear and respect in the

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class atmosphere. Still, I can't say that they hated their teacher. I think the traditional teacher has advantage at public schools (July 2015).

This smooth transition did not last for more than two days, when challenges started to emerge. Muna described how she felt within those two days compared to what she faced later:

> The first two days were like a wonderful trip to a new world. I liked what I saw on the first two days and thought that our journey through teaching practicum, albeit demanding, would be rewarding and full of invaluable experiences. These glorious dreams evaporated on the third day when we entered our classes alone and started teaching…was that teaching? I'm even unable to recall what happened on that day. My classes were chaotic and noisy (June 2015).

Iman sighed when she sadly said that her high opinion of the school context collapsed after one day at secondary school:

> I constructed a high opinion of the school context. But my opinion changed the second day when I entered my classes alone. It was like a war battle. The students were fighting and I was trying to calm them down but in vain. I think it was a very short transition period (July 2015).

PI Crisis. The data collected from the participants during the teaching practicum stage revealed a PI crisis. Confronted with contextual challenges and tensions at the teaching practicum sites, the participants started losing confidence in their teaching abilities. They had a PI crisis featured by participants' feeling unconfident, frustrated, burnt out, alone, isolated, ambivalent and non-agentic.

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Unconfident and Frustrated. The participants revealed they felt unconfident and frustrated at the teaching practicum sites. They seemed to lose the confidence they developed during the simulated teaching classes. For example, Iman believed that the mentor, who had to give up her excellent class to Iman, was not happy with her presence at the school. The mentor's attitude negatively influenced Iman's self-esteem (i.e., self-confidence and self-worth):

> My mentor teacher told me that those excellent boys at her class became one of her motivations and reasons to come to school, so she was quite sad that she had to pass such an excellent class to me. I feel the pressure to continue teaching them well in English (July 2015).

Muna reported how chaotic her class was and that caused her to lose confidence in her ability to teach. All she wanted to do was stop the fights among students:

> I have gone to three classes so far. The students keep nagging each other and shouting while they are fighting inside the class. I don't know how to control them. My confidence level drops with every class because I can't execute my lessons (June 2015).

Asmira also thought that she lost the confidence level she had built during the simulated teaching classes:

> I feel that my hard work during the simulated teaching class to build my self-confidence as a teacher was destroyed here at school. With every class, I feel that I lose an invaluable part of my confidence. I am scared of going to my classes and feel that I just want to give up teaching. At the beginning of the simulated teaching class, I wasn't confident. But here in the real context, it's even worse. There is no one to consider your critical position as a trainee and your need for support and understanding (July 2015).

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Additionally, the participants reported feeling frustrated when they could not enact their innovative self because of contextual challenges. For instance, Iman wanted to depart from the work scheme of the prescribed curriculum to act her innovator self, but her mentor did not allow that:

> I tried my way to settle things down in class. I thought I could just make some changes in the work scheme of the syllabus. I wanted to teach those lessons and skills I thought I was good at. I wanted to teach them listening and speaking at the beginning instead of the reading part. I found it easier for me to prepare teaching aids and games for the students. Reading is a tough skill and I didn't know how to handle its activities. The mentor shocked me when she asked me to commit to the work scheme. No harm would have happened if I had changed the topics and skills. I wanted to do something I feel comfortable with until I become more confident. That was very frustrating for me (July 2015).

Asmira was eager to enact her innovator self and enrich her lessons using technology, but the computer lab was under renovation. She could thus not book it for her class:

> It is difficult to use technology in the class because there is no projector or LCD. You have to book a room at the library, but other schoolteachers of other school subjects occupied it. I am not sure how I can teach when I lack such vital resources (July, 2015).

Suzan was brought back to the feared traditional teacher self, and also felt frustrated because the mother tongue was used extensively in her classes:

> I tried to avoid using the Malay language in my classes, but then one of the teachers told me that I had to translate everything because of the students' low proficiency level. I know my students just listened to the translation to understand the lesson. That wasn't teaching English, but I had no other choices (June 2015).

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Iman also found it frustrating that student-centered activities were not really utilized at school:

> I don't see many activities similar, or approximate, to what I learnt at university. Most of the teachers whom I see when I pass by their classes, they just write on the board and their students are writing in their notebooks. The teaching is traditional. One teacher told me this was to keep the students busy and don't cause discipline problems (July 2015).

Burnt out. The participants felt burnt out as the secondary school administration assigned them extracurricular activities and administrative work in addition to their teaching duties. They admitted that participation in the school context was limited at the beginning. They focused more on handling admin work and controlling students. The PSTs felt totally exhausted and had no proper preparation for their classes. Mona reported that she did not expect all those burdens as a trainee:

> I didn't expect working at school to be that tough. I feel totally exhausted. All day I'm moving from my classes to extracurricular activities to covering absent teachers' classes. I have no time to mingle with the others even. I can't see myself growing as a teacher (June 2015).

The participants' sense of burnout was reflected in their PI. They started to abandon the image of an innovative teacher who prepares interactive activities for students. The participants were worried only about how to survive the challenging class context. Asmira reported that the noise in class constrained her application of lesson plans, "I try to prepare activities to engage students in my class. they are very noisy But and I think they take advantage of me because I'm a trainee" (June 2015).

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Fulla also considered her preparation of worksheets as a waste of time and money, "I prepare my worksheets and copy them for students, then half of the students just don't come to class" (July 2015). The participants were under the impression that their presence at school was to support and cover classes and not to try new teaching strategies. Muna revealed that her presence to cover absent teachers and supervise extracurricular activities was more important, "Why should I bother myself by preparing wonderful lessons: I'm here to cover absent teachers and supervise extracurricular activities. I feel really exhausted" (June 2015).

Alone and isolated. The PSTs found themselves isolated either at separate tables away from the school teachers, as was the case of Iman and Asmira, or in a separate room, as in the case of Suzan, Fulla and Mona. From the participants' point of view, they were seen as second class citizens who were at the school site to help alleviate teachers' burdens. They felt excluded from collegial relationships at school. Suzan complained about such exclusion, "I think they can't see us as colleagues, they look at us as second citizen, as visitors who will be around for a while before leaving for good. I utterly feel isolated" (June 2015).

In addition, the participants revealed they were practicing alone in classes. It was not clear whether their mentors would attend their classes. Iman wondered what the mentor's role was:

> I thought my mentor will attend my classes to help me improve, but she just disappeared. She was busy on her other teaching and administrative tasks. I'm not sure she will attend any classes other than those for assessment purposes (July 2015).

The participants were supposed to attend peers' classes to later discuss and gain more understanding of their practices. However, being burdened with tasks,

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they could not attend such classes and if it did happen, they would not have enough time for reflection and discussion. All that added to a sense of isolation in the secondary school culture.

Ambivalent and Non-Agentic. The participants reported feeling ambivalent and non-agentic. They revealed that their positions and identities were not clear in the context. Iman depicted a lost identity in such a context:

> I do not know how to describe myself. Am I a teacher? Am I a student who is learning how to teach? Am I an assistant to cover classes of a mentor or absent teachers? Or, am I a supervisee? I sometimes find my identity ambiguous. Please don't laugh at me when I say I'm utterly lost (July 2015).

Muna also thought their position at the secondary school was not what they expected as trainees:

> When you come to your practicum, you think you are a novice learning from experienced teachers how to teach. But in our case, we have other tasks to handle and the last thing for us here is to train with experienced people (June 2015).

The challenging secondary school context at the site of the practicum made participants feel less competent. They saw themselves as second class in a disadvantaged position in the school context. Fulla revealed how she perceived her mentor as a higher authority of whom Fulla was scared:

> I was quite scared when she came to my class because she looked very serious during the lesson. She walked around and saw the students' progress. I felt quite nervous when she went around. I think my students noticed how I felt and I wasn't happy with that. I felt in a powerless position (August 2015).

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Fulla claimed her mentor was supportive and resourceful; however, their relationship did not grow enough to have two-way conversations. The participants would listen to their mentors on the limited occasions on which they met and the participants would accept whatever the mentors suggested as suitable for conducting in class.

Another feared self (i.e., follower) controlled the participants' interaction in the training context. They reported the inability to induce any changes in the training context, because they felt there was a gap between the PSTs' novice level and their mentors' experienced level; hence, they had to maintain a peripheral position in the school context. Muna revealed they were expected to follow orders and carry out required tasks without objections:

> We were supposed to follow the instructions and carry out the tasks assigned for us without any complaint. We were afraid complaining could affect our evaluation. We're not staff there, then we had to respect that our mission is for a short period (August 2015).

The new context was disappointing for the participants whose non-resistant feared-self guided them through the professional growth journey. Fulla commented, "I don't see much progress in my PI" (July 2015). The participants expressed objections to such training policy through the research platform. However, they chose to remain silent in the practicum context. Iman expressed how talking about her concerns during the interview sessions was a relief for her:

> Throughout that frustrating context, I find these interviews as a relief as I can talk freely about my concerns, worries and anger. I don't want to sound ungrateful for the practicum context but I really feel that I need to tell someone about what we face here. I intended to work hard on my PI but the context is just not supportive (July 2015).

PI awareness. The fourth shift revealed by the participants' data was in PI awareness, which was featured by PSTs' adaptation to the school culture, regaining moderate levels of self-confidence and feeling committed to the profession and development.

Adapted to the school culture. Despite the wave of frustration, depression and sense of getting lost, the PSTs started to gradually calm down upon getting used to the school routines and utilizing their adaptation process (note: adaptation process will be discussed later under the RQ3 findings section). As time passed at the practicum sites, the PSTs started getting used to the admin work and extracurricular activities. Therefore, they had more time to focus on learning to teach. They managed to prepare better for classes, and Muna reported feeling less stressed out:

> At the beginning, I struggled to get used to the school environment and the system. But now, I feel a lot better, not pressured anymore. I don't know why, but I just realized it. That's why we don't feel stressed out compared to before. Maybe we feel so because we're towards the end of our practicum and we got used to it (August 2015).

Fulla felt similarly about getting more relaxed with the school culture:

> Yes, at the beginning we were focused on a lot of other work to do and also the pressure we had. But now since we managed to control those worries and pressures, when I plan the lesson, I feel more relaxed (August 2015).

Asmira also thought that earlier, they had many negative feelings and perceptions about themselves because they had to juggle many burdens. Now, she thought she had adapted to the school culture:

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> We had many classes but not much time to spend on the lesson. But now we're given less work… ah… I don't know if we're given less work or we manage it. I think adapting to the school culture helped us a lot. It wasn't an easy job at all but we gradually managed to respond to the context complexities and build better understanding of how to handle our tensions (August 2015).

They did what they were informed to do because they were convinced their presence and opinions meant little to the others. Iman declared that she stopped complaining and thinking negatively about her position at school; hence, she felt less stressed out:

> I got used to such a marginalizing and oppressing context. Why fight as long as we would leave sooner. I think I adapted to the context and stopped thinking negatively about my position here. Besides, I found some ways to handle my problems inside the class (August 2015).

Confident. The participants managed to regain lost confidence in their teaching abilities by adapting their teaching practices to the practicum context and building good relationships with their students. Fulla set up debating group work for her students, because she discovered they liked having presentations and debates:

> Because I know they can do presentations well, I got them in groups and discussing because I know they can think and they can come up with answers from the discussion. I think that was one strong point about my lessons near the end of my practicum (August 2015).

The participants reported that engaging students in group-work activities allowed those students to discuss the task before presenting their ideas. Asmira, who initially complained about lacking technology in class, found a substitute for that:

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large paper sheets. Instead of wasting class time trying to figure out which group finished first to write on the board, Asmira encouraged students to use paper sheets to display and present their group work in front of the class:

> At the beginning, I felt frustrated because I couldn't use technology in my lessons. But after using wall charts, I found it a simple and cheap way to help students present their work in front of the class. At least nobody complains now that I am not fair and don't give them their right turns to talk. They all show their work at the board. I feel really pleased with that (August 2015).

The participants managed to experiment with different teaching strategies. According to my observations the participants still struggled with classroom management, activity management and the depth of subject content knowledge, but not as severely as at the beginning of the practicum.

Separated from mentors, peers and other school teachers, the PSTs' sole shelter was to build good relationships with their students. Such relationships gave meaning and value to their presence in the school context. Classroom control shifted from keeping students completely silent, listening to their teacher and answering questions. The participants accepted some noise in their classes and considered it positive as long as they managed to control it when required. Fulla, for example, accepted that her students are just children whose nature may surface sometimes:

> They're still kids and I can accept that sometimes they just want to play and laugh. Once they are engaged in the activity, you'd find them focusing there. I love them so much (August 2015).

Committed to profession and development. At the end of the practicum stage, the participants felt committed to the teaching profession and eager to develop

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more as teachers. Fulla, Muna and Asmira were proud of their achievement so far. The participants reported feeling more like teachers at the end of the teaching practice. They accepted that schools have challenges and tensions. Moreover, they found it was possible to adapt to the context and remain open to the different possibilities a teacher may have to deal with such tensions. For instance, Muna declared that she became more realistic in her expectations from the secondary school context:

> I don't want to be idealistic in my expectations regarding secondary school sites. I think we suffered a lot earlier in our training because we thought the practicum sites would be similar to our simulated teaching class. Once we responded to what the practicum site offered us and became more realistic, we managed to adapt and develop our PI (August 2015).

The participants expressed the desire to become teachers and learn more about teaching through actual practice. Muna reflected, "I do feel enthusiastic about teaching. I love teaching those kids. It's tiring but still it's rewarding when you see their interaction." (August 2015). Fulla and Asmira also felt they gained sufficient confidence and control of their teaching abilities to become teachers. Muna, Fulla and Asmira gave themselves scores of 7-8 for their teaching abilities to reflect their perception of the progress made as teachers. They showed more awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in teaching. They also believed that longer training time would benefit them more. Furthermore, they found it was necessary to develop social relationships with others to negotiate the challenges and PI shifts experienced.

In contrast to the others, Iman described a 'lack of fit' (Jarvis-Selinger, Pratt, & Collins, 2010, p. 84) with teaching. She thought that teaching ESL in a public school was not something for the future. Iman gave her own teaching abilities a score

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of 6, which signifies that she did not believe her teaching abilities progressed much. When asked if she still wanted to become a teacher, she replied:

> Truthfully… no, sadly. I mean I wanted to; I used to have at least this slight passion to become a teacher. Now, I don't think so. Maybe because I got this feeling that becoming a teacher has many things to do. We need to be prepared, do admin work, handle our students and negotiate our positions with the others at school (August 2015).

The following table (4.2) shows the shifts in the self-given scores as teachers (teaching abilities) for the simulated teaching classes and practicum phase. Notably, by the end of the practicum stage, a development in PI was reported. The PSTs accepted what was gained from student teaching but admitted a need for more development. Muna, Fulla and Asmira scored themselves 7+ because they felt their teaching performance was better and they gained good levels of self-confidence as teachers. Muna saw progress in her level as a teacher, "Comparing the scores I gave myself as a teacher over the past seven months with the final score of 7-8, I believe and I really feel that I made remarkable progress" (August 2015). Fulla also considered her progress over the past seven months as noteworthy:

> We set off for this journey with very low perceptions regarding our teaching abilities. Today, I give myself 7-8 because I think after all the difficulties we went through, what I achieved is noteworthy. It needed much effort to become at this level in our teaching abilities and confidence to work there in our classes (August 2015).

For Asmira, progress was satisfactory:

> I can't believe we came to the end of our practicum. I gave myself 7 now because I feel that I did a great job to overcome all the obstacles and build up my teaching abilities and confidence to teach (July 2015).

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Iman thought she had made some progress and gave herself a 6. Although, for Iman this score did not reach the level she hoped in terms of teaching abilities and self-confidence as a teacher:

> I gave myself 6 because I made some progress but not up to the level I dreamt of. I feel I can teach and stand up in my classes, but I'm not that confident and competent. I still need a lot of practice to really say I became a good teacher (July 2015).

Table 4.2

PSTs' Evaluation of their Teaching Abilities through the Different Stages of the Learning to Teach Journey

Phases		Suzan	Iman	Muna	Fulla	Asmira
1. Simulated teaching	Beginning	5	3	5	5	5
	End	6.5	5.5	7	7.5	6.5
2. Practicum phase	Mid	6	5	6	6	5
	End	-	6	7-8	7-8	7

In preparation to finish the actual practice stage, the PSTs regretted missed opportunities to reconstruct a professional identity and reshape their understanding, beliefs, values and attitudes regarding the entire teaching/learning process. They thought that deeper relationships with mentors and school staff could have stimulated fruitful talks about their practice. They eventually admitted, "Communicating with other teachers and peers could have helped us face the problems and learn from each other's experiences" (Fulla, August 2015). Muna also stated:

> We didn't have enough opportunity to interact with the other senior teachers at school. I believe that we could have negotiated our teaching practices with them and built solid understanding of our

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> PI. But now that we are wrapping up our practicum, I think we lost a precious chance to make more progress in our PI (August, 2015).

Likewise, Asmira agreed with her peers:

> Our superficial relationships with our mentors and the other teachers at school had negatively affected our professional growth. With the absence of the others from our classes, we were just relying on ourselves to assess our teaching procedures. Sometimes I felt that I needed to discuss the decisions I made while working inside the class with someone professional. I wanted to understand whether I was right or wrong. Lacking real and continuous communication with the mentor and other teachers deprived me of a good opportunity to amend or solidify my understanding and beliefs regarding the teaching/learning process (August 2015).

RQ 2- What personal and/or interpersonal factors contributed to pre-service teachers' professional identity construction?

The study data revealed that a number of personal and socio-contextual factors influenced PSTs' PI development.

Personal and/or Interpersonal Factors Contributed to Pre-Service Teachers' Professional Identity Construction

Personal factors. The participants attributed their low PI (i.e., not seeing themselves as teachers) at the beginning of the simulated teaching classes to three personal factors: lacking motivation due to their reasons for becoming teachers, feeling incompetent in terms of English proficiency and lacking experience.

Lacking Motivation due to their Reasons for Becoming Teachers. According to the data, the participants did not have intrinsic motivation to become

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teachers. The two main reasons why participants chose TESL as a life profession were that TESL was a fallback choice and family pressure.

Suzan, Iman, Huda, Fulla and Asmira chose to become teachers because their desire to become doctors or engineers was unfulfillable owing to inadequate secondary school grades. Thus, a second/fallback choice was TESL. For instance, Iman explained how her low secondary school scores prompted a change in life direction towards TESL:

> Initially, I have never even thought of going along the education line. However, my general exam results took me away from the scientific stream I was at. I went along for the language alone as I would like to improve my English and get immersed in whatever English language-related learning. In addition, I just did not know what else I could do (Mar 2015).

Similarly, Suzan regretted her inability to study dentistry due to her secondary school grades:

> Teaching was the last resort for me. I always imagined myself as a dentist. Unfortunately, my secondary school scores were not high enough to allow me to study dentistry. I had to make another choice to go to university and I chose TESL. So, as you see, becoming a teacher was a choice I had to make due to my insufficient scores to go along the medicine line (Mar 2015).

Asmira also talked about choosing teaching because she had no other choices:

> When I got my secondary school scores. I was shocked. My parents were shocked too. We planned that I become an engineer and I thought that I would get the right secondary school scores for that. Unluckily, I didn't get enough scores to study engineering. Once I lost my opportunity to study what I always dreamt about

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> (engineering), I browsed my choices and teaching was the available one. So, I took TESL (Mar 2015).

The participants revealed that their decisions to become ESL teachers were also influenced by their families. For example, Elisha's father who is an ESL teacher convinced her to pursue a teaching education degree:

> My father is an English teacher in a secondary school in Terengganu. He taught me English at home during my school years. He always talked about his students when we were at teatime. He convinced me that teaching English would be a good choice for me. He said I would enjoy teaching when I start working at school (Mar 2015).

Muna also chose to enroll in teacher education because her family considered it a better choice for her, especially since her cousin was also an ESL teacher:

> The main reason why I chose TESL was that my family preferred that I go along the teaching line as a suitable and feasible profession for me. I was skeptic about becoming a teacher. I thought it might be tough to deal with students at school, especially teenagers. But my family urged me to consider that choice seriously. Since my cousin is an ESL teacher, my family found it a good example for me to follow (Mar 2015).

In the same manner, Iman reported that her decision to become a teacher was to satisfy her father:

> I didn't want to disappoint my dad. He always wanted me to become a teacher. It wasn't my deliberate decision. We have unwritten rules in my house and I couldn't just do whatever I wanted. What my family perceived as good for me was the right thing I had to do. They wanted me to become a teacher and I had to

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abide by their wish. Personally, I didn't like being a teacher at all. It's a tough job (Mar 2015).

The previous comments show that some PSTs' reasons for becoming ESL teachers were not mainly driven by their own desire to become teachers. Rather, they perceived English as a medium for other subjects. Suzan, for example, declared that she always wanted to use English to study another subject:

> I always perceived English as a medium to understand different educational and scientific texts written in English. I wanted to use English as a medium to study dentistry but not to become a TESL teacher. I could become a dentist and fluent in English at the same time. Becoming an English teacher meant I would only master English and nothing else, right? (Mar 2015).

For Noor, the experience at the secondary school she attended and where English was a lingua franca among the three ethnic groups (i.e., Malay, Indian and Chinese) made her appreciate English use but did not make her think of choosing to teach English as a life profession:

> I admit that English helped me a lot in my interaction with others. I like to listen to English songs and read English magazines and books. But I have never thought of teaching as a profession for life because I know it's tiring. That's why I decided to choose TESL when my choices were limited. At least, I teach something I like (Mar 2015).

The participants worried they did not possess certain talents or capacities suitable for teaching. Such talents and capacities were not reported as the primary motivators in the profession. Asmira said she might not have such teaching abilities,

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"I don't think that I was born as a teacher. Teaching is a tough profession that not everyone can take" (Mar 2015). Suzan also could not recognize her teacher self:

> For years, I thought I will become a dentist. I have never thought of myself as a teacher and I don't think I have the talents of teaching. I believe that it doesn't matter how much we study and practice to become teachers. At the end of the day, one's talent is what makes him/her a successful and loved teacher (Mar 2015).

Along the same lines, Iman feared that she lacked natural talent to become a teacher:

> I tried to convince my family that teaching is different from other professions. It's not only studying at university or practicing a lot what makes the person a teacher. It's talent. I'm one of those who believe that a teacher is born and then comes the study and the practice. We have encountered many examples of teachers during our lifetime. You'd notice immediately that some teachers are successful in attracting their students' attention and creating a suitable atmosphere of teaching merely by their talented personalities. For sure, I'm not one of those talented teachers (Mar 2015).

That lack of genuine desire affected voice tone when asked about how motivated they were to start training. Apparently, the PSTs did not choose teaching because they were fond of becoming teachers. They expected training to be exhausting and challenging. Iman commented on her expectations of a tough practice stage, "I expect the simulated teaching and the teaching practicum will help me connect with teaching. But I know it will be a tough journey, at least at the practicum stage" (Mar 2015).

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Similarly, Elisha was worried about her teaching practice:

> I expect that teaching practice will be challenging because we need to convince ourselves that we can become teachers. When you choose something you believe you're talented in, you feel motivated to go through the journey. Here, I feel worried about my training and how feasible it would be (Mar 2015).

Fulla's comment supports previous statements, in that she was afraid that her becoming journey would be tough:

> I want to feel more enthusiastic about my becoming a teacher journey. I didn't want to become a teacher and I know that I may face many difficulties because I lack real motivation to do that. I expect to face many difficulties during my teaching practice (Mar 2015).

Influence by either families or the lack of other opportunities means that motivation to become teachers is external; therefore, educators ought to question those motives. Teacher educators need to recognize how to help PSTs connect with the profession and engage in PI construction.

Feeling incompetent in terms of English Proficiency. The second personal factor resulting in a low sense of PI at the beginning of the simulated teaching pertains to participants' English proficiency. Through experience with using English, the participants admitted uncomfortable moments when using English to speak. For example, Asmira saw herself as an incompetent user of English, "I caught myself several times committing mistakes in my speaking, in grammar and in vocabulary usage" (Mar 2015). The participants also believed they lacked vocabulary to express

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themselves smoothly. Iman, for instance, said her vocabulary repertoire was not sufficient to express herself on all topics:

> Sometimes I want to talk about, let's say the environment, but I find that I lack much vocabulary to say what I want to say. If I want to be a teacher, I have to be competent to express myself fluently in front of my students. Being competent is crucial for teachers to gain their students' respect (Mar 2015).

The participants also referred to their knowledge of grammar and syntax as inadequate. According to Elisha, her grammar knowledge was not strong enough to teach school students how to use it:

> I still lack solid knowledge in grammar to be able to teach it. Many variations in grammar get me confused, like when I want to use past simple, past perfect or present perfect. Mastering grammar, I believe, is at the heart of the TESL profession. Grammar is very important at school and teachers focus on it a lot. Also, the exams focus on grammar. I need to become competent in grammar if I want to be a successful teacher (Mar 2015).

Noor viewed herself as a fluent speaker of English but perceived her grammar knowledge as undeveloped:

> My grammar is not developed enough. I still commit mistakes in using grammar, especially when I think about the rules. I just get confused with some variations of the grammatical rules (Mar 2015).

This frequent feeling of incompetence results in low confidence levels. Iman explained her confidence was low due to her negative perceptions of her English proficiency, "I'm afraid my learners may be better than me. What if they asked

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a question about grammar and I didn't know the answer. That's why I feel unconfident to teach" (Mar 2015). The participants felt that using English in class to teach learners could provoke anxiety, hence minimizing their ability to deliver sound lessons. They admitted the need to upgrade their English proficiency because language learning "is never complete, even for teachers" (Fulla, Mar 2015).

Lack of Practical Experience. Lack of practical experience was the third personal factor perceived by the participants as a contributor to low PI. Despite reporting having learnt a lot about theories of teaching and learning, the participants were not aware of how they could put such theoretical knowledge into practice. Suzan thought her theoretical knowledge was not enough to call herself a teacher, "Learning pedagogical theories wouldn't necessarily mean you become a teacher" (Mar 2015).

Huda felt that not being exposed to practice during the last three years produced a lack of confidence regarding teaching abilities:

> We were just receivers of theoretical knowledge for the past three years in our TEP. We have never taught or tried the teaching practices we learnt about; hence, we can't judge how good our teaching abilities are (Mar 2015).

Elisha also could not dare call herself a teacher despite all the theoretical knowledge pertaining to teaching and learning gained in the TEP:

> I gained a good level of theoretical knowledge about teaching philosophies and methods. I also learnt about characteristics of learners, characteristics of good teachers and teaching materials. All that abstract knowledge is still trapped in my mind with no practical experience. That's why I feel unconfident and with a low PI. Professional means practice (Mar 2015).

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The participants admitted they would need a long and tough journey to manage transforming theoretical knowledge into experiential knowledge. Huda commented on how lacking experience influenced her perceptions of her PI negatively, "I have never taught before and I can't call myself a teacher. So far, I am a student. Only when I start teaching my perceptions may change" (Mar 2015).

To sum up, three personal factors led to participants' low PI at the beginning of their simulated teaching classes. The factors encompass low motivation to choose teaching as a profession, feeling incompetent in English proficiency and lack of practical experience.

Socio-contextual factors. A number of socio-contextual factors contributed vastly to PI development during the simulated teaching classes. The PSTs progressed from low PI to high PI at this time. The findings reveal that this shift in PI occurred on account of two main socio-contextual factors: (1) supportive simulated teaching class culture and (2) building strong relationships.

Supportive simulated teaching class culture. Simulated teaching class culture played an important and positive role in developing participants' PI. It offered them three main productive opportunities: (1) building connections with peers and supervisors, (2) expanding their practical experience through microteaching lessons, and (3) creating opportunities to reflect on their practices and view themselves as teachers.

Building connections with peers and supervisors. The PSTs started connecting with their peers by sharing concerns regarding their teaching practice and becoming teachers. Before setting off for training, the participants had a number of initial classes where they were encouraged to share concerns regarding their training, desired selves and feared selves as teachers. As reported earlier under the RQ2

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findings on personal factors resulting in low PI, the participants were most worried about their English proficiency level. For them, a model teacher is one with strong academic knowledge of language. Noor, for example, expressed respect for proficient teachers:

> When I was a learner at school, I highly valued proficient teachers who had solid basis in language. I believe that appropriate English proficiency can add to the teacher's self-confidence in front of his/her students (Mar 2015).

Iman referred to pedagogical knowledge as another concern:

> Our theoretical knowledge of pedagogical theories is not enough at this stage. Practice will show how strong our teaching abilities are. Applying the teaching methods in real lessons is of real concern for us. I wonder how competent I will be as a teacher when I teach. I feel worried about my first teaching experience (Mar 2015).

Lack of teaching experience and principles of classroom management was another challenge for the PSTs. Elisha expressed worry regarding her ability to manage classes:

> I'm worried if the students will be kind or naughty. Not sure (laughing) if I'll be able to deliver information well, if the activities I prepared are interesting enough for students. Having chaotic and noisy classes could be the worst thing we face while practicing teaching (Mar 2015).

Becoming aware that they all faced the same concerns, the participants envisioned the CoP could help them handle those challenges. Fulla appreciated the discovery of sharing similar concerns with peers:

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> I didn't know that they all fear similar things of becoming teachers. We have approximate English proficiency level and we all lack practical experience. I feel that we can support each other, benefit from our experiences and even learn from our stories (Mar 2015).

Noor revealed while laughing how embarrassed she felt to talk about her concerns:

> I was embarrassed to talk about my concerns. I didn't know how I would face my fears in teaching. At least, being with the group might lessen my worries. Truly, I can't judge right now, but still it is a good start, I guess (Mar 2015).

Elisha agreed:

> As a shy person, I feel that I need much support from the others around me to be able to execute my teaching procedures. Being a member in a group of similar people will help me overcome my concerns and focus more on my professional growth (Mar 2015).

Similarly, Huda found a safe resort with her counterparts during the simulated teaching:

> We all have approximate levels regarding our proficiency and pedagogical skills. We even have some common personal traits such as shyness. Hence, we can support and help each other construct our PI and improve our teaching skills. I don't think that I would feel embarrassed in front of my classmates. I feel really connected to them (Mar 2015).

Having shared their concerns, hopes and feared selves, the participants started networking with peers from the beginning of the simulated teaching course. The participants' connection with supervisors was not as smooth as with peers. The

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participants began in the CoP on the margins, sitting silently and listening to their instructor.

> I was talking with the PSTs. They were discussing their supervisor's strategy in handling a simulated teaching class. Discussing the theories with the PSTs was not something supervisors believed in, to enhance teaching skills. Once the supervisor entered the class, the PSTs sat silent, listening to him lecture about teaching methods and some procedural tactics they can use in their classes at school (observation notes, Mar 2015).

Moving on to the microteaching lessons alleviated the tension they previously felt towards their supervisor's role in the simulated teaching classes. I observed the PSTs gradually developed a coherent and collaborative group with their peers and supervisor. The shared enterprise of PI development and teaching practice improvement enabled them to connect with each other as apprentices and with their supervisor as a facilitator expert. A sense of belonging and engagement emerged here. Fulla felt her belonging to her CoP became stronger over the course of the simulated teaching class:

> At the beginning of the course, I felt we were connecting with each other as PSTs away from our supervisor. But once we started our microteaching lessons, stronger bonds started to emerge between us all as a coherent group. The simplicity that prevailed our interaction helped us a lot get rid of our stress towards teaching. The best thing for me was belonging to such supportive group (May 2015).

Similarly, Asmira said, "I belong to this group and I will learn a lot from them" (April 2015). Noor also expressed her relief to be in such a group of PSTs, "I

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feel that I found myself here. It's not like feeling you're alone or different" (April 2015).

Expanding practical experience through microteaching lessons. The participants reported how the microteaching lessons improved their language proficiency, pedagogical skills, planning and time management skills. The progress they made in language and teaching skills resulted in enhanced self-confidence and motivation to go through the practicum.

First, the participants perceived microteaching as an invaluable means of helping them evaluate their language proficiency and develop it. The supervisor's comments on Suzan's first microteaching lesson helped her understand the correct usage of the future tense:

> When I taught the future tense, I made a lot of mistakes related to usage of different words to express the future simple. The rule variations were confusing to me and that negatively affected the presentation stage in my microteaching lesson. My supervisor later explained the rules thoroughly. That helped me correct my misunderstanding" (June 2015).

Six of the eight participants reported that the microteaching lessons improved their language, especially the words and instructions they might use in class. Elisha considered microteaching a good chance to learn classroom language:

> I found it very beneficial to participate in the microteaching lessons because I noticed what vocabulary my peers used in the classroom instructions and the management of the activities. I managed to improve my vocabulary in terms of teaching activities. I engaged those words in my teaching too (May 2015).

Generally, the participants agreed that the discussions after each microteaching lesson enhanced their speaking skills and enabled them to communicate more clearly. For example, Muna compared the beginning of the simulated teaching class when they sat silently with how her speaking ability improved after each discussion:

> At the beginning of the simulated teaching class, we sat silent. I felt unable to express my general or pedagogical knowledge in English fluently. That has changed as we went through more and more discussions about pedagogy. I corrected some pronunciation mistakes and became more organized in presenting my ideas (May 2015).

Elisha appreciated the improvement in her speaking skills, especially when using jargon related to teaching and classroom management:

> I may be able to speak generally in English, but when it comes to discussing serious and specialized topics, I find myself incompetent in speaking. All those discussions we had after each microteaching lesson enabled me to strengthen my speaking abilities regarding teaching English inside a class (May, 2015).

Secondly, the participants highlighted the value of microteaching in developing pedagogical skills. According to the participants, they managed to put what they had learnt in other theoretical teaching methods into practice. Iman described the way the model lessons enabled her to apply what she learnt at university:

> I tried to use the communicative approach today in my teaching. The game I prepared for my learners was interesting. I tried with a listening activity but it didn't go well because technology failed me. It was interesting to practice what we learnt (May 2015).

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Fulla also saw microteaching as an important opportunity to try out various instructional techniques:

> After trying teaching listening and speaking and having that discussion on the strategies I used, I felt confident in myself. I think next time I will use other strategies with other language skills. This way I can enhance my pedagogical skills (May 2015).

Four out of the eight participants agreed that microteaching offered the opportunity to try teaching strategies they had observed as learners in other courses. For instance, Noor said she adopted her way of teaching writing from her writing course instructor:

> He taught us writing by engaging us in groups of 4 to prepare our ideas and write a story on a big sheet of paper. I used his way in my model lesson and it succeeded. Microteaching helped me test that strategy and learn from the experience (May 2015).

Iman also admitted trying her 10th grade teacher's strategies in microteaching:

> My 10th grade teacher used games and interactive activities in the class. She managed to grab our attention as learners. In my lesson today, I used similar activities and they worked better with my students here. It was a good experience since we are training in such a safe environment and try teaching procedures we were exposed to as learners. This can prepare us to our actual training at school (May 2015).

All the participants reported that microteaching was not only an opportunity to apply the theories learnt in the TEP but also a chance to observe the others teaching. Muna

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stressed how important it was for her to try and teach and to observe others teaching too:

> The model lessons enabled me to practice my teaching skills and improve a lot. I noticed how I improved from the first teaching experience to the second. What promoted my learning was observing my peers teaching too. It added to my practical knowledge (May 2015).

Elisha referred to the value of observing others teaching in the simulated teaching course:

> I taught two lessons in total. But observing all the others teaching and then discussing all the teaching strategies they used made me feel I taught using all those strategies (May 2015).

Likewise, Fulla felt that observing the others teaching and taking notes of the comments they received, enhanced her teaching skills:

> Teaching two lessons in total wouldn't have made much difference in my teaching abilities. However, observing the others teaching all those model lessons and getting comments on every lesson was very important to enhance my teaching skills. I took notes and revised them regularly at home. For my second model lesson, for example, I tried to avoid the others' mistakes in teaching and adopt the good teaching strategies (May 2015).

In terms of pedagogical skills, the participants reported improvement in lesson plan writing and time organization. Huda reflected on the first part of the simulated teaching as beneficial to enhancing the ability to write lesson plans:

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> We spent a good time developing our lesson plans and creating organized and sequenced teaching activities. Writing measurable objectives, deciding what material to teach to achieve them, what teaching strategies and what evaluation procedures to include helped us to practically grow in preparing manageable lessons (May 2015).

The PSTs believed that writing lesson plans and applying them later in practice in the second part of the simulated teaching, helped them refine an understanding of what could or could not be applied in class. Asmira revealed how she made better connections between lesson plans on paper and execution in class:

> It was all theoretical for me at the beginning but when we applied what we planned, I learnt a lot about what objectives could be measurable and achievable and what objectives could be too ambitious (May 2015).

Similarly, Fulla learnt that writing a lesson plan and carrying it out in the classroom is a repetitive cycle:

> You know, writing the lesson plan and applying it in the class and then reflecting on that plan to refine it is proved to be cyclic in nature. I wrote my lesson plan for the first model lesson and then applied it in the class. After I got feedback from my supervisor and my peers, I revised my lesson plan and made corrections on it. For my second model lesson, I followed the same procedures. I think this is how a teacher can grow professionally (May 2015).

According to the participants, microteaching helped them to some extent learn how to set appropriate time limits for activities. However, due to the limited

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number of teaching trials (here 2 in total), they felt it was necessary to practice more to master time management during the lesson. Iman discovered that her time management in the second model lesson was much better than the first trial:

> On the first teaching experience, I wasted most of the lesson time on introduction and part of the presentation stage. When it was time for the learners to practice what they learnt, we had less than ten minutes. That was a horrible experience. My second experience had some time management problems, but generally, it was much better than the first one. At least, the learners got enough time to practice and present their ideas (May 2015).

Elisha compared her first with the second model lesson and observed that her time management enhanced:

> On my first model lesson, I was supposed to teach for 30 minutes. The activities I prepared took me 17 minutes only. That was a sign of inappropriate timing of activities. I gave my activities more time on paper, but when I applied them in class, I discovered they were too simple to be given such long timing. My second model lesson, for sure, had much better timing. At least, I didn't finish too early. The transition from one activity to another needs more consideration from me. I still need to enhance my timing of my teaching activities (May 2015).

The participants commented on how their progress in language proficiency as well as teaching and planning skills fostered self-confidence and boosted motivation to engage more in teaching. Huda saw this progress as remarkable and encouraging:

> We started our simulated teaching class with low PI. We were unconfident and worried about our ability to stand in front of a class and teach. Now as we are coming to the end of this simulated

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> teaching course, I can securely say that we achieved a lot. I feel I became a teacher even though I still need to practice more to grow even better (June 2015).

Suzan had a similar opinion pertaining to increasing self-confidence and motivation to teach:

> Earlier I felt frustrated when technology failed me in my class. I felt worth nothing as a teacher. Going through the teaching experience again and observing the others teaching, helped me grow. I'm confident and motivated and feel prepared to go to my practicum (June 2015).

Elisha also thought she managed to surpass her fear and shyness when teaching. Because her self-confidence as a novice teacher increased, she consequently became more motivated to start actual teaching practice:

> I feel more confident as a teacher. I'm still novice but compared to the beginning of the simulated teaching class, I find myself confident and motivated to start training at school. The model lessons and the discussion were really beneficial especially for a shy person like me (May 2015).

All the positive effects of teaching experience through the simulated teaching classes justify the importance of providing PSTs opportunities to practice teaching and boost their self-confidence in a safe environment before being sent to secondary schools.

Creating opportunities for PSTs to reflect on their practices and view themselves as teachers. The participants commented on the value of the microteaching lessons, observing peers' lessons, reflecting on those lessons and

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getting feedback from supervisors and peers. Such activities enhanced their reflective and negotiation skills along with their sense of belonging to their PSTs community. For example, comparing their practice and lessons to the others' enabled them to see differences. The PSTs learnt what teaching strengths they had and what needed more developing. For example, Muna indicated that she benefited from observing the others teaching and engaging in group discussions:

> I was nervous at the beginning… I was scared... but watching them teaching and all the group discussions that we had… I think it encouraged me do my lessons. I felt proud of their positive comments also (May 2015).

Additionally, Asmira commented on the positive effect of the feedback she received from her supervisor and peers:

> Naturally, I'm a shy person; I mean I can't behave openly in front of others. I found it easier to talk to my classmates. I think their suggestions and recommendations on how to prepare or teach a lesson helped me a lot. I wouldn't have made such progress in my PI if I hadn't got such comments (May 2015).

Iman also displayed better ability in reflecting on her lessons and pinpointing her strong or weak points. She became more aware of what she needed to develop, at least at this stage. Her following comment shows how she evaluated her teaching procedures:

> Today, I basically started by continuing from the prepositions of time from last week's lesson. I started by using simple things like my pencil case, bottle of water, myself, to ask about where I was, where the things were, to get them to know how to use the prepositions of where the things were. Then, I asked them to detect the word they used to describe things, like for example, on the

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> wall, behind… and so on. Then I continued with a game of pairs where they needed to find the locations of places on a map. For me it was interesting but maybe a bit time-consuming because they had to know how to properly ask and answer where the buildings were. I needed also to watch my timing for the activity (May 2015).

Suzan also appreciated her supervisor and peers' feedback and perceived their criticism as constructive:

> What I liked about our teaching experiences at the simulated teaching class was that it helped me identify my strengths and weaknesses. My supervisor and peers' feedback and comments at the end of my model lessons drew my attention to those strong and weak points in my teaching. Since we all got comments I never felt embarrassed when they criticized any mistake I committed while teaching. I learned a lot from their criticism for me and for the others (June 2015).

Negotiating teaching strategies and personalities while teaching prevailed the post model-lesson discussions. It was not only about improving teaching skills but also gaining interpersonal interaction skills. The PSTs were implicitly learning how to negotiate their dispositions and assumptions. For example, Noor stated:

> I improved my negotiation skills a lot during this course. I think I will need such interpersonal skills when we go on our teaching practicum. I will need such skills to communicate with my mentor, the principal and other teachers. I will even need such skills to interact with my students (May 2015).

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Elisha's comment is in agreement with Noor's:

> We were not only learning how to teach, we were also learning how to express our beliefs and opinions to the others. We were also learning how to accept the others' points of view and appreciate their different opinions. I developed much of my negotiation skills, which I will need for my future career as a teacher (May 2015).

Huda valued the opportunity to develop her negotiation skills:

> My negotiation skills got improved because of having all those post-lesson discussions. The atmosphere was motivating and we were encouraged to exchange our ideas about our model lessons. I believe that our simulated teaching class benefited us far more than just learning how to teach (June, 2015).

The PSTs' appreciation of the stories they shared reflects the strong sense of belonging to their supported community of practice (SCoP). Suzan, for example, reported feeling like a real teacher owing to the PSTs' group for the simulated teaching classes and talking about teaching matters:

> What I like the best about our group are those stories about the challenges each one faces while preparing the lessons. They made me feel like a real teacher chatting with colleagues. I learned a lot from them and I feel that I really belong to a teacher community (June 2015).

Fulla agreed with Suzan and said she was proud of her progress:

> We improved a lot and I feel proud of myself because I made sufficient progress as a teacher. I mean at least compared to my classmates… I see myself as a promising teacher. After listening to

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> my friends' stories here about their worries and their achievements, I can feel that I'm part of this learning community (May 2015).

Muna talked about what they achieved as learners from this group:

> We worked really hard to improve our teaching skills. Our model lessons, our stories, our reflections all added to our professional growth. I think that as long as we belong to such a community, we can even achieve more progress. My professional identity emerged because they all helped me in this group to keep working and trying to teach better lessons (May, 2015).

Elisha expressed a similar feeling of belonging to the SCoP of the simulated teaching classes:

> It's been noteworthy to be in this group. We always exchanged ideas and suggestions. I enjoyed being in this class because it gave me the sense of belonging to something bigger. Our stories of failure and success in preparing and delivering the lesson benefited us a lot and the feedback I got was invaluable (May 2015).

'We', 'our', 'my' are all pronouns that reflect a sense of ownership of learning and progress. The PSTs reported a great sense of PI at the end of the simulated teaching classes and saw themselves as confident and relaxed teachers.

Strong relationships within the simulated teaching class. The participants reported strong relationships with peers as an important factor that facilitated their engagement in the simulated teaching CoP. Such robust relationships also secured constructive and supportive negotiations, boosted their confidence in their teaching skills and mitigated the negative effect of power relationships.

First, by having good relationships with peers, the PSTs had opportunities to develop a teacher identity by increasing their sense of belonging to the CoP. Early on

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in their training, the PSTs talked about concerns, reasons for becoming teachers and possible professional selves. Discovering they had similar concerns and feelings made the participants imagine how the CoP would enhance the learning to teach journey. Elisha discovered how belonging to a CoP and building strong relationships with peers would support her professional growth:

> We have approximate levels in terms of our English proficiency and practical experience. Having each other here will support our professional growth. I feel satisfied being in this homogeneous group (April 2015).

By being flexible, open and respectful, the participants encouraged each other to coalesce and build strong relationships. They aligned with their peers, considering them as a safety net where they could discuss worries, understandings and practices. Noor reported appreciating peer discussions and feedback regarding the simulated teaching classes:

> I'm open to our discussions at our simulated teaching class. My peers are non-judgmental and supportive. I do the same thing for them. I respect their abilities and opinions. That's why we made remarkable progress on our PI after the first trial of teaching (May 2015).

Through such strong bonds with peers, the participants were open to feedback from those peers. They negotiated their practices and perceived any criticism as constructive and supportive to their growth. The participants also shared resources and collaborated on preparing lessons. When Suzan was asked how she felt when she got criticism from peers though she used technology in her lesson, she replied, "I was totally positive about that. They didn't mean to hurt me. What they said would help

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me refine my teaching practices and be aware how to conduct my lessons" (June 2015).

Likewise, Huda felt that her peers' comments were intended to enhance her teaching:

> My peers' comments were helpful in guiding me on how to conduct my teaching procedures. I was listening to them and took some notes. When I went home, I revised their comments and felt amazed at how precise they were in their description of my difficulties. They were right and their comments were productive (June 2015)

The participants believed that relationships with peers facilitated their PI development. They praised these peer interactions by describing how they moved from low to high PI levels, because peers offered "intellectual and emotional support while working together" (Muna, May 2015). The participants described the growth achieved in terms of their teaching skills as a result of working with, and observing their peers. Fulla reflected on how she grew as a teacher due to her peers' support, "I've got a lot of support from my classmates. That support reflected positively on my skills in writing lesson plans and delivering a well-organized lesson" (May 2015). Noor also reported that her classmates helped her amend her teaching style and become more innovative:

> I started with a traditional strategy of lecturing in front of the class. I was talking for long time. My peers' comments directed me to use technology and teaching aids to engage my students more in the lesson and reduce my teacher talk (May 2015).

Through collaboration, negotiation and reflection, the participants engaged in invaluable social activities that facilitated the emergence of a robust PI.

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Strong relationships and peer support also mitigated the negative effect of power relationships that could hinder PI development. Participating in different activities that involve the other members as well, entails PSTs negotiating their practices and understanding with those members to facilitate PI construction. This does not presuppose the presence of harmonious relationships among all members; hence, tensions and challenges may arise in the context.

In the initial stage of training (i.e., the simulated teaching stage), I noted that power relationships prevailed in the training atmosphere. The PSTs objected to their instructor's lectures on pedagogical theories upon the first meeting for the simulated teaching class. The participants chose non-participation in response to the early student teaching stage. They were silent without showing any sign of disappointment with the instructor. Later, they wondered if they would talk to their instructor, whether he would positively accept their suggestion, but they seemed reluctant and decided not to. The participants chose to just follow his strategy. Huda expressed some disappointment when they were exposed to more theory during the simulated teaching class, "My expectation of this class is to provide me the opportunity to enact the teacher professional roles and grow as a teacher. I did not expect to have more theories" (Mar 2015).

Lacking such productive communication between master and apprentice resulted in the participants' dissatisfaction with the onset of the simulated teaching class. Throughout the training activities, they maintained a formal relationship with their supervisor. Away from the supervisor, the participants gradually developed their own strategies, language and stories. I noticed more interaction between them when the supervisor was out of the class or asked them to discuss their activities in groups (observation notes March10th-24th 2015). They also collaborated outside the

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class. The participants sought their peers' advice more than the supervisor's advice on how to prepare and teach a lesson.

The participants perceived their instructor as a higher authority in the simulated teaching class although he led the discussions. Noor, for instance, revealed that the participants never argued with their supervisor's expertise, Lacking such productive communication between master and apprentice resulted in the participants' dissatisfaction with the onset of the simulated teaching class. Throughout the training activities, they maintained a formal relationship with their supervisor. Away from the supervisor, the participants gradually developed their own strategies, language and stories. I noticed more interaction between them when the supervisor was out of the class or asked them to discuss their activities in groups (observation notes March10th-24th 2015). Nonetheless, their perceptions of the supervisor did not hinder their PI development because they had peers for support.

Socio-contextual factors supported PI development among PSTs throughout the simulated teaching class. The following data presentation reveals that during teaching practicum, another group of socio-contextual factors led to a PI crisis.

The third shift PSTs experienced in terms of PI occurred upon moving on to the teaching practicum stage. The findings reveal that a crisis in participants' PI occurred on account of two main groups of socio-contextual factors: (1) institutional factors and (2) interpersonal relationships.

Institutional factors. The participants reported that three contextual factors negatively affected their PI construction: the poor physical condition of the schools, inadequate resources at the schools and the depleting and isolating practicum context.

Poor physical condition of schools. The participants believed that the poor physical condition of the school buildings added to the difficulties they faced in class. First, the windows were open wide with no way to close them, which caused outside noise to disturb class. The participants reported needing to speak very loudly to overcome the outside noise. Asmira, for example, felt exhausted from shouting all the time:

> It was really tiring for me to shout all the time to cover the noise coming from around the school. It was enough to have to deal with our students' noise. I feel frustrated because I have much pain in my throat (July 2015).

Iman described how students from outside would stop and talk to students in the class and she could not overcome this problem. She described the school's physical environment and drew attention to the fact that PSTs were suffering from noise outside class too, such that it lessened teachers' ability to control students:

> The school environment is generally noisy. When I went around the school, I noticed the classes are quite open and with no windows, so basically, anyone passing by the class can disturb the class. Because boys being boys when they pass by their friends' class, they talk to each other whether the teacher is there or not. When I went in for observation with my mentor teacher, I saw them also. Somehow, it causes… it's hard for a teacher to control the students, not only the ones inside but also those outside. In addition, there are two recess times. The first one is for lower secondary form 2, then the second will be for forms 3-5. Different time. During the recess, there will be a lot of noise with form 2 students going around the school. They take time to go back to the canteen and away from the classes. Also, after they finish, they go around school again. My class is at the center and many people pass near it; hence I suffer a lot (July 2015).

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I agreed with Iman as I took notice observing Asmira and Iman's classes regarding the noise outside classes. That noise affected teachers' voice projection and decreased their ability to control their classes.

The same problem with a noisy environment occurred at Muna and Fulla's school, but to a milder degree. Muna and Fulla could not close the windows because that would severely affect the ventilation inside the classes. Fulla mentioned that students would look unrestful if she asked them to close the windows:

> When I force them to close the windows to block part of the noise outside, my students start to feel uncomfortable after ten or fifteen minutes. They started calling my name several times and telling me they were shocked and unable to breathe. I understand that because it is really hot inside with those old electric fans. Then, I reopened the windows and got back to shouting so that they can hear my voice clearly (June 2015).

Inadequate Resources. Additionally, the participants reported that inadequate school resources hindered their teaching performance and creativity. For example, they could not integrate technology in their teaching. Asmira referred to her inability to use technology in class:

> You can't use computer and LCD inside class. It's not available in school. But there is in the library and I have to book for my class to take my students to go there. I tried on some occasions, but the library was always booked by schoolteachers for other subjects. Eventually, I gave up the idea of integrating technology in class (July 2015).

According to Muna, the principal wanted them to use the computer lab for teaching, but it was under renovation until the end of her practicum:

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> I felt happy when the principal informed us that we can use the computer lab to teach our classes. However, the practicum came to its end and we couldn't take our students to the computer lab because it was under renovation. It was a loss for us because we didn't try out integrating technology within our classes with real students. I think this part of our PI remained undeveloped (August 2015).

Besides technology, the participants reported that audiovisual materials were not available at school; hence, they needed to prepare their own. The participants complained about having to pay for educational aid, so they tried to use minimal aid to save money. Fulla, for example, reverted to traditional teaching because she could not afford it otherwise:

> To conduct creative lessons, you need to use educational aids to attract students' attention. I'm a student and I can't afford to pay for all the educational aids that we need to teach. I found myself revert to traditional teaching. It's cheaper for me (August 2015).

Iman found it difficult to develop her innovative self in the absence of resources in the practicum context:

> We were trained to use technology, games, worksheets and different aiding tools. It's true that for the simulated teaching class, we paid for our educational aids. But those were only two model lessons. Here, we teach every day, so we can't pay for all that. We are deprived from using educational aids. I can't enact my innovative self under such conditions (July 2015).

The participants believed that with such poor conditions their teaching abilities and creativity declined.

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Depleting and isolating context. According to the participants, the school administration assigned them responsibilities of extracurricular activities and covering absent teachers besides teaching classes. The extra load lessened their ability to focus on professional growth. Muna explained how the extra tasks were depleting for her:

> I thought I came here to practice teaching under the supervision of a mentor. But in fact, I work alone in my classes. When I don't have classes I have the task of training a group of students for extracurricular activities or go to a class of an absent teacher. I teach four classes a day and the other free classes are not actually free. I feel so exhausted (June 2015).

Fulla also complained she felt tired and unable to focus on preparing for classes due to the extra work assigned by the school administration:

> I work all day at school. I don't have enough time to see my mentor. I have to supervise students in extracurricular activities and cover absent teachers. Why do they treat us this way? I can't prepare at school. I have to wait till I go home, but then I have to stay up till late and then get up early to come to school. I feel really exhausted (June 2015).

The participants could not understand how such tasks would enhance their teaching abilities. Iman perceived the effect of such extra load negatively:

> I think they don't consider us teachers. They just want to make the maximum benefit of our presence on the school site. At the beginning, I believed that the principal asked for the maximum number of PSTs to get new teaching ideas and to give PSTs the opportunity to collaborate. It turned out to be to assign them all the tough work and alleviate the burdens of her teachers (June 2015).

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The participants saw themselves isolated from their mentors, peers and other staff at the practicum site. Due to the extra burdens, the participants could not meet regularly with their mentors. The PSTs were not able to attend their mentors' classes and vice versa. Muna, for example, revealed that she could barely meet her mentor:

> We are both busy all the time, especially me. Even when she has a free class, I'm still busy in my classes or covering an absent teacher's class. That isolates me and reduces my ability to negotiate my teaching practices with my mentor (July 2015).

For Asmira, the worst thing was having limited meetings with her peers, who could have supported her a lot:

> I thought when they seated us at one table, we would meet every day. But our school burdens deprived us of such fruitful meetings. For example, we were assigned three poor students to teach writing and reading Malay, not English. How could this help us? Meeting with our peers and discussing our lesson plans and teaching strategies would have enhanced our teaching abilities (July 2015).

Fulla described the separation of PSTs from the other schoolteachers as the worst decision, which reduced the PSTs' ability to mingle with those teachers and benefit from their experiences:

> I don't know who the teachers in the next room are. We don't meet because we are separated. Then we are too busy and we can't even communicate with those teachers to benefit from their long experience at secondary schools (July 2016).

The participants reported that the school policy resulted in tiring the PSTs, isolating and marginalizing them in the school context. They thought that juggling all

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those burdens alone diminished their ability to construct a PI and led them to experience a PI crisis.

The next part presents the interpersonal factors that negatively affected PSTs' PI construction during the practicum stage.

Interpersonal factors. The participants revealed that their relationships with mentors, university supervisors, peers and secondary school students had a negative effects on their PI construction and led to a PI crisis.

PST-Mentor Relationship. The participants complained that the negative experience with their mentors' insufficient teaching opportunities (for observation and feedback) and ineffective communication contributed to a PI crisis. The warm welcome the participants experienced on the first day at the secondary schools raised their expectations of their mentors' support. Muna expressed she had positive expectations, "I expected my mentor to offer me guidance and share her practical knowledge with me" (June 2015). Asmira also reported having high expectations from her mentor, "I thought that she would observe my classes and give me genuine feedback that could help me become better as a teacher" (June 2015). Suzan also believed that her mentor would help improve her teaching, "I wanted to learn from her how to manage my class and activities and how to apply different techniques to teach students" (June 2015).

Insufficient Teaching Opportunities

i. Insufficient Observation

The participants reported that the limited observations exchanged with their mentors deprived them of constructing new teacher images, learning classroom-management techniques or experiencing applying pedagogical strategies in real classes. All participants agreed on the lack of a resource for possible selves since

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they were not invited to observe their mentors' classes. Asmira mentioned that attending one class of her mentor was not enough to see different teachers’ roles in action:

> It was only one class that I observed for my mentor. Her voice was really loud and she elicited information from the students. She motivated them to participate in the class. I saw how she was a guide for them in that activity. But I don't know what about other teacher's roles. For example, when the students have to present their work or when there is a fight between two students, what would she do? (July 2015).

Fulla, who thought her mentor was an experienced teacher, expressed her desire to see the way her mentor incorporated her experience in professional practice:

> I feel that there is a big gap between me as a novice and her as an experienced teacher. I wanted to see her more in the class to understand how to engage experience in practice. Lacking the opportunity to observe my mentor's classes deprived me from seeing more examples of teachers’ roles (July 2015).

Muna also thought that telling about what a teacher could do in class is different from showing how professionals enact such roles in reality:

> We learned a lot about different teachers’ roles in class and how to be a facilitator, a guide, a parent, etc. We even practiced such roles in our simulated teaching class with our classmates as our learners. At secondary school, the context is real and different. I wanted more observation to learn how to teach in class. I think it was a big loss not to attend more classes of our mentors (June 2015).

According to the participants, classroom management techniques were the most important teaching aspects they could have learnt from observing their mentors

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teaching. The participants attributed their inadequate classroom management to the absence of mentor observation in several classes. Asmira, for example, complained that exchanging two observations with her mentor introduced her to no real experience of class management:

> "I observed one class for her; she observed one class for me. Then I was left alone to struggle with discipline problems and classroom control. The students were used to her way of managing the class and I didn't know what to do to control them in most of my classes (August 2015).

The same difficulties were reported by Iman, who blamed her mentor's absence from her classes for the discipline problems Iman faced with students:

> I don't like their policy of leaving us alone in our classes to become independent and learn how to handle our students. They could first teach us, show us and guide us how to control those students, then they could leave us alone. I'm totally upset with sending us to the wild alone (July 2015).

The participants felt that due to inadequate observation, they could not observe or attempt different teaching practices that suit the secondary school context. Muna reported that their mentors considered the participants as well educated and trained regarding teaching theories:

> The mentors knew that we had learnt about teaching at university and that the PSTs practiced teaching through microteaching at university. That's why those mentors thought that we did not need them. But actually, that wasn't true. What we did at university was idealistic compared with the real and harsh context of a secondary school. I needed to observe my mentor teaching and I needed her to observe my teaching and comment on my strong and weak points (July 2015).

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Iman also found she received no guidance on how to teach:

> Even for the only class she observed for me, she only attended half of it and her face showed how disappointed she felt. I expected her to explain her opinion to me. All I got was that I had to keep my voice loud enough to be heard by students at the back and engage all students (July 2015).

Fulla claimed that the PSTs built a shallow repertoire of teaching practices due to lack of support with observation or feedback:

> In spite of developing my teaching practice repertoire, I feel that I lost many of the innovative practices and roles encountered during microteaching. Many of my practices now focus on controlling students and engaging them in traditional writing activities to keep them silent. It's the mid of my practicum and I'm scared of using games or group work because I don't want to lose control in class. Maybe later I will try (July 2015).

The class observation data indicated the participants' inability to handle activities or timing. The participants sometimes lost proper sequencing of activities, which resulted in chaos in their classes.

ii. Insufficient Feedback

The participants reported that their mentors observed one of their classes at the beginning of the practicum and provided feedback on that lesson. Considering the participants were new to the context, the mentors offered them quick and superficial feedback, focusing mainly on the PSTs' ability to control their students. Muna reported that her mentor's feedback was short with focus on classroom control:

> My mentor observed me once at the beginning of my practicum but she didn't give thorough comments. Her immediate comment was that I have to be firmer with Form 4 (10th grade) students. She

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> said, "so far in general it was ok." But of course, there are many things I have to improve. I expect my mentor to pass her written comments today. But I have a class now (July 2015).

An immediate discussion with this PST could have taken her deeper from the level of 'in general' to understanding her teaching strategies and class control procedures. Allowing the PST to negotiate her worries and reflect on her attitudes and values is essential at this preparatory stage.

Similarly, Iman commented on the shallow feedback from her mentor:

> After attending part of my class, she went out. Later, she told me that I had to pay attention to my voice projection and try to control my students. I didn't respond but I wondered in my head what about other activities in the class. Had I handled those activities well or not? What about my presentation, my evaluation of the students… Then, I thought maybe it was just the beginning. Maybe in the next observations she would talk more (July 2015).

The participants revealed that the PST-mentor relationship evolved to be based on occasional unseen observation (i.e., mentors do not attend trainees' classes; they only listen to trainees' recounts of those lessons) except for two seen observations mid and end of the practicum for assessment purposes. The participants reported receiving occasional feedback on their lesson plans or descriptions of their classes to their mentors. The PSTs would write the lesson plans, show them to their mentors, get feedback and then conduct them in the classroom. Muna explained how limited the feedback she got on her lesson plan was, which was only once at the beginning and once later in the middle of her practicum:

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> I got my mentor's feedback on my lesson plans just twice during the practicum. That feedback was insufficient because I prepared many other lessons and they were different from those two lesson plans (August 2015).

The PSTs reported receiving occasional post-lesson feedback, perhaps once or twice for 5-10 minute periods after assembly or during the activities. The participants indicated describing a lesson from the previous day to the mentor, who would make comments on that particular lesson recount. Iman, for example, mentioned that she received oral feedback on her lesson once from her mentor:

> It happened around mid of my practicum, I saw my mentor after the assembly and she asked me how it was going with me. I briefly described my lesson from the previous day. Of course, I avoided talking about my struggles with classroom management. She just said the lesson seemed ok (July 2015).

The worksheets done in class were another way for the mentors to follow what the PSTs did in class and assess the students' progress. Muna reported that she received no feedback on those worksheets, because they were only to show that the PSTs work in class. Muna showed much care with the worksheets in class to present them to the mentor as proof of Muna's work in her class:

> I gave them a worksheet and asked them to work on it and I set time for that. The worksheet is important because the mentor will see it to see the result. If the students are unable to finish that, I'm afraid the teacher won't be satisfied, so I have to make sure that the students finish their work before I can proceed. It's proof for the mentor that I was working in the class. That's why I can't spend more time on group work, games and acting. The mentors can't depend just on our description of the lesson. They need tangible

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proof: paper work. But at the end we don't get feedback on those worksheets (June 2015).

The participants reported that the lack of genuine support with observation, guidance and feedback from their mentors made them experience many tensions regarding classroom management and teaching practices. Such tensions resulted in the participants experiencing low self-esteem and a sharp drop in their sense of self-confidence and self-efficacy. Their mentors played a minor role in guiding their teaching. The mentors were themselves overloaded with administrative work and professional growth courses, as the PSTs reported. Due to the heavy workload, the mentors were unable to respond effectively to their trainees' needs for guidance with teaching. Asmira complained that her mentor was too engaged in her administrative tasks and training to guide Asmira, "She's busy right now. She can't come to my class. She has to focus on her duties and professional growth courses. I'm afraid she has no time to observe me and guide me as a trainee" (June 2015). Around halfway through the practicum, I asked Asmira how regularly she met her mentor and she answered, "Sometimes, like last Monday. But last week, she wasn't around for two or three days. She had to attend a training shop outside school" (July 2015).

iii. Ineffective Communication

The participants revealed that ineffective communication with their mentors made them feel unsafe to open up. They chose to be silent to avoid the mentors' negative judgments. Iman, for instance, expressed that her mentor's negative attitude towards Iman's presence at school resulted in Iman's low self-esteem:

> I felt really nervous to be at my practicum because a week before, we came here to meet the teachers, get our schedule and meet our mentors. My mentor teacher seemed to be quite strict. Although she's really friendly, her image gave me the chills. She passed me

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> the first class for form 1. So basically, it's one of the most intelligent classes. But she told me, my mentor teacher, she told me that those excellent boys in her class were one of her motivations and reasons to come to school, so she was quite sad that she had to pass her excellent students to me. I felt the pressure to continue teaching them well in English. I felt unable to do that (July 2015).

Iman described how that kind of meeting with her mentor increased her nervousness and fear of teaching such good students English. It reminded Iman of her previous concerns, which she expressed during the simulated teaching class, pertaining to students' high proficiency level. In addition, what the mentor said was not actually encouraging to Iman; rather, it made her feel that she was taking something precious from her mentor. Iman chose to remain silent so as not to irritate her mentor:

> I think she wasn't happy to see me at school. But she had to accept me. I couldn't argue with her so I chose to keep silent because I didn't want to irritate her more. I just listened to her and in my heart felt really bad (July 2015).

Alleviating tensions rising between Iman and her mentor would need much effort on both sides to create a more collegial relationship. Later, it was clear that such progress in their relationship was not realized:

> I couldn't make friends with her. I rarely see her around, that's why I kept silent when she passed her comments on those rare occasions. I thought by that time we would build a good relationship. She didn't give such chance because she was away from me all the time (July 2015).

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Fulla also looked to her mentor as a figure of authority, which prevented her from approaching her mentor for help:

> I was quite scared when she came to my class because she looked serious. During the lesson, she looked very serious and she tried to walk around to see the students' progress. I felt quite nervous when she went around. I avoided consulting her on my teaching issues because I was afraid of being judged (August 2015).

In expressing such fears at the end of the training, Fulla also reflected on the absence of mutual and collegial relationships between herself and her mentor. Fulla revealed that their talks were one-way conversations. Her mentor was talking, suggesting, assessing, while Fulla was listening and accepting silently, "when she talks, I just listen. I don't want her to think I was facing problems controlling my students or applying teaching strategies in class. I was sure she would compare me as a novice to herself and definitely I wouldn't make it in her assessment (August 2015). This ineffective communication resulted in a formal relationship that lacked intimacy or real mutual communication. Asmira and Iman's relationships with their mentors also lacked mutual understanding and communication. Hence, the PSTs expressed feeling alone in the context of training. Iman explained:

> During the simulated teaching class, I could seek my instructor, my classmates, and other senior students at the faculty for help at any time. Here (i.e., practicum) I feel I'm totally alone like walking in the desert. My mentor is absent from the scene. My peers are also overloaded and most of the time have their burdens to juggle (July 2015).

In fact, Iman's relationship with her mentor developed into a distant and strict relationship, because the mentor chose to make negative comments on Iman's

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performance to the university supervisor instead of discussing them with Iman herself:

> She told my supervisor that she wasn't satisfied with my progress. She wanted me to utilize more proper teaching strategies and build close relationships with the students. She also said I don't make real effort to make progress. I think that was unfair. She didn't observe my classes and she didn't invite me to her classes. She forgot that PSTs needed to juggle many duties as PSTs and students. I think she asked her students about me instead of meeting me and discussing her suggestions directly with me (August 2015).

The participants reported that the sort of communication breakdown between them and their mentors added to their frustration and PI crisis.

PST-University supervisor relationship. The participants recounted that the limited interaction with their university supervisors resulted in a drop in self-confidence and desire to become teachers. For the PSTs, their supervisors' roles diminished upon starting the practicum. They perceived their supervisors' roles in the practicum as assessors. The participants also felt that what their mentors had to say about their progress was more important than what their supervisors actually said. The participants thought their supervisors already had their own burdens, which left them no room for guide the PSTs throughout the practicum. Surprisingly, Suzan thought she would gain nothing by getting into contact with her supervisor, "Why would I call my supervisor and ask for her help? I mean it's not her job. I have to handle my issues alone (June 2015).

The participant-supervisor relationship was restricted to two observations followed by post-observation conferences to show the PSTs what went well and what went wrong with their lessons. The supervisors also encouraged the participants to

exert more effort on their management and teaching skills. Fulla described how disappointing her meeting with her supervisor was:

> I expected him to ask me about my difficulties and help me find a solution to them. But he focused on what went on wrong, what went on well in my lesson and encouraged me to use more interactive activities. I was really disappointed (August 2015).

Those brief sessions were not enough to convince the PSTs of the importance of negotiating the gaps between the university and classroom perspectives. The participants gave the supervisors the space to explain their (i.e., supervisors) points of view without any interaction or discussion. From the participants' perspectives, the activities advocated by the university such as group work, games and songs were welcome in the school context. However, the PSTs found that in real classes and with real students, they had much more difficulty than with using student-centered activities.

Asmira commented on her frustration with her supervisor criticizing her activities and time management:

> He reminded me of what I practiced during the simulated teaching class. But that was an idealistic environment with excellent students, resources and technology available for us. He should have judged me based on the harsh environment of the secondary school. I waited for his guidance and support, not criticism. Meeting my supervisor added to my tensions and made me feel unconfident (July 2014).

Iman also reported a drop in her professional identity due to her supervisor's negative attitude towards her:

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> He thought I wasn't active and enthusiastic while I was teaching. That annoyed me a lot because he didn't know the difficulties I had to handle because of the students, lack of resources, the extra work and the mentor's attitude. He didn't understand and I just kept silent. His attitude made me frustrated and unwilling to continue with my practicum. At that moment, I felt I wasn't a teacher and I will never be (July 2015).

PST - Senior others Relationships. The principal and secondary school teachers were another human factor that could enrich the PSTs' experience at the practicum sites. Muna, Fulla and Suzan were unable to assess their principal at the beginning of the practicum. They saw her as cooperative and supportive but strict at the same time. Their relationships with the principal diminished, as she had many other administrative duties to worry about rather than a group of PSTs training at the school. Iman and Asmira also perceived their principal as supportive, but they only met her occasionally. When I asked the participants about how they perceived the principal, Suzan started complaining by saying, "she doesn't like our presence…" (June 2015). The other participants interrupted and said the principal was alright. Such sense of power relationship was clear in their attitude not to criticize the secondary school context.

The PSTs found themselves isolated either at separate tables away from the school teachers, as was the case of Iman and Asmira, or in a separate room, as in the case of Fulla and Muna. This arrangement kept their relationships with the school staff at a very formal level. According to Fulla, the separation reduced the PSTs' ability to collaborate with other teachers or benefit from their experience:

> They sat in the staff room while we sat in a separate room for PSTs. I found it somewhat strange because as teachers we need to interact with each other. They're experienced teachers and we

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> could ask them about different tensions we face. Our mentor is helpful and cooperative and I benefit a lot from her but she's also overburdened by her duties. We need to talk with the others, communicate with them and learn more (July 2015).

From the participants' point of view, they were perceived as second-class citizens who were at the school to help alleviate the teachers' burdens. The power relationship theme is notable in such hierarchy. Hence, the PSTs avoided consulting the teachers, first because those teachers were busy with their classes. Fulla hinted that it was almost impossible to collaborate with schoolteachers due to their burdens:

> I can't just consult other teachers because they don't sit in our room and they have many administrative tasks to handle and classes to teach. We also have the same burdens, so when would we meet to collaborate? I expected to build such a cooperative relationship with other schoolteachers, but the context doesn't facilitate the emergence of such relationships (July 2015).

The other reason why PSTs avoided consulting senior school teachers was that the PSTs were afraid of being judged if the teachers discovered the PSTs were unable to control their classes. Suzan reported feeling horrible if she was misjudged by school teachers:

> They are experienced teachers and they expect us to be excellent in language and strong in controlling our classes. I'm afraid if I consult one of those teachers or complain about class control problems, they would ridicule me or think I'm inefficient (July 2015).

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Muna summarized the PSTs' relationships with their principal and school teachers:

> The teachers, we only see the teachers who sit in this staff room, but those in the next room, we don't know them. Sometimes, we also see teachers who are not here, but that's not very frequent. The principal, I have no problem with her, we don't talk to each other. She doesn't talk to us; she's busy. But with the senior person in the office, I have no problem. She knows my name (little laugh with pride). She always informs me of anything they need to inform us about (August 2015).

This conversation took place prior to the end of the practicum stage. Her description reflects that their social relationships with the school staff never developed to the collegial or mutual level. That would also explain the low sense of belonging they had at the schools. Asmira commented, "I'm not suitable to sit in the staff room. I don't suit this isolated place. You sit at your table silently and work on your administrative work. It's really gloomy for me" (August 2015). The PSTs could thus not view their emerging PI in terms of relationship building.

A question that may arise in the readers' minds is why the PSTs would not enact their agency to negotiate their worries. Based on the interview data, observation data and literature on the Malaysian culture, three factors may have resulted in such passivity on the participants' side. First, the participants reported that due to a lack of communication with senior others on the practicum sites they constructed an image of their supervisors, mentors and school teachers as 'authority of experience' (Munby & Russell, 1994, p. 10) while the PSTs were novices with no real or limited experience in teaching. Asmira supposed that the experienced school teachers at her practicum site know what is best for their students, "They have been teaching for many years. They know what is best for those students in the context of

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the school" (July 2015). Iman also saw her mentor as an expert that Iman could not challenge, "She is the expert and I'm here to learn, not to challenge her. Actually, I can see her point in her comments, she's right" (July 2015).

The second reason for the participants not negotiating their worries with senior others at the practicum site was that the participants revealed that the way their schools, mentors and supervisors treated them made the PSTs develop an identity of followers at this stage, whereby experts instruct and novices follow. Participants explained that feeling constrained by power relationships resulted in low self-esteem. Asmira declared that she decided to become a follower and non-agentic because she was not encouraged to share her concerns with senior others at the practicum site, "Those seniors lead us to construct our PI and we have to respect that and follow their instructions. We are here to learn not to change context" (July 2015). Such traditional understanding departed from the social theory perspectives of the active learner who negotiates their learning before internalizing it in one's cognitive layers (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

The third reason for the participants becoming traditional followers in the training context is that senior others considered the participants as students and not teachers. The participants got negative comments on their proficiency and pedagogic skills and the need to work harder independently to improve. Suzan, for example, explained she was intimidated to speak, so as not to make language mistakes:

> I got negative comments regarding my language skills. That made me feel intimidated to talk. If we want people to listen to us, we need to be more competent. Other teachers here have experience and they built their subject content knowledge. I don't think I want to go through a discussion when I sound stupid and lack knowledge (June 2015).

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Fulla also commented that receiving such negative comments, though occasionally at the beginning of her practicum, made her unconfident and disappointed:

> I know I'm a student and I'm still learning. But I expected the school context to guide and support that learning by considering us equal colleagues. Secondary school staff's negative attitude was disappointing (July 2015).

PST- Peer Relationships. While most studies report the positive impact of the presence of peers on PSTs' PI construction (see e.g., Khalid, 2014), the participants in the current study reported that their peers' presence affected their agentic and innovative selves negatively in the practicum context. The participants and their peers encouraged each other to adopt a follower identity in the training context. They convinced each other that it was a short period. Fulla, for instance, was convinced that the PSTs could not induce any changes in the practicum context:

> It's better to listen to our mentors. It's not our job to change the context here. They are used to students' discipline problems. I think they have some more important tasks to focus on. What's the point trying to talk about school problems while no one will listen to us (June 2015).

Due to such negative influence, the participants could not see themselves as agentic in the school context. Asmira also thought it was not her job to make changes in an established culture in the practicum context:

> The other PSTs and I were talking about what the school needed to do to overcome the discipline problems and improve school facilities. We also talked about school policy in our training. But then, we thought that we were visitors and that we had a peripheral position in the school context. Better to keep quiet because nobody

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> would listen to us. The changes were not easy to conduct (July 2015).

The participants and their peers perceived the school principals and mentors as their main assessors; hence, they had to conform to the school culture even when they objected to some school practices. Suzan for example, did not like wasting part of her class with a school activity. She assumed complaining would mean nothing, because those co-curriculum activities may have been more important for the school. Her peers reminded her of their school days when the PSTs were learners, "My peers reminded me how we enjoyed wasting class time on such activities. I then thought it might be better if I just keep silent" (June 2017).

Additionally, the participants revealed that they accepted the oppressive school practices, because their peers encouraged them not to confront the administration or let the administration hear the participants' objections. Fulla indicated that the participants in general and she in particular did not accept the school's training policy deep down:

> We don't like being separated from the staff, being assigned such administrative tasks or being asked to cover absent teachers all the time. I cannot see how those tasks would help us construct our PI or improve our teaching skills. I didn't complain because my peers thought nobody would listen to us and that we would gain the school disrespect (August 2015).

Iman, who thought the PSTs were mistaken to have their voices unheard, admitted at the end that she could not be the only PST to keep challenging her mentor:

> I can't just keep challenging my mentor or complaining about the discouraging school environment. Why be the only one who

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> speaks? My friends are right. At the end of the day, I need my mentor and principal to give me good scores. I decided to follow my peers' policy and just take what was offered to me at school even if it was far less than what I expected. I talk about guidance and support (July 2015).

Although peers had supportive roles in the participants' PI construction journey in terms of some teaching and classroom management strategies, as will be discussed later, they clearly had another negative role when discouraging speaking up about their worries. The silence resulted in participants losing self-agency. The participants believed their peers dragged them away from enhancing their agency and building confidence in their potential to affect and induce change in the training context.

PST - School student relationships. The participants indicated experiencing a PI crisis from the beginning until the second half of their practicum due to the secondary school students' attitude towards the PSTs, discipline issues and students' fluctuating motivation. The participants claimed that the school students' initial negative attitude towards them was shocking for them. Iman felt that her students saw her as a young trainee, or a student, and tried to take advantage of her:

> It was shocking for me seeing them treat me as a student in their class, not a teacher. They were asking about their teacher all the time at the beginning. I felt nervous every time I had to go to the class (July 2015).

Asmira also commented on her students' negative attitude towards her, especially on how they perceived her voice:

> When I speak quietly they ask me to raise my voice and when I raise it they start laughing and ask me to lower it. It's very

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> confusing for me. I try to satisfy them but they just don't believe I'm a teacher. They look down on me. They made me lose my confidence with their negative attitude (2015).

Suzan indicated that her students' attitudes totally frustrated her:

> Many of them don't participate because they think I'm there for a temporary period and I will leave soon. They don't take me seriously. This negative attitude made me sensitive and easily annoyed. I even lost my temper once and shouted at them to keep silent, but they didn't care (June 2015).

The observation data for the first classes of the participants show that the students were not taking the participants seriously. For example, I was sitting at the back of Suzan's class. The students, who were sitting just next to me, were calling the teacher (Suzan) and complaining they could not hear her voice or see what she wrote on the board. Suzan got confused and did not know what to do. I asked the students if they really could not see or hear. They said they could but were nagging their teacher.

The secondary school students did not perceive the PSTs as teachers; hence, they were inclined to challenge the PSTs' authority. I noticed how the students' negative attitude resulted in the participants' confusion with their activities. The participants appeared nervous and intimidated to go ahead with the planned activities because they did not want the students to mock/disrespect them more.

According to the participants, the student discipline issue was the worst part of their PI construction journey. The participants reported that student discipline issues included late arrival to classes, disruptive talking and yelling at each other.

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Fulla explained that such difficulties irritated and negatively overshadowed her lesson plan:

> Sometimes I go into a Form 4 class (10th grade) and I find that half of the class is out. I have to wait for them sometimes 15-20 minutes till they come into the class. While waiting for them, I can't proceed with my lesson plan and try to move slowly with my procedures till they arrive (June 2015).

Iman commented on how bad she felt when her students yelled at each other:

> I'd feel helpless when they start yelling at each other. They ignore my presence and quarrel as if there is no teacher there. Usually, I have to stop my lesson and try solve the problem and that results in wasting time for instruction. I can't focus on my professional growth in such a chaotic environment (July 2015).

Asmira reported struggling with her students' disruptive talks:

> They sit with their friends at the same table though their teacher changed their places but they keep going back. The problem is that they keep talking with each other and laughing. They don't pay attention to the lesson. My activities are wasted because of that. Sometimes I feel angry and depressed. They're giving me no opportunity to teach (July 2015).

In addition to students' negative attitude towards the PSTs and the discipline problems, the participants agreed that students' fluctuating motivation contributed to their PI crisis. Participants reported feeling frustrated because most of the time they could not understand what motivated their students. Fulla, who was the most enthusiastic to use games in class, described how frustrated she felt when her students did not engage in her game:

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> I prepared a game for them because I noticed that they liked games in a previous class. But I was working alone because they thought it was a boring game. They just didn't have the desire to work. I tried to encourage them, but I failed. I felt frustrated and turned to a traditional activity (July 2015).

Muna also could not tell when her students were ready to work and when not:

> Sometimes they want to talk and work really hard. They even come early to class. I feel happy and enthusiastic to work with them. But then, when they don't want to work, they just disrupt the class, talk to each other and shout. I can't explain such swinging in their motivation. It's tiring for me and disappointing (July 2015).

Asmira reported feeling frustrated and disappointed when she prepared well for a lesson but then the students did not work:

> Last week, I prepared them worksheets that I had to pay for. But they were demotivated saying "oh, teacher can we take it as homework?" It was shocking for me. I decided not to prepare worksheets for them the next time. I come to class, ask myself if they would like to learn today, or they would keep thinking English was difficult, and just don't bother engaging in the activities (July 2015).

To sum up, participants experienced a PI crisis during the practicum due to a number of institutional and interpersonal factors.

RQ3. How did PSTs employ adaptation processes to develop their professional identity?

In the previous discussion, the results revealed that personal and socio-contextual (institutional and interpersonal) factors had a major role in participants' PI construction. The subsequent data presentation will show how participants used

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personal adaptation strategies to respond to the opportunities or challenges to which the context exposed them.

Using an Observation-Experimentation-Evaluation Cycle in the Simulated Teaching Context

Participants reported that being members of the simulated teaching SCoP enabled them to activate the three adaptation strategies of observation, experimentation and evaluation to construct their PI. The three adaptation strategies facilitated a shift in PI from low PI due to their low motivation to become teachers, no confidence in language proficiency and pedagogical skills and lack of practical experience (i.e., being novice teachers), to high PI, featured mainly by self-confidence, compassion and motivation .

Observation

Observation for building a repertoire of professional selves. The interview data revealed that participants observing their peers during the simulated practice contributed to building a professional image. The participants focused on four main areas when observing peers: teacher's character, teaching ability, teacher's language performance and classroom management. The participants reported observing peers' model lessons to discover strengths and weaknesses in their peers' performance; therefore, the participants would construct a clearer image of teaching performance. Moreover, the participants felt well-guided during the microteaching observations because the supervisor provided an observation sheet (see appendix D) to use as reference.

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Through observation, the participants were able to build images of personal traits and skills of a successful language teacher. Iman described liking Suzan's teacher's character when Suzan delivered her model lesson:

> She was totally confident using her power point presentation of ideas and moving on the stage in front of us. Even when she missed explaining the activity to the learners, she didn't panic. She simply explained it and engaged her students again in the activity. She was enthusiastic and inspired us a lot (June 2015).

Another teacher characteristic that participants learned through their observations is that a teacher needs to be patient, respect the students and maintain authority. Muna saw Noor as a good example of such patient and respectable teacher who managed to establish authority in class:

> I think Noor has an effective teacher self. She was patient with students' behaviors and talks. She respected their opinions and encouraged them to speak up their ideas. Most importantly for me, she looked confident and able to establish her authority instead of her learners. Everyone resected that (May 2015).

Participants indicated that observing their peers' model lessons enhanced their teaching skills through exposure to different teaching strategies. Attention grabbers were the first teaching strategy that enticed participants. Asmira said she developed a repertoire of attention grabber strategies by observing her peers teaching:

> I learned a number of strategies to arouse my students' interest in the lesson. I learnt to use a song, a short video or a photo that is related to the lesson. That benefited me in my teaching (May 2015).

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Elisha expressed admiration of Huda's teaching strategies in reading comprehension:

> I liked how Huda taught us that lesson about chocolate. She used a video and worksheets for reading comprehension. Also, the song she used to end the lesson was relevant and enjoyable (June 2015).

Iman valued the way Fulla explained grammatical rules, "She guided us clearly on the rules and gave us plenty of activities to practice. Her explanation of the rules was simple and clear" (May 2015).

Muna stated that she learnt different techniques of giving feedback to her students by observing her peers' model activities:

> At the beginning I found it difficult to correct my learners or guide them on how to correct their mistakes. Observing my peers' strategies, I developed a number of feedback strategies like keeping silent for a few moments so that the learners would notice that she made a mistake. Or asking another student to correct the mistake and the first one to repeat the correct answer… (May 2015).

Additionally, the participants reported improvement in their language performance by observing peer model lessons as well as improvement in using appropriate classroom language. Huda, for example, found that her repertoire of words and sentences used for classroom management and activity instructions boosted during her simulated teaching class:

> I built a list of words and sentences to use during teaching my classes. For example: Ok students let's open the books at page 12. Can you please read the first sentence? Who can give me an example? What does the word 'campaign' mean? I found those sentences excellent to learn (June 2015).

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Another example of appropriate language performance is related to voice clarity and projection. Muna felt she improved her voice quality while teaching because she observed how clear and loud enough her peers' voices were while teaching:

> Huda, Suzan and Noor have the loudest and clearest voices among us all. I felt attracted in their classes because of their voice quality. They just make you follow them wherever they move in the class, following their clear voice (May 2015).

Additionally, participants reported what they observed for correct pronunciation, stress and appropriate delivery rate. The participants considered those language features as important aspects learnt through observations. Elisha indicated that she learnt some practical linguistic features while observing her peers' classes:

> I corrected the pronunciation of some words I use in English. Also, I noticed how my peers attracted learners' attention by emphasizing key words in their talk. I found their delivery pace appropriate, neither too slow nor too fast. I think it's not only about teaching but also enhancing our language skills (May 2015).

The participants also appreciated what they learnt about classroom management through observing simulated teaching classes. They perceived the simulated teaching class as idealistic in the presence of peers as students and the availability of educational resources. However, participants found that observing their peers' classroom management techniques opened up horizons for thinking of different possibilities to choose from. Noor, for example, constructed knowledge regarding giving clear directions during activities:

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> I observed how my peers improved their activity management over the course of the simulated teaching. I found that inspiring for me and helped me develop my strategies too (May 2015).

Asmira found her peer showing a chart of classroom rules for her students to follow impressive:

> I liked when she showed a chart of classroom rules so that students will not exceed their limits. I observed how positively that affected her classroom management (May 2015).

Muna found that observing her peers making maximum use of space in their classes was educating for her:

> Noor distributed her students in group and then when it was time to present their role plays, she asked them to make a circle leaving one angle open. Then each group will present while the others would clearly see and hear the presenting group. That was brilliant (May 2015).

By building a possible selves repertoire in teaching, the participants managed to build clear images of what is appropriate or inappropriate in teaching. Participants built such images by comparing the different teaching styles and strategies observed in peers' presentations. Suzan explained that her teaching skills repertoire enhanced by observing her peers in action:

> With every class I observed for my peers, I picked up different teaching strategies and teaching characters. I decided which professional images were good images for me to adopt; which were inappropriate images to avoid (June 2015).

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Observation for Matching Identities. Participants also compared and contrasted their practices with those of others during the microteaching sessions. The process helped participants elaborate images of their possible selves. Huda indicated that comparing her teaching practices to her peers' helped sharpen her style:

> I used my observation of my peers' model lessons as an opportunity to compare and contrast their practices, their personalities and their knowledge and language to mine. That helped me a lot decide what was good about my teaching abilities; what wasn't. Through my observation I understood my teacher self (June 2015).

Finally, the participants reported that based on observing the different PI roles enacted by peers, they decided what teacher model they wished to follow or to avoid. Elisha, for example, saw Noor as a role model, "She's active, enthusiastic and charismatic. I want to be a teacher like her" (May 2015). Asmira also perceived Suzan as exemplary of an innovative teacher:

> Suzan excelled among us in using technology. Have you seen her presentation? She used new software instead of the traditional power point presentation… we felt we were going on a real journey around the world. That's exactly how I want to be: innovative in my teaching (May 2015).

The PSTs also identified hated selves they would like to avoid in teaching. Fulla expressed that she hated the strict image presented by one of her peers:

> One of my peers was really strict while teaching. She didn't smile or show positive interaction with her learners. We are her peers and she behaved strictly with us. I think this is a type of teacher that I would hate to become (May 2015).

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Experimentation. The second strategy the participants employed in developing a PI identity is selecting models from their repertoire of possible selves and trying them while teaching. The participants claimed they constructed professional images through the educational experience of observing school teachers and university instructors teaching. They also referred to the simulated teaching classes as a vivid source of professional image, as they observed peers enacting various professional images.

Experimenting with professional selves can occur at three levels: wholesale imitation, selective imitation or true-to-self strategies. Generally, participants felt that their experimentation strategy was not to literally imitate a teacher model whom they had encountered previously. Iman, for example, found the wholesale imitation strategy difficult to use in a teaching situation:

> I can't come and imitate a previous teacher or even one of my peers for 60 minutes while I am teaching. I can't see this strategy applicable to teaching. Within the teaching context, many factors overlap. Hence, a successful teacher needs to respond to the situation and change her way of teaching to achieve her objectives (May 2015).

Noor agreed with Iman referring to the lesson she taught based on the model of her writing teacher:

> Even when I took my writing teacher as a role model to imitate, I couldn't do this for the whole class. The context in my class was different, with other teaching elements to consider. I don't think wholesale imitation is welcome in teaching. We need to be ourselves and become innovative (May 2015).

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The second strategy, which the participants agreed is the most applicable in the teaching filed, is selective imitation. The PSTs reported selecting different possible selves from their repertoire to construct an appropriate synthesis to apply in their classes. Muna explained how using selective imitation guided her PI construction:

> I picked different teaching skills that I observed from my peers' lessons or from previous images of teachers to create a coherent way to teach my lesson. I found this strategy useful in putting me on the teaching track (May 2015).

Huda also selected teaching practices or characters to imitate in her class:

> I thought that I can combine different practices, which I observed, in my lesson. For example, I picked Suzan's way of attention grabbing. The writing task, I picked from Noor's class. The compassionate smiling image of the teacher, I picked from Fulla's teacher character. I found this strategy excellent to try different possible selves to build my style later (June 2015).

On the way to selecting a range of professional images to imitate in class, the participants claimed they were also trying to use images that match their personalities. Huda believed she was building a teacher image similar to her own personality, and described what she liked to do with her learners:

> I moved away from just imitating the others. I'm a cheerful person and I can see that my teacher character turned out to be like me, not the others. Also, I try the teaching practices that I used to enjoy in my classes as a learner (June 2015).

Noor also found that experimenting with various possible selves enabled her to construct her own style:

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> I can see that I'm different from the others. I experimented with different teaching practices. I showed tolerance to my students' behaviors but at the same time I maintained my authority in class. How I managed my activities reflected my preferences in teaching. I'm satisfied with my experimentation (May 2015).

The participants expressed that trying out diverse teaching practices in front of peers and supervisors guided their PI construction. The observation data demonstrated how actively the participants engaged in the experimentation process. They exhibited sufficient progress in their teaching performance, which reflected positively on their self-confidence as teachers.

Evaluation. Experimentation strategy success for enabling participants' PI development was strongly connected with their performance evaluation strategy. Evaluation was vital for PSTs to assess and modify their practices. The participants reported utilizing both internal and external feedback to assess their performance and achievement.

Participants employed self-evaluation to compare what they had hoped to become and what they became. Muna revealed using such comparison and contrast to evaluate her teaching activities:

> I tried to prepare my lessons and deliver them in a way I thought perfect for me as a teacher. I always wanted to be an innovative teacher. But while trying out teaching, I sometimes found that I didn't feel comfortable using technology in class. For example, I wasted five minutes to adjust the volume. I didn't show the innovative person I wanted (May 2015).

For Iman, internal feedback and self-evaluation enabled her to realize her strengths and weaknesses:

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> I hoped to be a compassionate teacher. I admired my previous teachers who built good relationships with us. I wanted to be like them. Then, on my first lesson, I found myself unable to create such rapport with my students. On the second lesson, I tried to build such good relationships. I was successful. I consider it a strong point for me (May 2015).

At the end of the simulated teaching session, the participants reported a high sense of PI. They were satisfied with their achievements and felt they gained much confidence in their teaching performance. Suzan believed that she achieved the self she chose, "I'm satisfied with what I achieved here. I wanted to be an innovative, enthusiastic and active teacher and I became what I wanted" (June 2015).

Moreover, according to the participants, the feedback from their supervisors and peers was even more effective in constructing a PI. The external feedback from the other SCoP members enabled participants to adopt, modify or discard teaching strategies. For example, I observed that Suzan continued to use Prezi software while teaching, because both her supervisor and peers admired her technology skills. Fulla altered her ways of introducing key vocabulary by using different techniques, such as using a picture or an example or translation. Asmira changed her deductive way of teaching grammar because she received negative feedback from her supervisor on that strategy.

The adoption, alteration and rejection of various possible selves were all found in the interview data. The participants believed they modified their professional images to match their observers' expectations, which helped them grow as teachers. Elisha, for instance, reported adopting new techniques for before reading, following the comments from her supervisor and peers:

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> The supervisor commented that I couldn't start my reading comprehension lesson with questions or pictures that are not relevant to my reading passage ideas. I think though I didn't have another chance to try out teaching reading, I still understood what changes I needed to make based on my supervisor and peers' suggestions (May 2015).

Muna explained how she adhered to her compassionate self, due to the others' good feedback, "My supervisor and peers commented positively on my teacher character. I intend to enact this self when I teach real students too" (May 2015).

In summary, when the PSTs had adequate opportunities to observe, try out and get feedback on their teaching performance, they succeeded in developing a PI. They shifted from the unconfident and unmotivated arena to confident and motivated teachers.

Altering Adaptation Strategies at the Practicum Site

Upon reaching the practicum stage, the participants needed to activate adaptation strategies. The challenges and tensions faced during the practicum required them to act to personally get out of their PI crisis. The participants revealed that using adaptation strategies the same way they had used them during simulated teaching was not practicable during practicum in the secondary school context. They reported having to alter their adaptation strategies of observation, experimentation and evaluation to create other strategies to overcome their PI crisis.

Responding to inadequate observations. The participants apparently had very limited access to practical knowledge at the practicum sites. Their mentors and peers were overloaded with burdens; hence, the participants could not exchange

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regular visits with peers and mentors. To respond to such inadequate observations, the participants reverted to two other sources of professional image to guide PI construction. The sources include images from prior experience and imagined pictures of their mentors and peers based on unseen observations.

Images from prior experience. Recalling pre-constructed possible teacher selves was one of the PSTs' means of developing their PI. The participants recalled professional images of a number of role model teachers who inspired them with their teaching styles. They also referred to images they would like to abandon from their teaching. These remembered possible selves represent the personal repertoires for PSTs to caliber their practice as teachers to the times observation was not sufficient at the practicum sites. The participants revealed having used prior experience to respond to their students' lack of interest and motivation and to handle classroom management problems.

The participants recalled what their secondary school teachers used to do in teaching and managing secondary school students. Their prior experience encouraged them to consider diverse teaching activities to respond to their students' needs. Fulla used her recollection of her role model teacher to face her own students' lack of motivation to learn:

> My form 4 (10th grade) English teacher used interactive activities. She was enthusiastic and encouraging and altered her teaching styles to suit the students. I loved her classes because they were energetic and full of life. I used this memory to motivate me create different activities to encourage my students to come to class. It took me great effort and time, but eventually the strategy succeeded (August 2015).

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Muna also reverted to the strengths of her secondary school teachers in facing her students' lack of interest:

> I recalled a number of my teachers who represented aspects of a role model teacher for me. They were open minded, offered us interesting educational activities and encouraged us to participate. Therefore, I told myself why not act like those good model teachers. Despite the challenges in the practicum context, I continued building different kinds of activities to provoke my students' interest (August 2015).

Memories from past school days were also supported by the participants' prior experience in the simulated teaching sessions. However, they tended to revert to school teacher images to respond to the school context. To Fulla, her previous school teachers' professional images were closer to what she needed to enact during practicum:

> I recalled my peers' images while they were teaching during our simulated teaching class and I benefited from that in my teaching here at secondary school. But I found previous school teachers' professional images were closer to what I needed to enact on the practicum site (August 2015).

Additionally, the participants reported that their prior experience stimulated them to consider having closer relationships with their students as a strategy to overcome classroom management problems. Asmira considered the memory of her Form 4 grade teacher a reason for her to work towards building rapport with her students to face classroom disorder:

> My Form 4 grade teacher was compassionate and had great relationships with us. She always encouraged students to articulate their ideas. I decided to use her strategy to handle my students'

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> discipline problems. When I became friends with them and maintained my authority at the same time, I managed to convince them to listen to me. Now when I call their names, they listen to me. Not always, but better that while being of my practicum (August 2015).

Based on what she remembered about her role model teacher, Fulla decided to accept that her students were children and she needed to build good relationships to be able to affect them positively:

> The role model teacher I remember during my school years showed us much love and understanding and we respected her a lot. I used her way to influence my students. It took some time, but I managed to reach their hearts and know they listen to me. Sometimes they talk and laugh but I have no problem with that. I find this natural to break boredom during class (August 2015).

Seeking comments from unseen observations. The second way participants used to respond to inadequate observation during practicum was to construct imagined images of mentors and peers based on unseen observations. The participants reported having limited opportunities to see their mentors' outside classes. These opportunities helped participants build imagined images of their mentors in action. Muna, for example, referred to such imagined images as a way to construct new professional images on which to caliber her practice:

> When my mentor explained to me how she taught a speaking activity, I'd imagine that. When I go to my class, I keep this memory alive in front of my eyes and I start teaching using those imagined images. This strategy helped me a lot since I couldn't go to observe my mentor's classes (August 2015).

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Participants also reported seeking peers' suggestions on how to manage classes. Through those suggestions, participants constructed images of their peers in action. Asmira found that her peers' suggestions helped her handle noisy students:

> I found my students very noisy, so I asked my peer trainees what I should do there. They gave me very useful suggestions. One of them suggested that I make sure my activities are very interesting and then set rules and not to be very strict with students because they are boys; and even if you get really mad with them, they will become angry too and won't listen to you. Imagining how my peers act in their classes was helpful for me (August 2015).

Muna also talked positively about her peers' comments helping her build imagined professional images to which she could refer in her classes:

> The unseen/unobserved images helped me a lot. Whenever I don't have an idea of what to teach or how to teach, my peers will give me good suggestions. When I have a problem, I ask them what I should do and they help me. Their suggestions guide my work in class. My peer described her lesson to me and suggested I use her teaching resources the same way she did. I could imagine how she behaved in her class without even observing her. It was a good strategy in the absence of actual observation (August 2015).

Experimenting alone in class. Participants reported they could not escape the fact of working alone in their classes. They revealed struggling with classroom management and lesson plan execution. The participants expressed they felt insecure, confused and unguided in their classes. They believed that the absence of their mentors encouraged students to take advantage of the PSTs. Moreover, the participants believed they were inadequately supported, which led to a PI crisis. To overcome this PI crisis, they attempted different teaching strategies that helped them eventually gain PI awareness and understand their strengths and weaknesses. Two

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strategies the PSTs used to adapt to the challenging context were selective imitation and modified practices.

According to the participants, they started teaching at the practicum sites using the practical knowledge gained through microteaching in the simulated teaching classes. Soon, they discovered that the simulated teaching context differed from the realistic context of secondary schools. Fulla mentioned that she experimented with many teaching strategies that she either practiced or observed in her simulated teaching classes:

> I tried out different strategies in my classes, such as an inductive strategy of teaching grammar. I prepared educational games similar to those we prepared for simulated teaching. Those strategies that worked well with me, I adopted them in my next classes (August 2015).

For the participants, the lack of resources at the school sites deprived them of trying out technology. For example. Asmira prepared a lesson to conduct with a computer and LCD, which she could not do because other senior teachers had already booked the facilities:

> I was sorry that I couldn't try out some lessons with technology. I prepared my lesson, but when I tried to book the library I was informed it was fully booked for others (August 2015).

The participants reported they had to select from the images constructed from their previous secondary school teachers to try with practices that are more feasible. They followed this strategy because some of the strategies learned during simulated teaching were not applicable in the secondary school context. Muna revealed that many of her lessons were based on her recollection of her role model teachers:

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> I recalled those strategies our previous teachers used to teach us. Group work and worksheets, but not acting or debating, were two strategies that our teachers used extensively, so I tried them (August 2015).

The participants tried out strategies that were appealing to them when they were school students. However, they discovered that what they liked when they were secondary school students might not be appealing to current students. Iman found her students' attitude towards her activities puzzling:

> I don't understand why they didn't like it when I tried to motivate them by giving them a pop quiz. I used to like that and felt it motivating. But my students shouted and said it wasn't fair and they were not prepared. It wasn't an exam. I started to realize that what I liked is not necessarily what they like (August 2015).

The next strategy the participants reported using is the modified practices, which corresponded to their current students' interests. When Fulla noticed that her students liked to express ideas in debating activities, she engaged them more in such activities:

> I found out how much my students liked debating. I think it's their nature as they are very active and all the time they object to whatever they don't like. I started to try out more debating activities and I think they enjoyed that a lot. I enjoyed that too and felt more confident about my teaching performance (August 2015).

Asmira attempted calling students by their names. That reflected positively on her relationship with them, and consequently affected her classroom management:

> I tried out different strategies to control my students' behavior, like setting rules for the class, changing the seating of some students or

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looking angry in front of them. What worked the best with them is memorizing their names and calling them out by their names. I discovered that when I once called the name of a naughty student, she felt proud and said, "You know my name. You know me." She was looking proudly at her classmates. Later, I noticed that she behaved well every time I called her name. My God! I didn't know how such a simple thing meant a lot to my students. I used the same strategy and it worked well (August 2015).

Such trials helped the participants discover what activities were more motivating and interesting so their students would engage in the lessons. Despite some difficulties the participants faced during practicum, they felt satisfied with what they achieved. They felt they required more time to try out more and discover what could work well. Muna said she felt exhausted with training at school, but she still needed more time to practice, especially since some strategies started to work out well with the PSTs:

I feel so exhausted and tired from my training. I want it to finish soon. But I think regarding our teaching performance, we need more time. We have just started to succeed in applying different teaching skills and got used to the school context" (August 2015).

Feedback. In the absence of mentor and peer observations of participants' classes, the participants relied on two strategies for class evaluation: internal feedback (based on their own standards) and external feedback (based on their mentors and peers' unseen observation comments and students' nonverbal and verbal reactions and feedback).

Internal Feedback. Participants had to rely heavily on their own internal feedback from the beginning of the practicum. They described referring to prior

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professional images from their experience as learners to judge their own practices. Muna, for example, used her role model teacher images to judge to what extent her practices were good, "Comparing what I do to what my teachers did in our secondary school classes was the first strategy that I relied on to assess my work" (8/2015). Fulla believed she used her standards (and what she hoped to be as a teacher) to evaluate her own teaching performance:

> I used my hoped-to-be self to judge my practices and behavior in my classes. I would ask myself within and after each class that I teach, whether that was what I always wanted to do in my classes with my students or not. That helped me a lot amend my teaching practices and character to match my hoped-to-be self and to avoid my feared-to-be self (August 2015).

Participants reported that internal feedback turned out to be inadequate in the secondary school context. Iman insisted they needed others to observe the participants and give constructive feedback:

> Depending on yourself to evaluate your own work isn't practicable all the time. We are learning and we need others (mentors, peers and supervisor) to guide us and give us clear feedback about our performance and how to improve (August 2015).

External Feedback

Mentor and peer feedback based on unseen observation. As the participants faced more difficulties in their classes, they believed internal feedback was not sufficient. The PSTs reported seeking their mentors and peers for comments. They would try to take a few minutes from their mentors' time to describe the lessons taught by the participants and get the mentors' evaluation and suggestions for improvement. Muna took advantage of assembly time to consult her mentor:

> During the assembly time, I would take five minutes talking to my mentor. I tell her what happened with me in my lesson the previous day. She would tell me what was good and what I could do better. Her comments helped me (August 2015).

Fulla exploited the shifting time between classes to seek her mentor's feedback, "If I saw my mentor around during the shifting between classes, I would hurry to her and tell her what I taught the other day and get her comments" (August 2015).

In their evaluation, the mentors relied on what the PSTs chose to report within a very limited time. The participants believed this kind of feedback was inadequate and did not reach their standards of what feedback represented. The PSTs were thus left to experiment primarily on their own. Later, by telling their mentors what they did in their classes resulted in some feedback on classroom activities, educational aids and classroom management.

The participants' next solution to inadequate and inappropriate feedback from mentors was to seek peers' support. They reportedly saw their peers more in the staff room or during extracurricular activities to obtain feedback on their performance. Asmira talked about her class with a peer to help sort out what was wrong that led to so much noise in Asmira's class:

> I described my lesson to Iman and the others. In that lesson, I used group work with my students but I ended up with much noise and fights. My friends commented that my instructions were not clear for my students and that was why they felt angry when I allowed other groups to present before them. I developed my group activity instructions for the next class and that worked better (August 2015).

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According to the participants, they could have made much more progress in their teaching performance had they been given enough time and space to reflect on their classes and discuss them with peers. Overburdening at schools prevented such regular and beneficial meetings. Hence, the participants turned to a third strategy to secure feedback.

Students' nonverbal and verbal feedback. The PSTs found that students were the main asset for obtaining supportive feedback. The participants depended first on their students' nonverbal reactions to what was taught in class. Nonverbal reactions guided participants' teaching performance in terms of adopting, discarding or modifying teaching practices as needed. Similar to the other participants, Iman relied on her students' nonverbal reactions to caliber her teaching strategies:

> I look at the students. If they show they understood and they were interested in my lesson, then I think… I'd say it was a good lesson. But if they were bored and didn't want to participate, then I would take it as a sign that the lesson wasn't well-done. For example, the lesson you observed today, I felt it was so-so because they participated but there were some students at the back who didn't want to take part in it (July 2015).

The participants indicated that once they found they would practice alone all the time, they decided to take another step towards the students. They reported seeking students' verbal feedback to clearly decide what to do in their classes. For example, Fulla asked her students to take the last five minutes to comment on the class. She asked them to tell her what they liked and what they did not:

> To convince my students of Form 4 to come in class and stay there, I decided to take the last minutes of my class to ask them about their interests and what activities they wanted to have in class. Their feedback helped me a lot in modifying my teaching

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strategies to suit their level and interests. This feedback strategy also enabled me to build good rapport with them. I noticed that they were more committed to my classes (August 2015).

Asmira also sought her students' opinions to decide on the type of activities they preferred:

I use a lot of interesting games. The students here are boys and they don't like to be lectured, they just like to play. I asked them to write on a piece of paper what they like to do in an English class. So they did. I read through their answers and found they wanted to play interesting games (July 2015).

The strategy helped Asmira understand her students' needs, build good relationships with them and overcome discipline problems.

Muna referred to her students' reactions as a reflection of her success or failure:

I get my feedback from the students. I ask them how the lesson was and whether they understood what I taught them. Yes, I can trust them but sometimes I am afraid they might want to be nice to me and that's why they give me good comments. But, sometimes I think they are sincere in giving the comments. By looking at their responses during the lesson or after the lesson (August 2015).

Despite the depletive role of the students in the participants' professional growth journey, it is clear they were also a motivating and supportive factor in the participants' PI construction. The participants worked hard to come up with activities and procedures that would help gain students' friendship and attention. The participants' success in the teaching trials led them to experience a PI awareness shift.

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To sum up, though the participants' opportunities to experiment and receive feedback in the challenging practicum context were limited, they managed to amend their adaptation strategies to respond to the challenges. By the end of the practicum they achieved a new shift in their PI towards PI awareness by leaving the PI crisis, which they experienced due to a lack of guidance and support with practicum teaching. They became more aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They also claimed they construed a better understanding of their experiential knowledge. Fulla wondered at the end of her journey:

> Had we got the guidance and support in the practicum, we would have built an even stronger PI. Unfortunately, while we are preparing to leave school now, we feel that we missed real opportunities to construct our PI (August 2015).

Summary

Chapter 4 presented the findings of the current study. First, the four PI shifts experienced by the PSTs during the journey of learning to teach were outlined. Then the different personal and socio-contextual factors influencing the PSTs' PI emergence were described. Finally, the chapter explained how the PSTs employed adaptation processes differently based on the context in which they were training. The following chapter presents a summary of the findings, a discussion, the study contributions and conclusion.

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CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Chapter 5 of this thesis summarizes the study findings by revisiting the research questions that guided this study. A discussion of the study findings is initially presented, followed by the study contributions and implications for practice and future research.

This study was intended to provide a better understanding of teacher identity (re)construction of a group of Malaysian ESL pre-service teachers (PSTs) through their student teaching community of practice (CoP) (i.e., simulated teaching classes and practicum stage). The study explored what professional identity (PI) these PSTs constructed over the course of their student teaching. In addition, the data revealed what personal or social factors (contextual or interpersonal) facilitated or hindered the pre-service teachers' professional identity (PSTPI) construction. The study also explored how the PSTs employed individual adaptation processes to observe, try out and evaluate different possible selves in developing their PI.

The primary question that guided the current study was: How did ESL pre-service teachers (PSTs) develop a professional identity (PI) through simulated teaching and practicum within their pre-service community of practice (CoP), when understood with reference to the context and adaptation processes?

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The sub-questions were:

RQ1- What professional identity (PI) shifts do pre-service teachers (PSTs) experience during their student teaching practice (i.e., simulated teaching classes and teaching practicum stage)?

RQ 2- What personal and/or interpersonal factors contributed to the pre-service teachers' professional identity (PSTPI) construction?

RQ3- How did the pre-service teachers (PSTs) employ adaptation strategies to develop their professional identity (PI)?

The study participants consisted of eight female Malaysian ESL PSTs in the first phase (i.e., simulated teaching). For personal reasons, four participants withdrew from the study, leaving four participants. All participants were recruited from a group of PSTs who were completing the teacher education program (TEP) at University of Malaya (UM), a reputable public university in Malaysia. The participants had no previous professional experience upon entering university immediately following secondary school. The data examined to realize the study purposes was obtained from interviews and observations. To answer the study questions, qualitative data analysis methods were used to extract themes and subthemes from the generated data.

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Summary of Findings

RQ1- What professional identity (PI) shifts did the pre-service teachers (PSTs) experience during their student teaching practice (i.e., simulated teaching classes and teaching practicum stage)?

Table 5.1

Summary of the Features of Each PI Shift

Low PI	High PI	PI crisis	PI awareness
-Being only theoretical -Not confident about English proficiency and pedagogical skills	-Confident -Active learners -Prepared and motivated -Compassionate and innovative	-Unconfident and frustrated -Burnt out -Alone and isolated -Ambivalent and non-agentic	-Adapted to the secondary school context -Confident -Committed to profession and development

Finding 1: PI is dynamic and changing constantly as one re-interprets and re-evaluates one's practices and self as a teacher.

The findings revealed that the PSTs experienced four shifts in PI: low PI, high PI, PI crisis and PI awareness, over the course of the student teaching (simulated teaching classes and teaching practicum). Low PI was experienced at the beginning of the student teaching stage. At the onset of the simulated teaching, PSTs could not see themselves as teachers. They had theoretical knowledge of subject content and pedagogical skills besides early professional images of who a teacher is and what a teacher would do. The PSTs felt unconfident and inexperienced.

The second major shift experienced was from low PI to high PI due to engagement in practical situations. With the new shift to high PI, the PSTs revealed feeling confident and active. At the end of the simulated teaching, the PSTs saw themselves as prepared and motivated teachers. They described themselves as compassionate and innovative. The data revealed the progress achieved with the simulated teaching classes.

Upon changing the training context from simulated teaching at university to secondary school, the PSTs reported a very short and smooth transition in PI. They felt positive and relaxed at the secondary schools owing to the warm welcome by the

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schools' administration and mentors. However, confronted with contextual challenges and tensions at the teaching practicum sites, the participants started losing confidence in their teaching abilities and reported feeling frustrated, burnt out, traditional, incompetent, isolated and lost.

Over time at the teaching practicum sites, the PSTs started to gradually calm down upon getting used to the routines and school culture, receiving feedback from others, and utilizing adaptation processes. Eventually, the PSTs reported having gained awareness of PI and a moderate level of self-confidence in teaching performance. They declared commitment to this profession and a desire to become teachers; nonetheless, they remained aware of the need for more development as teachers.

RQ 2- What personal and/or interpersonal factors contributed to pre-service teachers' professional identity (PSTPI) construction?

Finding 2. A number of personal and socio-contextual factors were interconnected and influenced PSTPI development. Besides, the premise that PI is socially constructed is applicable to this case study. The change from the university to the secondary school context exposed the PSTs to different opportunities and challenges that either hindered or facilitated PI development.

The current study findings indicate that PI shifts were triggered by a number of personal and socio-contextual factors. The socio-contextual factors proved to be more prominent than personal factors in guiding PSTPI transformation.

Table 5.2

Personal Factors Influencing PI

Personal factors – Beginning of simulated teaching
• Lacking motivation due to personal reasons for becoming teachers • Feeling incompetent in terms of English proficiency • Lacking practical experience

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In the early student teaching stage (i.e., simulated teaching classes), the PSTs attributed the low PI (i.e., not seeing themselves as teachers) to three personal factors: lack of motivation due to personal reasons for becoming teachers (i.e., fallback choice and family influence), feeling incompetent in terms of English proficiency, and lack of experience.

Table 5.3

Socio-contextual Factors Facilitating PI Development in the Simulated Teaching Classes

Supportive simulated teaching class culture	Strong relationships within the simulated teaching classes
• Building connections • Expanding experience through micro-teaching lessons • Creating opportunities to reflect on their practices and view themselves as real teachers	• Facilitating engagement • Securing constructive and supportive negotiations • Boosting confidence in teaching skills • Mitigating he negative effect of power relationships

PST involvement in a supportive CoP throughout the simulated teaching stage enabled high PI emergence. They had opportunities to build connections with peers and supervisors, expand their practical experience through the microteaching lessons and view themselves as real teachers. The strong relationships in the simulated teaching stage facilitated engaging in learning to teach situations, secured constructive and supportive negotiations with supervisors and peers, and consequently boosted confidence in teaching skills.

The challenging teaching practicum context at the secondary schools revealed that socio-contextual factors could dramatically change the path of PI construction. The participants experienced major PI turbulence, which resulted in a PI crisis. According to the findings, a crisis occurred in the participants' PI on account of two main groups of contextual factors: (1) institutional factors and (2) interpersonal relationships.

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Table 5.4

Socio-contextual Factors that Hindered PI Development in the Teaching Practicum

(1) Institutional factors	(2) Interpersonal relationships
• Poor physical condition of schools • Inadequate resources • Depleting and isolating context	• PST-mentor relationships • PST-university supervisor relationship • PST-senior others (at school) relationships • PST-peer relationship • PST-secondary school students relationship

Institutional factors hindered PSTPI construction. For example, poor physical conditions of schools lessened PSTs' ability to control their students. The PSTs could not block the noise outside their classes that disturbed teaching in the classes. Adding to noisy environment, inadequate resources on the practicum sites at schools hindered the PSTs' teaching performance. With the absence of technology or other educational aids, the PSTs found it difficult to execute innovative lessons similar to what they did on their simulated teaching class.

Additionally, the responsibilities of extracurricular activities and coverage of absent teachers depleted PSTs and lessened their abilities to focus on their professional growth. Due to their burdens, the participants could not meet regularly with their mentors, their peers or other schoolteachers. The participants reported that being isolated and marginalized in the practicum context diminished their ability to construct their PI and led them to experience a PI crisis.

The interpersonal relationships also negatively contributed to PSTPI construction. The participants revealed that their relationships with their mentors, university supervisors, peers and secondary school students had negative effects on their PI construction and led to a PI crisis. Insufficient teaching opportunity of observation and feedback and ineffective communication contributed to their PI

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crisis. Teaching practicum was a time of intensive and extensive work on PI; however, PSTs' experience of loneliness, marginalization, lack of guidance and support negatively affected their self-confidence and self-agency, leading to a PI crisis.

RQ3 - How did the pre-service teachers (PSTs) employ their adaptation strategies to develop their professional identity (PI)?

Finding 3: PSTs' personal adaptation strategies of observation-experimentation and evaluation can scaffold their PI development. Under the effect of the socio-contextual influence, the PSTs took two different actions. Within the SCoP of the simulated teaching context, the PSTs used the observation-experimentation-evaluation cycle. However, in the challenging CoP of the teaching practicum context, they adjusted the adaptation cycle.

Table 5.5

The Adaptation Process: Adopted or Altered Based on Context.

The adaptation process
-Using the observation-experimentation-evaluation cycle within the simulated teaching context
-Adjusting the adaptation cycle to respond to the challenging teaching practicum context

When the PSTs in the current study had adequate opportunities to observe, try out and get feedback on their teaching performance, they succeeded in developing a PI by moving from low PI, unconfident and unmotivated PSTs to high-PI, confident and motivated PSTs.

The participants reported that the simulated teaching SCoP enabled them to activate the three adaptation strategies of observation, experimentation and evaluation in constructing a PI. Observation served to build a repertoire of

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professional selves. In the experimentation stage, the participants reported having selected different possible selves from their repertoire to construct an appropriate synthesis to apply in class. The success of the experimentation strategy in enabling PI development was strongly connected with the evaluation strategy of the PSTs' performance. The participants reportedly used both internal feedback (self-standards and evaluation) and external feedback (from their supervisor and peers) to assess their performance and achievement. The feedback received from supervisors and peers was apparently even more effective in PI development.

The participants faced a number of challenges at the teaching practicum sites. For one, they felt marginalized, had limited guidance and support and they found it impossible to apply the adaptation strategies they used in their simulated teaching SCoP. Therefore, the PSTs altered those strategies to be more practicable at the practicum sites.

For example, to respond to inadequate observation, the participants reverted to two other sources of professional images to guide PI construction. The first source was images developed from prior experience as learners at school (K-12) and university. The second source was imagined images of mentors and peers. The PSTs constructed those images based on unseen observation (i.e., lesson descriptions by mentors and peers of how they work in class).

Experimenting with different professional selves implies the presence of other professionals giving feedback on the PSTs' performance. During practicum, the participants experimented alone in class without the supervision of an experienced teacher or peers. The participants started experimenting with teaching by selecting from their possible selves repertoire. Then they adapted their teaching practices based on students' reactions and feedback. Instead of relying on selecting other

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teaching practices to try with students, the PSTs tended to revert to their modified practices.

In the absence of class observations by mentors and peers, the participants faced difficulties in getting constructive feedback. To overcome this problem, they relied on three strategies for class evaluation: internal feedback (based on their standards), external feedback (based on comments from mentors' and peers' unseen observation, where the participants described their lessons to mentors and peers) and students' verbal and nonverbal feedback.

By adjusting adaptation strategies to handle the lack of support, guidance and feedback, the PSTs were eventually able to gain PI awareness and understand their strengths and weaknesses.

Findings Discussion

Four PI shifts experienced throughout student teaching. The social theory that guided this study postulates that identity construction is a dynamic ongoing and nonlinear process (Wenger, 1998). The PSTs' sense of PI is based on personal interpretations of the self as a teacher through the ongoing interaction with their context (Beijaard et al., 2004). The current study findings are in line with these social theory and PI construction premises, as the participants experienced four shifts in PI: low PI, high PI, PI crisis and PI awareness.

Features of low PI. The study revealed that the participants began their journey of student teaching with a low sense of PI, feeling theoretical, unconfident and inexperienced. They felt their theoretical knowledge contributed to the low PI, since PI implies practical knowledge more than theoretical. For example, Noor believed she had theoretical knowledge of language skills and TESL. Another feature

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of the participants' low PI was the low confidence in English language proficiency. The participants were afraid that their students-to-be might have higher proficiency levels than them. The third feature of low PI was the feeling of being inexperienced. Lacking practical teaching skills left the participants unable to perceive themselves as teachers. Iman thought her student identity was greater than her teacher identity in this preliminary teaching practice stage.

The negative perceptions of their own PI were present upon being confronted with practical situations during the microteaching lessons. The participants reported feeling worried, scared, frustrated and incompetent in the first simulated teaching trial. Muna appeared nervous and unconfident prior to her first model lesson; Fulla was confused, nervous and stressed while delivering her first lesson; and Suzan felt frustrated because her activities were below the students' level.

The current study findings on the student teaching practice beginning with a low or tentative PI are in line with other studies on PI development (see e.g., Chong et al., 2011; Clandinin et al., 2009; Elsheikh, 2012; Glava & Glava, 2015; Gratch, 2001; Izadinia, 2016; Lee & Schallert, 2016; McKay, Carrington, & Iyer, 2014; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Smith, 2006; Turbill & Kervin, 2007). For instance, Izadinia (2016) interviewed eight PSTs at an Australian university before they started teaching practice. The aim of Izadinia's study was to investigate the positive influence of the PST-mentor relationship on PSTPI development. The study first highlighted the low PI with which the PSTs started practice. The eight participants expressed fears and doubts with their teaching abilities. They believed they lacked confidence and felt more like students too lenient and idealistic to become teachers.

Features of High PI. High PST PI was featured by being confident, active, prepared, motivated, compassionate and innovative. By progressing through the

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simulated teaching stage, the participants reported that the model lessons conducted or observed, the post discussions on those lessons, and the feedback received all benefited PI development. Fulla described that her teaching performance improved due to feedback received, and this improvement boosted her self-confidence. The participants saw themselves as active learners negotiating their dispositions and assumptions while interacting with other SCoP members. The PSTs' increasing participation in their SCoP and PI construction through negotiations with others are in line with Lave and Wenger's (1991) propositions that identity development is a negotiated process and novices become experts by increasing participation in their CoP.

The PSTs perceived their developing PI in terms of self-confidence and self-efficacy (Jarfis-Selinger et al., 2010). I observed the improvement in teaching skills, and it was noticeable they became more confident and relaxed, and controllers of their stage fright. Besides, it was observed their lesson plans were clearer in terms of timing and activity sequencing. At the end of the simulated teaching classes, the participants evaluated their own teaching skills as much better than at the beginning. The PSTs became more motivated to work on their PI. They developed a compassionate attitude towards their students (although these were peers) and anticipated succeeding in the teaching practicum. They also viewed themselves as innovative teachers because they used technology and different educational aids in their lessons.

Simulated teaching classes proved to be a supportive CoP for PI development. At the end of the simulated teaching, the participants expressed a sense of preparedness, appreciation of peer support and stories, a sense of belonging and progress ownership (Wenger et al., 2002) and high levels of self-confidence.

These merits were highlighted by Lave and Wenger (1991), Wenger (1998) and Wenger et al. (2002) as expected outcomes of a successful CoP. All mentioned benefits gained from the simulated teaching classes indicate how highly the PSTs felt about their PI.

The findings of the current study pertaining to the value of simulated teaching or microteaching in PSTs' PI development support other studies on the same topic (e.g.,Amobi, 2005; Amobi & Irwin, 2009; Britton & Anderson, 2010; Maria Lorelei Fernandez, 2010; Maria L. Fernandez & Robinson, 2006; He & Yan, 2011; Ismail, 2011; Ogeyik, 2009). For instance, He and Yan (2011) conducted a study with a cohort of 60 EFL Chinese PSTs in Hong Kong. The researchers collected reflective journals from the participants to investigate the role of microteaching classes in supporting the emergence of PI. Similar to the current study findings, He and Yan's study showed that a microteaching course positively influenced the participants' PI development. The only limitation of microteaching referred to by the current study and He and Yan (2011) study is the artificiality of the microteaching model lessons. The participants could not develop real-life classroom practices in such idealistic and artificial context. He and Yan (2011) recommended potentially supplementing microteaching with real school practice simultaneously.

PI Crisis Features. The first two days in the practicum context were reportedly smooth, after which the participants began encountering struggles. In those first days, the participants observed one class taught by their mentors and received guidance on conducting administrative tasks and handling extracurricular activities. The participants expected the practicum context to boost their confidence and efficacy as teachers. They started constructing new professional images of ESL teachers as controlling classes with strong voices and personalities. Fulla believed

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that if she controlled her classes, she would be able to improve her teaching performance. However, the participants soon started to struggle at the practicum sites.

The study findings reveal that the participants suffered a PI crisis upon confronting a number of socio-contextual challenges and tensions at the practicum sites. Throughout the practicum, the participants reported negative feelings of being unconfident, burnt out, alone and isolated, ambivalent and non-agentic. Tsui (2011) contended that PSTs may experience competing beliefs, values, practices, attitudes and constraints in the new context (here, the practicum sites) that may result in loss of confidence and sense of efficacy. Muna, for example, lost confidence and the ability to teach in her chaotic classes.

The participants reported an inability to enact innovative possible selves and consequently turned to traditional ways due to inadequate access to resources at the practicum sites. Additionally, they felt burnt out due to overburdening during practicum. The findings show that the participants were separated from other schoolteachers and sent to practice alone in class. Hence, the participants felt isolated, marginalized and excluded from collegial relationships, as if they were second-class citizens at the practicum sites. Similar findings regarding participants' negative feelings towards the practicum context were reported by Kayi-Aydar (2015) and Castañeda (2014).

According to the findings, the participants also felt ambivalent about their positions and identities at school. Iman could not describe herself as a teacher, student, assistant or supervisee. Such ambivalence in PSTs' position at school was also reported by Yuan (2016), whose EFL Chinese PST, Yang, could not see herself as a real apprentice in the practicum. Yang saw herself as an assistant, a secretary

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and an outsider in the school context. The current study participants felt powerless facing the school policies and chose to adopt a non-resistant self to avoid making negative impressions to the school administrators, mentors and staff. These findings resonate with Kayi-Aydar (2015) report of participants feeling powerless and non-agentic in the training context.

Phelan (2005) argued that experiencing heightened anxiety and tension could paradoxically benefit PSTs. In the current case, it is also suggested that such strong emotions may encourage PSTs to reshape their identities and grow as teachers. Phelan (2005) directly connected the PI crisis shift with the PI awareness shift, as the participants worked hard to find a way out of the tensions encountered in the practicum.

PI awareness features. The study findings reveal that despite the frustration, depression and sense of being lost at the practicum sites, the participants gradually adapted to the school culture, regained self-confidence and eventually felt committed to the profession and development. The PSTs viewed the developing PI in terms of self-confidence and self-efficacy (Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2010). Muna, for instance, reported reduced stress upon getting used to the secondary school environment and system. Asmira also felt that adapting to the school culture helped the participants reduce many negative feelings and perceptions about themselves due to juggling many burdens.

By adapting to the school culture the participants also regained self-confidence, especially as they succeeded in attempting to come up with activities suitable to their students' interest and levels. For instance, Asmira stopped complaining about the lack of technology and used wallpaper sheets for student work presentation instead. That enabled her to regain confidence in her ability to teach.

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Additionally, the findings indicate that the participants developed an understanding of their students' nature as children and worked towards building rapport with them.

A similar finding was reported by Lerseth (2013), who examined PI development among four American Arts PSTs during their teaching practicum. The participants in the aforementioned study reported becoming compassionate and understanding of their students' needs and interests while growing professionally. Similarly, Phelan (2005) found one of the participants came down from her theoretical knowledge tower to more practical grounds, where she benefited from learning more about her students to build new understanding of her practice.

Having regained confidence in their teaching abilities, the participants in the current study also announced a commitment to the profession. Muna, for example, felt enthusiastic about teaching and declared that being with students was tiring but rewarding at the same time. This echoes Jarvis-Selinger et al.'s (2010) proposition that PI development is related to commitment to the profession and the teacher's desire to remain in the profession. The current participants mentioned they needed more practice to develop their PI. Only one of the participants, Iman, could not see herself growing as a teacher. Similar to Jarvis-Selinger et al.'s (2010) participant, Iman felt she lacked fit to the teaching profession and found teaching TESL in public schools depressing.

Comments on the PI transformation theme in the current study. The current study showed that Malaysian ESL PSTs experienced four PI transformations/shifts, from low PI to high PI and then back to a PI crisis before reaching PI awareness. The nature of these shifts is parallel with the proposition that identity development is nonlinear. The fluctuation in the participants' self-confidence and self-efficacy, which is connected with PI shifts, is not an isolated theme as

reported by McKay et al. (2014) in a case study of an Australian PST. This PST's journey of becoming an inclusive educator unfolded as a 'messy' transformation: growing and changing, then changing in another direction and growing again.

The current study findings regarding the changing nature of PI are in line with the findings from a number of studies that examined PI development in pre-service education (Cattley, 2007; Chong et al., 2011; Cooper & He, 2012; Iswandari, 2017; F. M. Jamil et al., 2012; Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2010; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lerseth, 2013; H. T. M. Nguyen & Sheridan, 2016; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008; Smith, 2006; Wenger et al., 2002). For example, Iswandari (2017) conducted a recent study of 19 Indonesian ESL PSTs. Iswandari (2017, p. 59) used a theoretical framework of three imagined PIs: language expert, learning facilitator, and spiritual guide. The participants were asked to write reflective journals during their micro teaching course. The findings showed that all three types of imagined identities occurred in the participants' reflective journals. Moreover, the PSTs' understanding of teaching shifted towards becoming facilitators in class. Iswandari's (2017) study focused only on a microteaching course and did not expand to the practicum stage as the current study did.

The current study differs from other studies on PI development in presenting a clear and holistic description of the emerging PI versions, starting with simulated teaching classes and through the teaching practicum stage. In other studies (Cattley, 2007; Chong et al., 2011; H. T. M. Nguyen & Sheridan, 2016; Smith, 2006), reference is usually made to the entrance and exit points of student teaching with focus on the social factors that influence PI construction. Cattley (2007), for example, conducted a study with 8 female PSTs working on different Education Bachelor degrees in their fourth practicum to examine the emergence of PI in their

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reflective logs. Cattley (2007) considered practicum as an important point in teacher education in investigating PI emergence. However, Cattley's study did not describe with what PI the participants started or constructed. The study focused mainly on the value of using reflective journals to help PSTs understand their PI.

Nguyen and Sheridan (2016) explored the identity development of two non-native speaker teachers doing their practicum in Australian public schools. Unlike the present study, Nguyen and Sheridan did not describe or indicate what professional identity the participants constructed. Focus was on result presentation and a discussion on social factors influencing PI development, thus leaving readers unable to decide what PI the participants developed. Similar to Cattley (2007), Nguyen and Sheridan (2016) took practicum teaching as a starting point to investigate PI development, as their participants were considered to have a tentative PI at the beginning of the practicum. The two previously mentioned studies neglected the value of simulated teaching classes as an important stage in PI development.

Chong et al. (2011) quantitatively examined PI development among 148 PSTs upon entry into the teacher training program (TEP) and upon finishing after 4 years. The researchers reported that the participants' perceptions regarding their PI changed over time. One of the findings indicated a drop in the participants' sense of PI at the exit point. The researchers justified this drop with the notion that PSTs usually enter the TEP with idealized images about teaching. Experiencing the theoretical, and more importantly, field practice may have helped them build a more realistic understanding of PI. Again, the researchers did not comprehensively describe what changes and shifts the PSTs experienced to reach the final stage.

Personal and socio-contextual factors influencing pi development. The current study reveals that a number of personal and socio-contextual factors

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influenced PI transformation in student teaching CoPs. The premise that PI is constructed socially is applicable to this case study. The changing context from university to secondary school exposed PSTs to different opportunities and challenges that hindered or facilitated their PI development. In line with MacGregor (2013) results, the factors influencing the PI development process are not isolated from each other; rather, personal and social factors overlap and impact each other.

Personal factors resulting in PSTs' low PI . The participants attributed the low PI at the beginning of their student teaching to three personal factors. First was the lack of intrinsic motivation due to personal reasons for becoming teachers, namely fallback choice and family pressure. Understanding the reasons behind PSTs' decision to become teachers is an important step in understanding background identity (Fokkens-Bruinsma & Canrinus, 2014; Fokkens & Carinus, 2011; Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2010; Olsen, 2008). In a study conducted by Jarvis-Selinger et al. (2010), the participants were classified based on their reasons for becoming teachers into four areas of low/high commitment accompanied by low/high identity. The participants in the current study came mainly from the science high school stream. They had originally planned to become doctors or engineers but were unable to achieve sufficiently high scores in secondary school; hence, they chose teaching instead. Besides, the participants' families had a major role in affecting this choice of teaching. In line with the current study findings, Mudavanhu (2015) reported that the majority of participants chose to become teachers because they had 'no other choice,' and it was a matter of chance rather than a deliberate decision. Family pressure was reportedly the second reason for the PSTs becoming teachers in Mudavanhu's study.

Similar to Mudavanhu's (2015) findings, the current study participants' reasons for becoming teachers are viewed as pull factors of their level of motivation.

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Jarvis-Selinger et al. (2010) reported that their participants' reasons for becoming teachers (i.e., fallback choice and family pressure) impacted their commitment to the profession (low commitment) and how they perceived themselves as teachers (low PI). The PSTs in the current study showed that their reasons for becoming ESL teachers were not geared mainly by their own desire to become teachers. They also did not mention possessing certain talents or capacities suitable for teaching (Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2010) as their primary motivators for this profession. Teacher educators ought to question these motives and address the PSTs' need to invest in the journey of learning to teach (Darvin & Norton, 2015) and connect them with their "imagined futures and imagined identities" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 39). In other words, teacher educators should recognize how to help PSTs connect with the profession and engage in PI construction.

The second personal factor that led to participants' low PI was the feeling of incompetence in terms of English proficiency and pedagogical skills. The participants reported feeling incompetent in English proficiency, especially grammar and pronunciation. The PSTs were afraid their school students would have higher language levels. They admitted needing to upgrade their proficiency level to become more confident when teaching. This finding resonates with Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016), who categorized their Finish ESL participants according to confidence in English proficiency and pedagogic skills in developing a PI. (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016) found that a group of participants doubted their ability to become the teachers they hoped to be, because they lacked confidence in language and pedagogic ability.

Lack of experience was the third personal factor contributing to PSTs' sense of low PI. While preparing to start the micro model lessons, the PSTs could not see

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themselves as teachers. Despite all the theoretical/subject content knowledge formally transferred to them through the university courses (Dowling, 2009), the participants were not confident in their teaching abilities. Hence the finding that theoretical knowledge is not sufficient, in support of the premise that experiential knowledge is more valuable in enabling PSTs to translate what they learnt into effective teaching practices (Johnson, 2006). Similar to Jarvis-Selinger et al.'s (2010) participants, those in the current study believed that lack of teaching experience, and later on during practicum lack of classroom management principles, stood out as key reasons for their low PI. They doubted their ability to deliver a lesson in a pedagogically proper way that would attract students' attention. In their opinions, learning pedagogical and psychological theories and content knowledge is not comparable to the experimental knowledge they could construct through practice.

Socio-Contextual factors in the simulated teaching classes facilitating PI development. The socio-contextual factors in the simulated teaching SCoP included institutional factors represented by a supportive simulated teaching culture and interpersonal factors represented by strong relationships supportive of the participants' PI development from low PI due to lack of motivation, confidence and experience, to high PI with a sense of high confidence, motivation and preparedness.

Supportive Simulated Teaching Culture Facilitating PI Development. The current study findings on the facilitative socio-contextual factors in the simulated teaching classes are in line with recent studies that highlight the importance of belonging to a particular community where the individual can make sense of their role and develop PI (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Castaneda, 2011; Castañeda, 2014; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Ruohotie-Lyhty, 2013; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). The SCoP offers learners support to enable learning and results in professional

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development (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The PSTs in this study grew through lived experience and not only by accumulating theoretical knowledge in their cognitive layers (Dowling, 2009).

The participants reported that the SCoP facilitated their learning to become teachers through providing opportunities to build connections with SCoP members, expand their teaching experience and view themselves as real teachers. By sharing concerns, aspirations and hopes with peers, the participants discovered and imagined how their CoP could scaffold their PI construction (i.e., CoP domain) (Wenger et al., 2002). The sharing act enabled connecting with supervisors and peers as supportive and guiding members. Pulvermacher and Lefstein (2016) conducted a study with a group of PSTs to investigate the value of sharing stories of personal experience of teaching practice. Pulvermacher and Lefstein's findings (2016) support the current study in that sharing stories of concerns, hopes and practices enables building connections among CoP members and leads to professional growth.

Another opportunity offered by the simulated teaching SCoP was to expand the PSTs' teaching experience through microteaching. They perceived such experiences as powerful and effective in improving their language proficiency, pedagogical skills as well as planning and time management. Being able to enact the teacher role, observe, attempt and evaluate their possible selves in such a safe environment positively influenced their trials of constructing PI, albeit tentatively. The reflection sessions (Beijaard et al., 2004; Korkko, Kyro-Ammala, & Turunen, 2016) after each model lesson helped the PSTs understand the underpinnings of each activity. The current study finding regarding the value of practical microteaching experience resonates with the results of a mixed method study with 78 ESL PSTs

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conducted by Ismail (2011). Ismail reported a positive impact on the participants' awareness of language and teaching competencies.

Another benefit reported by the participants in the current study is that their SCoP facilitated viewing themselves as teachers. Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) emphasized the importance of providing teachers a safe place to try out new ideas and question their understanding and practices. Such practical opportunities enable PSTs to evaluate their teacher selves and see themselves through a new lens (i.e., seeing themselves as teachers rather than students). Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016) found that engaging their Finish PSTs in a supportive professional community contributed to developing PI and confidence to decide how they would become professional teachers. The participants were able to experience teacher roles, question these roles and revise their understanding in a positive, non-judgmental environment. This achievement resonates with the current participants' improved confidence level and motivation to set out on school practice following positive experiences, negotiations and refined forms of participation (i.e., moving from a peripheral position to the center of their SCoP).

Interpersonal relationships within the SCoP of the simulated teaching facilitating PI development. The study findings for the simulated teaching stage reflect the positive characteristics of a CoP (i.e., interaction and collaboration) (Dillon & Maguire, 2011; Floding & Swier, 2012; Wenger, 1998). Strong relationships in the simulated teaching class SCoP facilitated participants' engagement, secured constructive and supportive negotiations and boosted confidence in their teaching skills. Scholars such as Banadura (1977), Wenger et al. (2002), Dowling (2009) and Li et al. (2009) agree on the value of having a social structure in a CoP that offers individuals support, guidance, feedback and

development. The social structure present in strong relationships within the simulated teaching SCoP encourages the participants to engage in discussions and negotiations of their teacher selves and practices. The study findings demonstrate that the participants aligned with peers by considering them as a safety net. The participants could discuss worries, perceptions and practices with peers in their SCoP.

According to the participants, they were not only improving their teaching skills but also gaining interpersonal interaction skills. Such implicit learning of how to negotiate dispositions and assumptions boosted PSTs' negotiations of PI later on at the teaching practicum sites. Robust relationships and peer support also mitigated the negative effect of power relationships that may hinder PI development. Through collaboration, negotiation and reflection, the participants engaged in invaluable social activities that empowered them and enhanced ownership of their learning (Pulvermacher & Lefstein, 2016), thus facilitating the emergence of a high PI.

The value of the simulated teaching SCoP can be further enhanced. Examining the positive outcomes of the simulated teaching SCoP in the current study against recent arguments in literature reflects there is room for further enhancements to make such SCoP even more valuable for PSTs' PI development. The first argument of some scholars is that the model lesson experience can be enhanced by having university supervisors/instructors conduct some of the model lessons. Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) conducted a study with a number of PSTs from three disciplines. Similar to the current observation findings, Ronfeldt and Grossman noted that model lessons were only conducted by PSTs. Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) argued that university instructors should also conduct model lessons to allow PSTs to encounter real models of student-centered activities advocated by their universities. This way (i.e., university instructors conducting model lessons) would be more

convincing for PSTs to draw possible selves from instructors' teaching. It would also help PSTs explicate their choices and understand their roles as teachers. In this study, PSTs had to rely on the examples presented by novice peers in constructing a repertoire of possible selves.

The second argument in the literature pertains to PSTs' romanticized images formed in the simulated teaching SCoP. The participants' positive experiences in the simulated teaching class in the current study yielded romanticized notions of their roles as teachers. Most teacher qualities they attributed to themselves were cheerful, innovative, guiding, facilitating, charismatic and respondent to students' needs and interests. Similar to Beltman et al.'s (2015) participants, on the way to high PI, the PSTs in the current study expected to enjoy teaching and their students to enjoy learning. The participants in the current study and Beltman et al.'s study were not aware of the emotional demands of the teaching profession (Newberry, Gallant, & Riley, 2013). Two recommendations are made for such PSTs. First, teacher educators need to raise PSTs' awareness of negative feelings or struggles they may encounter in teaching. Second, PSTs who proceed to actual training with positive feelings and high confidence require supervisors, universities, mentors and schools to collaborate on "how to maintain and nurture this confidence" (Beltman et al., 2015, p. 239).

Institutional and interpersonal factors at the practicum sites hindering PI development. Moving to a new context to continue training in an actual setting offered PSTs new opportunities and challenges in becoming the professionals they hoped to be. The CoP expanded to include more people, such as mentors, students, school teachers, principals and administrative staff in addition to peers and supervisors. At the practicum sites, the PSTs started confronting a number of institutional and interpersonal factors that caused experiencing a PI crisis,

represented by the participants feeling unconfident, burnt out, alone, isolated, ambivalent and non-agentic.

Institutional factors hindering PI Development. It was found in the current study that institutional factors at the teaching practicum sites acted as barriers that hindered PI development. The impact of institutional factors cannot be underestimated, since they can hinder or facilitate PSTs engaging in the training context and negotiating their possible teacher selves with others involved in the context (Williams, 2013). PSTs' sense of belonging to a CoP can strengthen PI (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Williams, 2013). The participants revealed how institutional factors, such as poor physical condition of the schools, inadequate resources and a depleting and isolating context exhausted and drew them away from focusing on PI development.

For example, the participants complained that poor physical conditions of the secondary schools contributed to difficulty in managing classes. The participants could not block outside noise due to broken windows. The noise affected teachers' voice projection and decreased their ability to control their classes. In literature, classroom management problems are attributed to student discipline issues and misbehavior (Castañeda, 2014). Studies conducted in the Malaysian context (Goh & Matthews, 2011; Khalid, 2014) reported classroom management as a major difficulty faced by Malaysian PSTs at practicum sites. However, those studies did not report on the relationship between the physical school condition and classroom management issues.

Inadequate resources, such as available computer labs, LCDs or other educational aids in the secondary school context deprived PSTs of trying various interactive and innovative activities. The context proved to be frustrating for the

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participants. They could not develop their teaching performance and had to revert to traditional methods of lesson delivery. A similar challenge with inadequate or absent resources at practicum sites was reported by 50% of 44 Malaysian PSTs who participated in a study by Ong, Ros, Azlian, Sharnti, and Ho (2004). The participants' complaints echo the current study participants' complaints of schools not providing educational resources except textbooks to support training and help PSTs try diverse teaching practices. Abas (2016) conducted a study in the Philippines to investigate difficulties faced by PSTs from different disciplines including ESL during field practice. Abas found it was difficult for the PSTs to access resources at the school sites, though the principals wished the PSTs would have convenient access to the premises. The principals justified this difficulty with accessing resources to the limited school equipment and facilities. They considered their own teachers had a privilege over the PSTs to employ the available equipment. The context of Abas' study was not different from the current study, where PSTs were invited to use school facilities but were then denied this right. Participants reported the inability to enact their innovative selves owing to such difficulties with access to resources. Besides, as students, they could not afford to pay for other necessary educational aids.

The participants were overloaded and drained by administrative duties, covering for absent teachers and engaging in extracurricular school activities. Similar tension was reported by Ong et al. (2004). The participants in Ong et al.'s study doubted the value of administrative burdens in enabling professional growth. Yuan's Chinese ESL participant (2016) complained of being assigned many administrative duties that kept her busy in the staff room and deprived her of focusing on engaging with students. Yuan's participants found such administrative assignments of no real

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relation to language teaching. Yuan's participant saw herself as a secretary and not an apprentice who came to the practicum site for training under her mentor's supervision. Yuan's participants' feelings echo the current study participants' perception of themselves at the practicum sites as second-class citizens whose position is decided by higher levels (Jusoh, 2013). This perception affected their inclusion in the professional context negatively (Castañeda, 2014). The participants saw themselves as marginalized and isolated from mentors and peers due to school burdens.

The practicum context complexities staggered as the PSTs were sent alone to classes without the immediate supervision of mentors. The participants mentioned it was the school's way of allowing PSTs to depend on themselves and learn faster how to control classes. This attitude immediately triggers the metaphor 'swim or sink' (Avery, 2015, para. 7) in teaching practice rather than reflect a carefully planned agenda. Creating an autonomous self-dependent learner may be one of the major goals in education. However, this educational goal does not necessarily contradict the social theory that guided this study and presupposes that novice trainees need guidance and scaffolding before they become confident in their performance (Wenger, 1998).

The participants felt isolated by the several burdens that reduced their ability to negotiate their teaching practices with mentors, peers or school teachers, since they were deprived of exchanging observations. The absence of a clear supervision policy deprived the participants of engaging and interacting with other CoP members. The participants felt that as apprentices, they were not guided at the practicum sites.

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Apprenticeship entails 'guided participation' (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008, p. 156). Becoming familiar with the school norms as well as social and cultural values and routines would guide PSTs' PI construction and build self-confidence. Comparing the training context of the current study to other training contexts in a country such as Australia can justify the tension of feeling unguided reported by the current participants. Bloomfield, Taylor, and Maxwell (2004) described how their student teachers gradually progressed in their practicum. First, they observed mentors' classes and were then involved in small teaching groups. Later, they started teaching under their mentors' supervision to try and evaluate their practices in open and non-judgmental discussions. Bloomfield et al.'s (2004) study showed how student teachers gained experience and confidence over the course of training. The current participants suffered a confidence crisis during practicum (El Masry & Mohd Saad, 2017) because of the unclear supervision policy at school.

Interpersonal relationships hindering PI Development. The unclear supervision policy at the practicum sites resulted in a number of interpersonal tensions that hindered PI development and increased the PI crisis.

PST-Mentor Relationship Hindering PI Development

The study findings reveal that the PST-mentor relationship was dysfunctional and affected PSTs' PI development negatively. The results identify insufficient teaching opportunities of observation and feedback, and ineffective communication as the main challenges that PSTs struggled with in their relationships with their mentors. These struggles resulted in a drop in self-esteem, including self-confidence and self-efficacy.

The participants reported that the limited observations exchanged with their mentors deprived them of constructing new teacher images, learning classroom

management techniques or experiencing the application of pedagogical strategies in real classes. The concept of 'apprenticeship' in CoPs (Lave & Wenger, 1991) entails the presence of an expert to guide a novice to construct new understanding and skills (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008, p. 156). The presence of an expert working in front of a novice can help the novice create a repertoire of images of possible selves (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). After trying them, the novice can internalize such images and use them to construct their own PI (Ibarra, 1999). In the case of the current participants, they had very limited opportunities to observe experts (here, experienced teachers) in action. Attending one class at the beginning of training exposed them to one possible example of how to teach. The participants claimed necessitating more regular observation to build a solid repertoire of selves to which to revert whenever needed while teaching.

As long as mentors were absent from the PSTs' classes, the PSTs received insufficient and inadequate feedback from the mentors. In this study, mentors attended one class for their trainees and commented on it. The four participants reported that the immediate feedback received focused mainly on the PSTs' ability to control their classes. Muna mentioned she was waiting for her mentor to discuss the observed class another time. PI is socially embedded and a teacher's knowledge of how to teach is constructed through experiences in the teaching context with other members (Pennington, 2002). An immediate discussion of practices could have taken the PSTs to a deeper level than the general comments they received. It would have enabled them to reflect with their mentors' guidance on their teaching strategies and control procedures. Korkko et al. (2016) reported how their Finish student teachers' practical theories developed owing to the feedback and dialogue sessions during practicum. The sessions enhanced self-knowledge as teachers.

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Ineffective communication that prevailed at the practicum sites in this study represented a major challenge for the participants. The PSTs revealed that ineffective communication with their mentors made them feel unsafe to open up. They chose to remain silent to avoid mentors' negative judgments. For example, Iman was constrained by her mentor's attitude of considering Iman was an outsider who seized the mentor's excellent class. Lack of effective communication between Iman and her mentor precluded the opportunity to build a collegial relationship between them. Rodgers and Scott (2008) emphasized that constructing an identity requires a dialogic space, where the external aspects of context and relationships interact with the internal aspects of individual stories and emotions. The data from this study suggest the PSTs were denied such spaces of negotiating experiences of self. The PSTs avoided challenging their mentors' points of view.

To maintain calm relationships with mentors, the PSTs developed a one-way communicating strategy, whereby they listened and received knowledge silently. The participationist metaphor (Sfard, 1998) was not utilized in such practice context. The findings of the current study pertaining to ineffective communication echo Yuan's (2016) findings, which revealed how negative mentoring and ineffective communication between mentors and PSTs constrained the PSTs' ideal identities (e.g., innovative teacher) and created followers. Another extreme example of confining a PST's ability to enact one's agentic self was reported by A. Clarke and Collins (2007). They referred to ineffective communication as a confining factor of the participants' professional growth. The cooperating teacher, in one of the two cases they studied, had charted for the students and student teacher everything to be done in class. She denied the trainee the opportunity to discuss or negotiate class

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practices. The cooperating teacher believed that since everything is predictable and stable in class, the lesson would be a success.

In contrast, other studies celebrate the value of effective communication and relationships between mentors and PSTs (e.g., C. Fairbanks et al., 2000; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016; Slick, 1998a, 1998b). In those studies, mentors negotiated plans and practices with their PSTs and expected the PSTs to refine those pedagogical activities depending on their new teaching knowledge. For example, Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate's (2016) Finish participants developed an identity agency and role by participating in open-ended dialogues where they asked questions, reflected, and agreed or disagreed with other voices during practicum. The Finish study concluded that "the more persuasive voices appear to be the ones that offer the most participatory experiences rather than authoritative impositions" (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016, p. 325).

PST-University Supervisor Relationship Hindering PI Development

According to the study findings, the role of the university and supervisors diminished as the participants started the practicum. The PSTs perceived assessment by their mentors and school administration more important than their supervisors'. The limited number of supervisor visits (i.e., twice) to the school sites for assessment purposes proved the participants' understanding of the partial value of their supervisors' presence in the practicum context. Hence, they avoided serious discussions of the gap between university perspectives, and classroom and secondary school reality. The participants followed this one-way communication strategy, listening to the supervisors and agreeing with everything they said.

The avoidance of controversial debates with supervisors or even mentors was reported in other studies by Bullough and Draper (2004) and Veal and Rikard (1998).

The researchers noticed that avoiding debates with authority figures like supervisors fostered a complex environment in which PSTs worked. Bullough and Draper (2004) and Veal and Rikard (1998) recommended effective communication among CoP members as a remedy for practicum complexities.

The participants expressed frustration and disappointment with their supervisors' comments on the PSTs' teaching performance during micro teaching practice at university. Asmira found it unfair to compare the idealistic context of a simulated teaching class where PSTs had excellent learners and technology to conduct lessons, with the harsh secondary school context. Similar to the current study findings, others (e.g., Brandt, 2006; Kennedy, 1993; Wilson, 2006) also reported participating student teachers complained of university supervisors using authority to criticize student teachers' performance and judge their decisions negatively, thus neglecting the real classroom context.

The current study result regarding the dysfunctional PST-university supervisor relationship contradicts Pulvermacher and Lefstein's (2016) study on the value of the presence of a facilitating supervisor. The two scholars found that the successful storytelling sessions and reflections on PSTs' teaching performance were facilitated by the presence of supportive supervisors. The supervisors helped alleviate tensions PSTs encountered at the practicum sites and enabled restoring their motivation to teach and connect theoretical with experiential knowledge. A successful CoP requires the presence of an understanding facilitator who is able to network people and create focus for discussions (Wenger et al., 2002).

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PST-Senior Others at the Secondary School Sites Hindering PI Development

The current study findings reveal that the participant-senior other relationship lacked collegial and interactive elements to support participants' PI development. The PSTs believed that for administrative staff and school teachers, the trainees' presence in the school context was as an opportunity to lessen the staff and teachers' workload. The participants reported having almost no relationship with the principal and other school teachers. What added to their sense of alienation at the schools was being seated either in separate rooms or at separate tables. This isolation, though aimed to increase peer interaction, developed formal relationships between the participants and school staff.

Non-participation (Smith, 2006) in such dysfunctional CoP resulted in participants avoiding consulting school teachers, so as not to be judged in case the teachers discovered the PSTs were not able to control classes effectively. Suzan, for example, considered consulting other school teachers and risking being misjudged by them unacceptable. Consequently, interaction at different CoP levels (Hoffman-Kipp, 2008; Wenger et al., 2002) stalled. Instead of maximizing opportunities to learn from the sociocultural context around, the PSTs had to rely mainly on occasional meetings with peers, supervisors or mentors. It became evident that participants' social relationships never developed to the collegial or mutual level. This also explains the low sense of belonging they experienced at the schools. Asmira, for instance, reported rejecting such an isolating context, where she sat at a table and worked alone instead of interacting and collaborating with others.

PST-Peer Relationship Hindering PI Development

A number of scholars have reported the positive impact of peers on PSTs' PI development through providing PSTs professional and emotional support (Bowen & Roth, 2006; Kabilan & Izzaham, 2008; Khalid, 2014; Ong et al., 2004). According to the current study participants, meetings with peers helped them overcome some of the classroom management difficulties and develop pedagogical practices. Nevertheless, another negative effect of peers regarding social practices in the school context was reported by the participants. Darvin and Norton (2015, p. 47) argued that there may be structures that subjugate learners; however, David and Norton "draw attention to how learners may paradoxically contribute to their subjugation through the performance of hegemonic practices." The participants revealed that peers encouraged them to conform to the school culture to maintain calm relationships and receive good assessments.

Consequently, participants and peers encouraged each other to adopt the follower identity in the training context. The findings indicate that PSTs questioned the futility of discussing with seniors or opposing them. They convinced each other it was a short period to survive by satisfying their mentors and the principal. In addition, the participants objected to some school practices, like being assigned an abundance of extracurricular activities to handle instead of focusing on their own practice. However, they reminded each other of how they enjoyed wasting time on co-curriculum activities when they were students themselves. Nonetheless, they hated the idea of being separated from experienced teachers or being asked to cover absent teachers' classes. For the PSTs, it was a waste of time and opportunity of constructing a PI and growing as teachers.

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The participants could not see and were not encouraged to see themselves as agentic in the school context. Similar to Julie, a PST participant in Castaneda's (2014) study, Iman in the current study wanted her peers to voice out their concerns and objections to the school or supervisors. However, Iman ultimately admitted that she could not keep challenging her mentor or school administration. She finally decided to conform to the school culture as recommended by her peers. Only the mentors and school's good assessment mattered at the end. The participants dragged each other away from enacting their agentic selves and building self-confidence in the ability to make changes to the practice context.

Losing the agentic role in the practicum context due to negative peer influence echoes Kayi-Aydar's (2015) findings of the three participants, Elizabeth, April and Janet, who assigned themselves powerless and non-agentic positions. Even when the three participants had ideas or concerns to share with the school administration or mentors, they hesitated due to the power relationship in the practicum context. Similar to the current study, Kayi-Aydar's participants questioned their capacity to act and make changes in the practicum context. The participants in both studies did not feel empowered and feared devaluation by others at the practicum site.

PST-School Student Relationships Hindering PI Development

A challenge that participants had to manage upon starting to teach in real classrooms was classroom disturbance represented by students' attitude towards the PSTs, discipline issues and students' fluctuating motivation. Classroom disturbance and the negative influence on PSTs appear in literature as a worldwide problem, as indicated by studies in Germany (Dicke, Elling, Schmeck, & Leutner, 2015), Australia, (Cattley, 2007; O'Neill & Stephenson, 2014), Malaysia, (Khalid, 2014;

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Ong et al., 2004; Sueb, 2013), Colombia, (Castañeda, 2014) and the Philippines (Abas, 2016).

Participants including Asmira and Iman reported disappointment with their students' negative attitude towards them. In literature, scholars argue that the struggle of being accepted by school students may be partially connected with the PSTs' own struggle with transitioning from university students to novice professionals (Friedman, 2000). Iman, Asmira and Suzan in the current study mentioned feeling frustrated because their students did not recognize them as teachers to respect and fear. The observation data support the participants' perception of students' disapproval.

A related situation was reported by Sara, Castañeda's (2014) Colombian participant, who experienced a sense of professional frustration because students did not take her seriously as a teacher. This students' negative attitude towards PSTs was also found by Nguyen, Tran, and Luu 's (2016) Chinese participant Lee, who was practicing teaching in an Australian public school. Lee reported that students devalued her as a student teacher from the first time she met them. She said they tried to test her and caused much difficulty while she was trying to handle class discipline problems. Whereas Lee had her mentor step in and help her overcome these problems, the current study participants were left to struggle alone.

Recent research demonstrates that PSTs' sense of low confidence, exhaustion and burnout is in large part caused by student discipline problems (Friedman, 2006). The current participants mentioned that students were challenging the PSTs because they did not perceive them as teachers. Hence, the participants became intimidated to act in class and teach using different activities for fear of being disrespected by students, for instance Asmira, whose students mocked her voice. Like Asmira,

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Nguyen et al.'s (2016) participant Lee was scared to lose face in the classroom, as the students were laughing at her English accent. The current participants were drained due to having to handle student discipline issues, such as late arrival to class, disruptive talking and yelling at each other.

Fulla revealed that such misbehavior wasted much class time and energy. The situation was even worse for Iman, whose students ignored her presence and wasted class time. Luara, a Korean participant in Nguyen et al.'s (2016) study, also considered student behavior management as one of her limitations. It took her three practicum experiences before declaring an improvement in managing student behavior. She required much time and energy to handle discipline problems similar to the current study participants, who found they were actually not focusing on their professional growth or student learning. What mattered to the participants was controlling their classes, regardless of instructional teaching problems such as students' low academic achievement.

Sueb (2013) conducted a study in the Malaysian context to investigate the challenges faced by two chemistry PSTs at the practicum sites. The two participants reported that their greatest challenge was their students' disrespectful attitude. The students talked a lot in class, were not willing to come to class, slept during the lessons and did not do homework. These challenges negatively affected the PSTs' motivation to work in class. Sueb's findings on the Malaysian context are in line with the current study findings for the same context.

Students' fluctuating motivation to learn was another serious challenge for the participants, causing them to face discipline problems. The participants prepared activities in the hope of engaging students; however, the PSTs found themselves restricted by the students' desire to work on a particular day. Muna for example,

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could not explain the fluctuation in her students' motivation, whereby one day they wanted to work and another time, although with a similar activity, they did not want to work. The participants felt unprepared for such problematic relationships with students (Jones, 2006). Nguyen et al.'s (2016) participant Lee, also believed that her students did not place value on language learning; hence, they caused many discipline problems.

In previous sections related to RQ1 and RQ2, the discussions showed that a number of personal factors and socio-contextual factors interplay in the TEP (including university-based and school-based practice) and influence PI construction. The following discussion presents how the PSTs negotiated their PI development by using adaptation strategies to observe, experiment with, and evaluate different possible teacher selves. The possible selves were reflected by the learning context in which they were situated. The discussion continues by explaining how the PSTs altered their adaptation strategies to work better when moving from one learning context to another.

The adaptation cycle in the simulated teaching context SCoP facilitating PI Development. As discussed earlier, the simulated teaching classes offered the PSTs a supportive community of practice with strong relationships to facilitate PI development from a low PI owing to personal factors to high PI. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, p. 177) argued that PI is "a constantly evolving phenomenon involving both a person and a context." Since the contextual factors were facilitative of PI development in the simulated teaching classes, the PSTs underwent three adaptation strategies to grow professionally.

Observation. The first strategy, observation, had two main outcomes: building professional images and matching identities to build one's style. The first

outcome of observation was that according to the participants, observations of peers' model lessons enabled them to build a number of professional images pertaining to teacher character, teacher ability, teacher language performance and classroom management. For example, the participants highlighted their peers' confidence and enthusiasm, patience, care, commanding presence and charisma while teaching. Iman noticed how enthusiastic and confident Suzan was while teaching a model lesson. Muna also observed that Noor was patient and charismatic while teaching. Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) viewed such teacher characteristics as part of their personal identities that can serve as foundations for PI. Thus, scholars, such as Tsui (2011) refer to the interplay of personal and professional identities as individuals negotiate their understanding within a context.

Additionally, observing peers teaching helped the PSTs build a repertoire of teaching strategies to use in their own teaching. For example, Asmira built a repertoire of attention grabbers for use in the introductory section in her lessons. Elisha learned teaching strategies for reading comprehension from Huda's model lesson. Muna reported learning various techniques of giving students feedback by observing her peers.

The current study findings on the benefits PSTs gained from observing peers' model lessons in the simulated teaching stage are in agreement with other studies. For example, Ogeyik (2009) explored how 57 ELT PSTs in a Turkish university benefited from observing peers' model lessons. The overall results indicate that peer observation promoted the PSTs' effective teaching strategies. Benton-Kupper (2001) conducted a mixed method study to gain quantitative and qualitative data from a group of PSTs regarding the benefits of observing peers teaching. Benton-Kupper's

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study revealed that peer observation was beneficial and helped PSTs learn about the teaching craft.

While previous studies focused on teaching strategies, the current study shows that observing peers' model lessons enhanced the participants' language skills too. The participants reported enhanced language performance in terms of using appropriate classroom language, correct pronunciation and a clear voice: Huda built a list of words and sentences to use in her lessons and Muna improved her voice clarity and projection similar to her peers. Ismail (2011) and Ogeyik (2009) achieved similar results to the current study. Their participants referred to observing peers and interacting in microteaching as effective tools in promoting their language skills for class teaching. Nearly half of the participants of Ismail's (2011) 76 female ESL PSTs found they had refined their English language and developed a jargon (e.g., giving instructions) needed for use in class.

According to the participants, the simulated teaching classes presented an idealistic educational situation because peers were the learners and educational resources were available. Nonetheless, the participants felt they had learned some foundational classroom management techniques to which they could refer when teaching. Noor learned about giving clear activity instructions; Asmira learned about using a classroom rule chart to manage classes, and Muna observed her peers make maximum use of space in their classes. The aforementioned studies did not highlight PSTs' classroom management development, because the PSTs, similar to the current study participants, felt that microteaching and model lessons might not depict the true nature of secondary schools. Hence, PSTs are generally expected to encounter difficulties with classroom management upon changing from the safe university context to the challenging secondary school context.

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This study and previously mentioned studies focused on how PSTs benefited from observing peers' model lessons. It was found that PSTs used observation to compare and contrast peers' teaching practices to ultimately build clearer images of teachers and teaching. The current study additionally investigated other observation sub strategies that PSTs used to benefit from observations. Since the adaptation cycle is iterative (Ibarra, 1999; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008), an individual tries out learned practices and then observes others in professional roles to match identities between oneself and the others.

According to the PSTs, their second goal of observing was to compare and contrast their own practices in their model lessons to peers' practices. For example, Huda indicated that she continuously compared her teaching to her peers' to sharpen her style. The participants reported recognizing what teacher models they wished to adopt or avoid based on their observation. Asmira found Suzan as exemplary of the innovative teacher she hoped to become. Fulla rejected her peer's strict role with her students; hence; Fulla decided to avoid enacting such possible self in her profession.

Experimenting with different possible selves. Experimentation is the second adaptation strategy PSTs need to adopt in trying various possible selves to develop their PI. Besides, PSTs construct tentative images through "apprenticeship of observation" (Lortie, 1975) during their educational experiences while observing teachers (at school and university) teaching. Additionally, the participants referred to the possible selves they constructed while observing their peers' model lessons as a vivid source for trial. The participants in Ronfeldt and Grossman's (2008) study reported that the different PI models encountered in their TEP were valuable for them to attempt themselves.

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Ibarra (1999), who built her model in a business context where novices observe a limited number of professionals, defined three sub strategies of experimentation: wholesale imitation, selective imitation and true-to-self strategy. The participants in the current study conveyed that while experimenting with different possible selves, they could not literally imitate one teacher model encountered previously. Iman found such strategy inapplicable in teaching situations, since many factors overlap in class. For the participants, selective imitation was a successful sub strategy to adopt, as they could select different possible selves to construct a well-synthesized lesson to apply in class. Muna, for example, explained how she selected diverse teaching strategies she had observed in her peers' lessons or from previous teachers' images to create a coherent way of teaching her lessons.

The participants also revealed that the selected professional images aligned with their own personalities. Huda found that her built teacher character was similar to her own personality as a cheerful person, while Noor experimented with different possible selves and constructed her own style. Trying to teach apparently improved the PSTs' teaching performance and confidence in themselves as teachers; hence, they moved on to a higher step in the PI construction journey.

The current study not only traced the benefits that PSTs may gain by trying out different teaching strategies, but it also highlighted the experimentation sub strategies employed by ESL PSTs deliberately in trying out various professional images. This finding is not reflected by many other studies that investigated PI construction (Benton-Kupper, 2001; Elsheikh, 2012; Maria L. Fernandez & Robinson, 2006; Horn et al., 2008; Ismail, 2011; Kabilan & Izzaham, 2008; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Lee & Schallert, 2016; Ogeyik, 2009; Rodgers & Scott, 2008; Smith, 2006; Turbill & Kervin, 2007). For example, Maria L. Fernandez and Robinson

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(2006) conducted a study with 74 PSTs at Florida State University to explore their perception of the benefits from microteaching lessons they taught. Similar to the current study findings, the abovementioned participants indicated they improved a lot as teachers when they tried out theories they learnt and practices they observed.

A study by Maria Lorelei Fernandez (2010) conducted with 18 PSTs used different research tools, such as videotaping, audiotaping and group discussions to investigate what PSTs learnt from the microteaching lessons. The participants in Fernandez' study reported being able to explore different teaching strategies and develop effective ones. They also conveyed their classroom management techniques improved, although they were aware that their classmates were acting in a simulated situation. Those findings support the current study findings regarding the benefits of trying out teaching during simulated teaching classes.

Evaluation using internal and external feedback. The third adaptation strategy that PSTs used to develop a PI was to evaluate their teaching performance by using internal and external feedback. The participants used self-evaluation to compare and contrast what they hoped to become as teachers and what they had become or practiced. Ibarra (1999) contended that congruence between individuals' self-conception of what they hoped to be and their practices can facilitate internalizing those practices (possible selves) to be part of self-representations. According to the participants, they used their hoped-to-be selves as a reference for internal assessment. Muna judged her teaching performance based on her desire to become an innovative teacher. The participants evaluated their strengths and weaknesses and felt satisfied when their practices were in accordance with what they hoped to be, such as in Muna's case. However, contradictions between what they hoped to become and what they practiced, or were driven to practice, created

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dissatisfaction. For example, Iman was not satisfied with the strict teacher image she represented in her lesson because she hated this image when she was a learner. The value of the internal feedback mechanism is understudied in literature, whereas focus is on the value of external feedback (Britton & Anderson, 2010; Maria Lorelei Fernandez, 2010; Maria L. Fernandez & Robinson, 2006; Ismail, 2011; Korkko et al., 2016; Ogeyik, 2009; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008).

External feedback from supervisors and peers effectively influenced PSTs' PI development. Observing others' practices and trying out different possible selves may not be as effective without immediate and constructive feedback from those observing PSTs in action. Such feedback helps novices to correct practices and underlying conceptions of those practices (Ibarra, 1999; Ismail, 2011; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). The participants mentioned that external feedback from other SCoP members enabled them to adopt, modify or discard teaching strategies based on positive or negative feedback on their teaching performance. Suzan continued to use Prezi software because her supervisor and peers expressed admiration for her technology skills; Fulla altered her vocabulary presentation techniques; and Asmira discarded the deductive way of teaching grammar due to negative feedback from her supervisor.

Ismail (2011) results are in accord with the findings from the current study. The participants in Ismail's study reported coming to their microteaching course with preconceptions about the model teacher and sound teaching practices. Britton and Anderson's (2010) study is in agreement with the fact that PSTs alter their pedagogical practices based on peer feedback.

The participants in the current study as well as in the two aforementioned studies reported readiness to receive feedback from peers and supervisors. They

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revealed they were open-minded to others' comments and sought even more help to grow professionally. In contrast, Amobi (2005) studied the reflective journals of 31 PSTs during their microteaching classes. The PSTs' perceptions of self and peer evaluations were evaluated. The participants were invited to comment on the feedback received from peers in a discussion session. Apparently, the PSTs were defensive and passive towards their peers' comments, because they felt their peers were competitive and unfair in their evaluation. The argument is that the presence of a facilitating supervisor helps PSTs imagine how negotiating with peers and reacting positively to their feedback may promote professional growth (Wenger et al., 2002).

Similar findings on the value of immediate feedback from supervisors and peers were reported by Korkko et al. (2016), who emphasized that such feedback needs to be constructive. Korkko et al. thematically analyzed 13 PSTs' reflective journals to investigate how external feedback resulted in the development of the PSTs' practical theories. Korkko et al.'s (2016, p. 202) study demonstrated that "the feedback and dialogical reflections with their supervisors and peers provided a learning opportunity … to further develop their practical theories." The researchers concluded that positive or negative feedback may not necessarily result in real learning. However, constructive feedback is necessary for PSTs to learn how they act and explore the underlying assumptions or preconceptions behind these actions (Beijaard et al., 2004).

Altering adaptation strategies in the challenging teaching practicum context. As the PSTs changed contexts by moving from the simulated teaching classes at university to the real classroom context at public secondary schools (i.e., practicum sites), they began encountering a number of difficulties and tensions caused by socio-contextual factors. The PSTs reported being sent alone to class with

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no support or guidance on how to solve the problems faced. The participants discovered that the adaptation strategies they used during the simulated teaching classes were not practical at the practicum sites. Hence, the participants exerted effort to adapt to the constraints faced in PI development by altering the observation-experimentation-evaluation cycle. They deliberately added new mechanisms to overcome the PI crisis.

Direct observation replaced by New Mechanisms. Anderson, Barksdale, and Hite (2005) argued that the apprenticeship experience at the teaching practicum site postulates that mentors serve as authentic models who guide PSTs in applying and refining theoretical knowledge. Close observation by mentors can help PSTs develop their teaching practices and PI. Observation of field practice may be guided or unguided. Guided observation means that PSTs are directed to observe specific teaching aspects, such as transitioning between activities or giving clear instructions. Unguided observation entails no specific focus for observation, but only observing to recognize general strengths and weaknesses in the lesson. The participants in the current study claimed they had to practice alone in class with none of the aforementioned observations; hence, they reverted to two other types of professional images: images from prior experience and imagined images of mentors and peers based on unseen observation.

The participants recalled prior experience of learning from their secondary school teachers' practices to teach and manage classes. They referred to their model teachers' images in adopting their practices in class and for classroom management techniques. For instance, Fulla recalled a memory of her Form 4 teacher, who used interactive activities and encouraged her students a lot. Asmira remembered her school teacher building good rapport with her students and managing classes

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effectively. Reactivating educational memories of school and university teachers to create visions of desired teacher selves echoes Flores and Day (2006), who worked with 14 novice teachers during their first two years of teaching. The teachers found school memories effective in developing their PI. Cook (2009) interviewed ten inexperienced teachers who felt that recalling previous teachers' practices was influential in PI construction.

More recently, Miller and Shifflet (2016) analyzed the reflective journals of 69 PSTs who were asked to write about their school memories and reflect on the meanings. Their participants claimed those memories enabled them to create their desired selves. They also recognized some conflict between memories and sound teaching practices they learnt during the TEP. The findings indicated the power of memories on PSTs' practice with teaching. The current study findings support the value of recalled memories in guiding PST development in the absence of live professional images.

The second mechanism employed by the PSTs in the current study to compensate for the absence of mentors and peers from their classes was to construct imagined images based on talks with mentors or peers outside class. Muna said she used her mentor's comments to imagine how the mentor would work in class. Muna referred to those images while teaching and felt they were effective in improving her teaching in the absence of direct observation. Peer suggestions on how to handle classroom management problems helped Asmira build an image of her peers teaching. Unseen observation and its role in building imagined professional images has not been reported in literature on PSTs. Only one study by Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) with a number of novices resonates with the current study findings pertaining to imagined professional images. The researchers noted that their clinical

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psychology PST, Quise, had a high opinion of her mentor, as the kind of clinical psychologist Quise hoped to become. She described her mentor with positive qualities as kind, confident and competent. Quise admitted she had almost no chance to observe her mentor in real practice. The researchers concluded that their participants "were often making inferences based on what they imagined rather than what they observed" (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008, p. 47).

Experimenting alone in class. Teaching classes alone, the participants reported struggling with classroom management, which affected their teaching performance negatively. They felt unconfident, confused, unguided and burnt out at the practicum sites. Despite the absence of observers (i.e., mentors or peers), the participants kept trying different teaching strategies and solutions to eventually gain PI awareness. They employed two mechanisms of experimentation: selective imitation during the simulated teaching classes, and modified practices as solutions to the challenging context.

The first strategy the participants attempted was to use the practical knowledge gained from their simulated teaching classes. Later, they discovered that moving from one context (i.e., university simulated teaching class) to another (i.e., secondary school) required them to activate varying techniques to improve teaching performance. Fulla, for example, experimented with many teaching strategies she either observed or attempted in her simulated teaching class. The findings indicate that lack of resources deprived the PSTs of attempting innovative lessons. Even when they prepared lessons with technology integrated, as in Asmira’s case, the PSTs were not granted access to the computer lab or library.

As discussed earlier for the observation strategy, the participants found previous images as sources of more feasible practices to try in the secondary school

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context. This strategy helped them overcome the lack of resources and educational aids at the practicum sites. Muna abandoned technology and used more group work and worksheets, similar to her school teachers in the past. The participants sometimes faced difficulties when trying out practices that were appealing to them as students. Some of the practices were not welcome by current students. Iman found it puzzling that her students did not like pop quizzes as a motivating activity. It is argued that when PSTs recall memories to help accept or reject certain strategies, they base their judgment on what worked and was suitable with their current students (Castañeda, 2014; C. Fairbanks et al., 2000; Miller & Shifflet, 2016).

The current study findings reveal that the participants decided to follow another strategy to amend practices and behaviors in response to their students' interests. Fulla, who discovered that her naughty students liked debating the most, represented a very successful example of practice modification. She prepared more debating activities, which were successful and reflected positively on her confidence level. Asmira discovered that memorizing her students' names and calling them by their names facilitated building good rapport them. Such discoveries evidently enabled PSTs to regain confidence and make progress in PI development.

Similar findings were obtained in Miller and Shifflet's (2016) study, where the participants demonstrated a deeper understanding of their teaching practices. One of the participants admitted relying heavily on her memories to teach students. However, she decided that understanding her students' nature and needs facilitated progress in her own style. The researcher noted that the reflective practice in the study context guided by teacher educators helped PSTs to negotiate past memories with their present practices. This finding on the value of reflective practice is not part of the current study results, since the PSTs were left to teach alone.

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New Mechanisms of evaluation and feedback. The study findings regarding PSTs' journey through the teaching practicum indicate they were unguided and unsupported, which resulted in a PI crisis. Half way through making sense of their journey, the participants declared they started to find their own ways to improve their practices and adjust to the challenging secondary school context. Not exchanging observation visits with peers and mentors also deprived of receiving adequate and constructive feedback. According to the participants, they had to alter their feedback sources to respond to the lack of mentor and peer feedback. They adopted an internal feedback strategy and altered the external feedback strategy to include mentor and peer feedback based on unseen observation and students' nonverbal and verbal feedback.

Internal feedback using prior images and personal standards. The first mechanism available for the participants to evaluate their practices was related to their possible selves' repertoire (prior images and personal standards). This strategy echoes with Ibarra's (1999) model of the adaptation process that a novice uses to evaluate their own practices. Muna used images of her role model teacher to evaluate her own teaching practices. Fulla employed her hoped-to-be selves to judge to what extent she realized them. The study findings at this stage correspond to the findings on internal feedback that participants used during simulated teaching classes. The result also corresponds with other studies that focused on the value of possible selves in guiding the individual towards achieving one's desires (Borg, 2004; Cook, 2009; Friedman, 2000, 2006; Ibarra, 1999; Lee & Schallert, 2016; Merseth et al., 2008; Ogeyik, 2009; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008).

Feedback based on Unseen Observation. From the participants' perspective, external feedback was not as effective as when used during the simulated teaching

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classes. According to the findings, the participants sought their mentors and peers' comments outside class. The participants could not devote much time for such feedback, as they had only few minutes to talk to their mentors. Fulla exploited the shift between classes to meet her mentor and get quick feedback on her description of the lesson. Similarly, Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) noted that PSTs had opportunities to try out teaching strategies, but they received little evaluation. The researchers also noticed that senior professionals (mentors or supervisors) did not observe the PSTs perform, so seniors' "evaluations were constrained by what novices later chose" (2008, p. 50) or neglected to report. Without meaningful and constructive feedback, novices cannot judge whether their practices are up to professional standards (Ali & Al-Adawi, 2013; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008).

Literature on feedback at practicum sites indicates that constructive feedback, whether oral and face-to-face or written, enables PSTs to confirm whether they achieved the learning outcome. Constructive feedback can motivate PSTs and encourage them to exert more effort on improving their teaching performance (Ali & Al-Adawi, 2013; Copland, 2010, 2011; Davis & Dargusch, 2015; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; White, 2007). The result from the current study that PSTs could not secure meaningful feedback from mentors is not in accord with many other studies that investigated the types and value of feedback the participants received. For example, White (2007) asked a group of PSTs in New Zealand about the influence of feedback on teaching performance they got from their mentors during practicum. The findings revealed that oral feedback was given most often and was the most useful mode of feedback. The participants claimed they received various types of feedback that exceeded their expectations. They believed that owing to such

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effective modes of feedback they were able to focus and direct their teaching practices and professional growth.

Another study regarding the value of feedback was done by Ali and Al-Adawi (2013). The researchers conducted a mixed method study in the Omani context to investigate the perceptions of 46 Omani EFL PSTs aged 22-24 of the type and value of practicum feedback. The findings indicated that the majority of participants perceived practicum feedback, whether written or spoken, positively. Unlike White's (2007) participants who preferred spoken feedback, Ali and Al-Adawi's PSTs considered written feedback as more effective than oral feedback, because they could refer to it any time. Both PSTs and mentors in Ali and Al-Adawi's study considered feedback influential on improving PSTs' pedagogical skills and knowledge. Feiman-Nemser (2001, p. 23) postulated that concrete and constructive feedback enables PSTs to "visulaize their evolving style, clarify what they need to work on, and concretize their own vision of good teaching." In contrast to the participants in the two aforementioned studies, those in the current study felt lost and isolated, and suffered a PI crisis in the absence of such influential feedback.

In the current study, the participants claimed that the feedback received from their mentors was inadequate and inappropriate. Consequently, they attempted to secure some constructive feedback from peers. They met peers more in the staff room, thus having a better chance to get feedback on their performance based on their descriptions of their classes. Asmira debriefed her lesson to her peers to help figure out why the class turned chaotic that day. This study shows that the participants were not given time to observe their peers' classes, discuss those classes and reflect on practices. They could have grown professionally, but the overburdens at school deprived them of a powerful tool for PI development.

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In the literature, direct observation of peers' lessons and immediate feedback proved to be more fruitful (Anderson et al., 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). One of the findings in Anderson et al.'s (2005) study is that the PSTs expanded peer observation and feedback from once weekly as required by the TEP, to a daily basis. Two of the participants reported exchanging visits and notes on their lessons daily, after which they passed those comments to the other PSTs. This strategy proved to be effective in enhancing the participants' pedagogical and classroom management skills.

Another related study was conducted by Starkey and Rawlins (2011) in New Zealand to outline the features of an effective practicum. The researchers used an online survey of 164 PSTs from early childhood, primary and secondary education programs at Massey University and Victoria University in Wellington in 2010, as well as 138 mentors and 32 supervisors. Starkey and Rawlins also carried out open-ended interviews with 11 participants. The study revealed that 80% of PSTs received feedback and support from peers on matters related to teaching performance and classroom discipline. Ninety percent (90%) of PST participants reported finding peer feedback influential and supportive along their teaching practicum journey. Almost 50% of PSTs revealed that staff room discussions with peers were useful. This finding supports the current study participants' perception of obtaining peer feedback in the staff room. About 70% of PSTs found informal face-to-face feedback from peers more effective than formal university organized sessions (15%). The researchers recommended that PSTs exchange more constructive feedback with peers using different social networking tools such as Facebook or Twitter. This can help PSTs, for instance in the current study context, to compensate for the minimal opportunities available at the practicum sites to meet and reflect on their practices.

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Students' Nonverbal and Verbal feedback. Practicing under such challenging practicum conditions, the participants kept attempting to obtain feedback that could direct and give them a sense of achievement during the practicum. This study shows that the participants considered their school students as the third resort for seeking feedback. At the beginning, the participants relied mainly on students' nonverbal reactions to decide whether their teaching strategy or behavior was appropriate. Iman, for instance, considered her students' facial expressions as a good indication of whether her activities appealed to her students. In terms of securing feedback from students, the participants decided to act deliberately and obtain their students' oral or written feedback. Fulla sought her students' oral comments on her classes; Asmira asked her students to write comments on paper; Muna took her students' reactions as a reflection of her success or failure. These findings demonstrate that the PSTs managed to understand their students' needs, build good rapport with them, and most importantly, manage classroom problems to a good extent.

Some studies reported that building rapport with school students soothed PSTs’ tensions and increased their motivation to work harder in class (Shafer, 2015; Sueb, 2013). However, those studies did not refer to PSTs' deliberately seeking students' feedback to improve their teaching skills. For example, Sueb (2013) showed that her Malaysian PSTs tried to resolve the challenges with students' misbehavior and lack of motivation by creating fun activities, memorizing the students' names, punishing negative behaviors and rewarding positive ones, and becoming friendly with students.

Shafer (2015) conducted a qualitative single case study to examine the relationship building strategies that Becky, an American biology PST, used in her practicum. Shafer utilized observation, interviews and journaling to collect data.

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Some of Shafer's study findings indicated that Becky had a positive experience in the practicum upon improving her relationships with the students. By showing interest in her students' lives by providing individual attention and encouraging them with fun activities, Becky managed to enhance her relationships with the students and promote her motivation to work with them. Though her strategies were approximate to those used by the current study participants, Becky did not seek students' direct feedback on her teaching performance.

School students who had a depletive role at the beginning of the current study participants' practicum journey turned out to be a motivating factor for the PSTs. The participants had to make extra effort to come up with activities suitable for their students, besides building good relationships with students to overcome discipline problems. The participants claimed that the success attained at the practicum sites led them to become more aware of their roles and practices as teachers. However, the participants reported having lost opportunities to grow professionally and decided they needed to seek greater development in their future career.

The previous sections presented a summary of the study findings by revisiting the research sub questions. The study results were then thoroughly discussed by relating them to literature on PI development. In the next section, a synthesis of the study results is employed to show the theoretical contribution of the study. The methodological and professional contributions in addition to recommendations for future research are also presented subsequently.

Study Contributions

The study was aimed at exploring the PI construction of 8 Malaysian ESL PSTs by understanding the nature of the PI developed throughout the student

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teaching stage (including the simulated teaching classes and teaching practicum stage). The study also examined the personal and social factors influencing the PSTs' PI construction. The way ESL PSTs employed adaptation strategies to respond to contextual affordances or challenges in developing their PI was also assessed.

This research contributes to current knowledge on language teacher professional identity from the following theoretical, methodological and practical/professional aspects:

(1) Theoretical contributions

a. Presenting a situative understanding of ESL PSTs' PI construction

b. Proposing alterations in the guiding theoretical framework of the adaptation cycle to respond to the contextual specifications of the study.

(2) Methodological contribution following a methodological approach that supported the PSTs' interview data with observation data from the constructivist perspectives of research.

(3) Implications for practice

(4)

Theoretical Contributions

Presenting a Situative Understanding of ESL PSTs' PI Construction

a. The first contribution of this study is the support of existing literature on PI construction in EFL/ESL contexts by adding support to the perspective that the journey of becoming a teacher is complex and affected by the person and context, including opportunities it offers or challenges it poses, to enact and develop one's PI. The following figure (6.1) represents a synthesis of this study findings to which other researchers of PI development can refer. The current study results are context-

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specific; hence, they may be in agreement or disagreement with results from other contexts.

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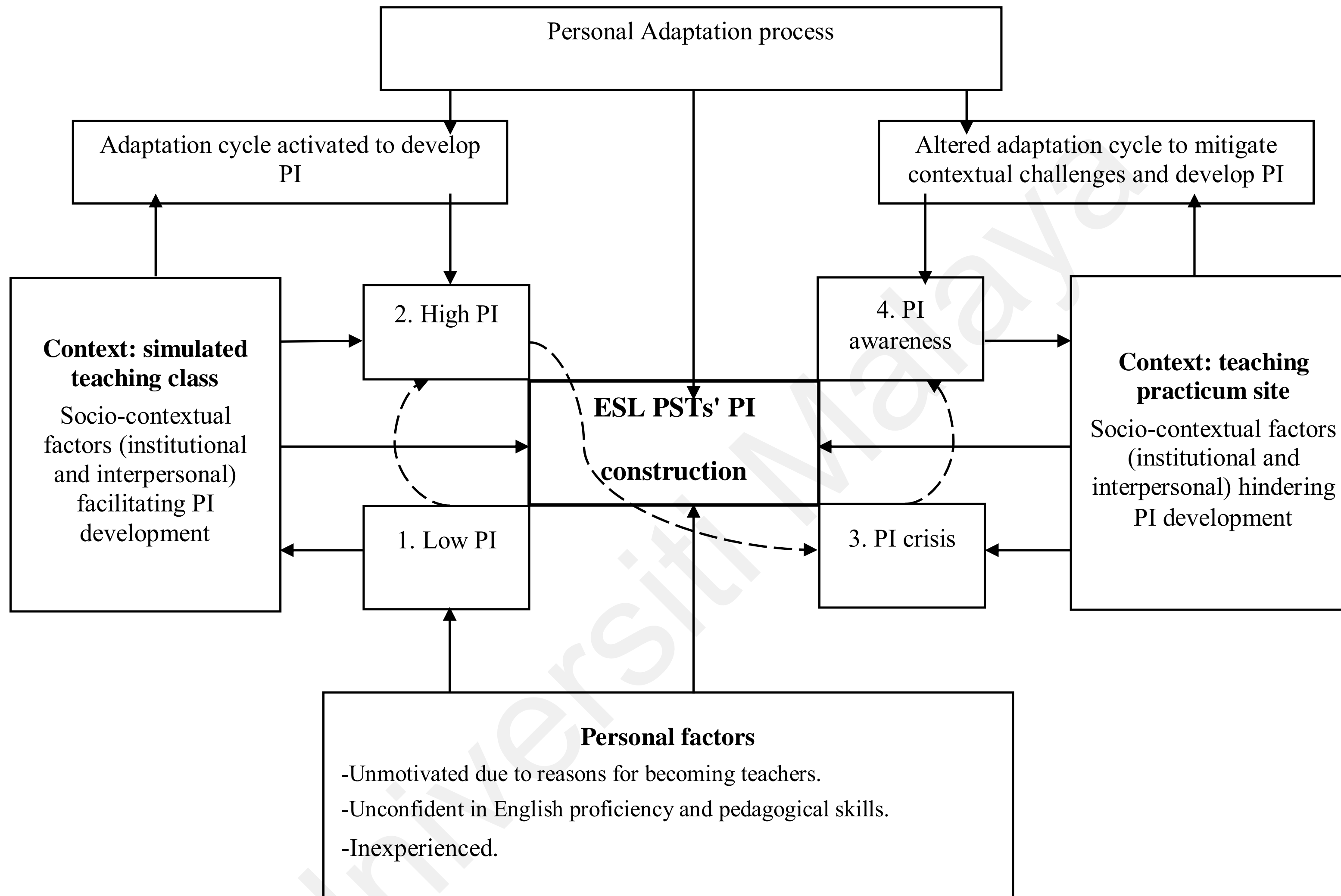

Figure 6.1 Synthesis of personal, sociocultural and adaptation process influencing PI construction

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Figure (6.1) highlights three major points regarding ESL PSTs' PI construction. The first point is in line with the premise that PI construction is dynamic, changing and nonlinear (Battey & Franke, 2008; Beijaard et al., 2004; Florio-Ruane & Williams, 2008; Kang, 2012; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Olsen, 2008; Slick, 1998a). The participants in this study experienced four shifts in PI: low PI, high PI, PI crisis and PI awareness.

The second point the figure shows is that PI construction is strongly influenced by personal and social factors in the context of learning to teach. Personal factors underlined the low PI at the beginning of the student teaching program. Lacking motivation due to their reasons of becoming (fallback choice and family pressure), lack of confidence in one's English proficiency and pedagogical skills, and feeling inexperienced strongly shaped the type of PI the PSTs developed, although they went through many theoretical courses in the TEP. The findings suggest that teacher educators must help PSTs understand their pre-assumptions and connect with their teaching profession.

Based on Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of identity development as well as this study, it seems that social structure is critical to shaping one's identity as a TESL teacher. For example, a supportive and facilitating context such as the simulated teaching class facilitated the emergence of high PI. However, when the context was challenging and marginalizing, such as in the practicum context, it hindered PI development and led to a PI crisis. The results suggest that the assumption that taking a CoP for granted once PSTs start their university-based and school-based training is misleading. Hence, stakeholders need to create learning contexts conducive of PI construction.

The third point the figure reveals is that personal adaptation processes, though psychological individual constructs, are highly affected by the context surrounding PSTs.

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This finding resonates with the new trend in literature that argues that PSTs are not fully autonomous nor completely dominated by the surrounding social context (Grossman et al., 2009; Horn et al., 2008; Olsen, 2008). The participants in the current study were influenced by their context; however, they developed their own strategies to respond to the context challenges. Their personal responses to the tensions encountered enabled them to survive the student teaching stage and develop their PI.

Alteration of the adaptation cycle framework. The second theoretical contribution of the current study is represented by the alteration of Ibarra's (1999) adaptation cycle of observation-experimentation and evaluation. The adaptation cycle proved to be applicable to the simulated teaching class SCoP. The PSTs had the opportunity to engage in interactions and negotiations with the other SCoP members and work on developing their PI using their adaptation strategy extensively. However, the study findings prove that Ibarra's (1999) model, which was adopted by Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008), was impracticable when the PSTs were confronted with the challenging teaching practicum context. Because they felt isolated and alone in classes with no guidance, feedback or support, the PSTs altered their adaptation strategies and created others to manage the PI crisis.

Hence, the study contributes to literature by adding new adaptation strategies to Ibarra's cycle to respond to challenging contexts similar to the current study context. Table (6.1) shows the applicability and alterations of Ibarra's model of the adaptation cycle in the current study cycle. Three symbols serve to show if the strategy in Ibarra's (1999) adaptation model was applicable in the study context (√) or if the strategy was not applicable (X). The table also shows what new strategies were added to replace strategies in Ibarra's adaptation cycle model (+).

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Table 5.6

Applicability and Alterations of Ibarra's (1999) Model in the Current Study Context

	Supportive context of simulated teaching class	Challenging context of teaching practicum
Adaptation cycle	Applicable	Inapplicable
Observation	Observing and being observed in the SCoP √ Built professional images √ Matching identities to build one's style	No observation then reverted to + Images from prior experience + Imagined images of mentors and peers based on unseen observation.
Experimentation	Experimenting in the presence of supervisor and peers √ Selective imitation of others' performance √ True-to-self strategy X Wholesale imitation	Experimenting alone in classes √ Selective imitation of previously constructed images + Modified practices to suit students' interests
Evaluation	Adequate and constructive feedback √ Internal (based on one's standards) √ External feedback (from supervisor and peers)	Absence of adequate and constructive feedback √ Internal (based on prior images and personal standards) + External feedback (mentors and peers based on PSTs' description of their lessons). + Students' nonverbal and verbal feedback

Note. Key of symbols- (√): strategy in Ibarra's (1999) model is applicable; (X): strategy in Ibarra's (1999) model is not applicable; (+) new strategy that replaced Ibarra's (1999) model strategies.

Table 5.6 shows that the application of the observation-experimentation-evaluation cycle was permissible within the supportive context of the simulated teaching class. The participants observed their peers in action and were observed by their peers and supervisors. The participants used observation to build professional images and to match

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their and others' identities to build their own teaching style. The experimentation strategy was carried out in the presence of a supervisor and peers. While the participants avoided wholesale imitation of others' teaching performance, they used selective imitation and true-to-self sub strategies to try out different possible selves during the model lessons. The PSTs received adequate and constructive feedback during the simulated teaching classes due to observation and experimentation in the presence of other CoP members. They also used internal and external feedback to evaluate their performance and hence develop their PI.

The study findings expand Ibarra's model by adding new sub strategies when the original strategies are not applicable in a challenging context such as the teaching practicum in the current study. Since observation was not possible in the new context, the participants reverted to images from prior experience as learners over previous years and through the simulated teaching classes. They also used imagined images of their mentors and peers based on unseen observation. The PSTs listened to their mentors and peers' comments and suggestions of how they acted in their classes. Then the participants constructed images to try later in their classes, where they experimented alone. They used selective imitation of previously constructed images to respond to the challenging classroom context. Subsequently, they found the selective imitation sub strategy was not enough to solve problems faced in class. The PSTs thus modified the practices to suit their students' needs and interests. In the absence of observation and with experimentation alone, the PSTs were also deprived of adequate and constructive feedback. Therefore, they devised new techniques in addition to internal feedback based on prior images and personal standards. They altered the external feedback from their mentors and peers based on their own descriptions of their lessons (i.e., unseen observation). They also sought their students' nonverbal and verbal feedback to evaluate their teaching performance and develop a PI.

Methodological contribution. The second contribution of the current study is at the methodological level, as the observation data supported the interview data, hence bridging one of the gaps in literature on TI construction (Izadinia, 2013). In a challenging context such as the current study context, novices avoided revealing their feelings of how they were taught to become teachers. The observation data enabled the researcher to note any inconsistencies between what the participants said and how they reacted and acted in their context. Observation data opened horizons for the study and enabled checking for different matters related to power relationships and teaching practices.

Another point regarding the methodological approach is the utilization of constructivist notions in approaching the study context. Prolonged exposure to the study context enabled the researcher to engage with the participants and gain better understanding of their journey to construct a PI. In addition, the participants were able to have their voices heard through the study platform. They participated in the data collection and analysis stages and even commented on the final themes and their presentation in the research report. The participants commented on the value of the research in helping them reflect on their journey of learning to teach. Being part of the research provided the PSTs with the type of discussions needed the most regarding their development, identity and commitment. According to Iman, they benefited a lot from partaking in this study and she wondered how others who did not participate went on this journey.

Practical/Professional Contributions

Implications for TEPs. This study showed that the PSTs experienced different shifts in their PI over the student teaching stage. A number of personal and social factors facilitated or hindered PI development. A teacher education program (TEP) needs to take into account PSTs' personal identity, their motivations to become teachers, their confidence

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in their language proficiency and effect of lack of experience, in order to help PSTs connect better with this profession and engage in their PI development. In a TEP, it is necessary to also identify the important elements of institutional or interpersonal factors, such as the roles of supervisors, mentors, peers, school administration, teachers and school students, and trace how these elements may positively or negatively affect PSTs' PI construction. In addition, program designers need to recognize how to enable adaptation processes to enhance PSTs' PI development. Accordingly, there are four recommendations for a TEP:

1. Focus more on social aspects in building teacher preparation programs. Besides focusing on individual teacher's tasks in teaching, more value should be given to social interaction and integration within the professional context. Perspectives of collegial and mutual relationships between PSTs and mentors, supervisors, peers and other teachers could help inform identity construction positively. This study proved the assumption that teacher identity is relational; hence, it is important to consider the groups with which PSTs are involved in a TEP. Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016) suggested that a group facilitated by educators could offer PSTs the possibility to participate and understand their responsibilities to themselves and others. In addition, PSTs should be taught about the self as a teacher (Alsup, 2006). For a long time, TEPs have been built on content and pedagogical knowledge. Governmental or academic reforms have been made in attempts to respond to the interplay between these two types of knowledge. The question of whether professional identity matters remains part of the debate. For those who adopt the knowledge transmission perspective, PI does not matter (Tsui, 2011). This study showed how TI construction can inform PSTs' professional growth and affect their commitment to the profession. Consequently, TI should be an explicit component of focus for PSTs in any TEP.

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2. Encourage closer collaboration between the Ministry of Education, schools and universities to form and abide by a clear training policy for PSTs. Such shared policy can provide a blueprint to mark the journey of PSTs in facilitating their transformation from university to school and to pave a clear path of action to illustrate how PSTs can learn to teach. Adoniou (2013) concluded that teacher preparation of PSTs was the most effective when there was collaboration and greater partnership between universities and schools. For example, classroom management proved to be the most complex difficulty in practicum, which reduced the PSTs' ability to try out different innovative possible selves. Therefore, a school-university partnership could highlight practical issues, such as managing classes and responding to 21st century students' needs to reduce discipline problems. Additionally, PSTs reported tensions from being overloaded with extracurricular activities and administrative tasks in the practicum context. Universities and schools ought to agree that more focus should be directed to PSTs' learning to teach in the first stage, and once they have gained confidence in managing their classes and activities, they may be assigned co-curriculum activities.

Gerardo and Contreras (2000) suggested that teacher preparation programs invite experienced school teachers to share their stories and experiences with program designers. Professionals could also participate in simulated teaching classes where they can convey experiences and comments to the PSTs. This may promote shared educational philosophies among mentors and PSTs. Instead of closing one door (university) to open another (school) with a different mindset, universities and schools should take joint responsibility for facilitating PSTs' transition journey from student to teacher (Crosswell & Beutel, 2013).

At practicum sites, only mentors who are committed and trained should be assigned to train PSTs. There should be clear rules to lessen mentors' administrative or schedule

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burdens to give more time for training. PSTs should be given plenty of opportunities to observe their mentors' classes to better understand how a practitioner enacts different possible selves. Mentors must meet PSTs in full sessions to discuss and review plans prior to the lesson. The presence of mentors, at least for the first half of the practicum, to observe the PSTs' teaching in class is vital. Such observed lessons must be followed by immediate reflection and feedback sessions to help PSTs and mentors assess the lessons and help PSTs improve their strategies. Lack of opportunities to observe, reflect and get feedback on teaching practices hinders PSTs' professional growth, as revealed by the data in this study.

3. Involve university supervisors, mentors and PSTs in engaging sessions of three-way conferences to share decision-making and negotiating differences in perceptions, expectations, and contributions to practicum teaching. To ensure effective and productive communication among members, stake holders can hold workshops on effective communication skills (Bullough & Draper, 2004; Veal & Rikard, 1998). In addition, supervisors need to spend more time at the practicum sites to help build trust and collaboration with mentors and PSTs. This is in line with what the PSTs and mentors suggested in this study, according to an informal talk between the researcher and a mentor. Supervisors need to be more engaged in PSTs' training rather than passing the entire responsibility to the schools. There is a need to shift the focus from assessment and evaluation while attending classes for PSTs to explore their development and TI construction (Chamberlin, 2000).

4. Hoffman-Kipp (2008) argued that critical reflection is a powerful tool for empowering PSTs against the constraining ideologies of their social context, including superiors, mentors, students, the university, etc. Teacher educators can encourage PSTs to

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become conscious of ways to change, adopt or reject imposing a certain PI. Rather, they need to be empowered to build that identity themselves based on their standards, especially in a context that does not offer real opportunities to grow professionally.

Reflective activities could include:

a. Writing autobiographies to help PSTs become aware of their prior experiences and reflect on their school memories. The autobiographies are put in pedagogical portfolios together with the PSTs' diaries of the simulated teaching classes and practicum sessions. The PSTs' written reflections are read by their supervisor to extract topics for discussion during reflective sessions that include supervisors, PSTs, peers, and mentors at the practicum site.

b. Reflection on reflection is another critical strategy to use in teacher education. Schön (1987) recommended enhancing the practitioner's reflective abilities during the TEP. Schön called for writings during practice as reflection-in-action (i.e., learning by doing and developing one's ability for continued learning). Reflection-on-action takes place in seminar sessions where the PST, supervisor and peers discuss their experiences and share stories and understandings.

Kabilan (2007) developed a strategy for supervising Malaysian ESL PSTs by using reflecting on reflection. In the first phase, Kabilan introduced the perspectives of reflective practice. He encouraged them to be critical of their own and others' pedagogical practices in the microteaching sessions. Two student teachers first presented a 40-minute mock class followed by 20 minutes of discussion. He asked his student teachers to write their own reflections after each session and comment on what they found interesting in the lesson, and what needed to be developed or changed.

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In the next session, all reflections were copied and distributed in class. The student teachers were asked to read others' reflections and reflect on them by accepting, rejecting or adopting their ideas. The second phase came at the end of the course when the student teachers got an open-ended questionnaire to elicit their perceptions and beliefs about the value of reflecting on reflections in enabling their professional growth. The challenge for teacher educators engaging their PSTs "in reflective practice is how they [PSTs] can move beyond descriptive accounts of their work to reflect on their practices critically" (Tsui, 2011, p. 30).

This example was chosen specifically to present the importance of guiding PSTs' reflective practice, because this study was conducted in Malaysia. It would suggest the feasibility of adopting the reflective practice in preparing ESL PSTs. Surprisingly, the reflective practice course is offered for ESL students at UM after they have completed the simulated teaching and practicum stages. The course in this case connects PSTs to their memories of training at school. Kabilan (2007, p. 683) suggested that immediate feedback and reflection on practice or experiences can help learners "develop more meaningful learning and teaching practices."

Contrary to the UM course plan, Kabilan exposed students to the reflective practice simultaneously with their micro teaching course. This better enabled those students to understand the practical meaning of reflective practice and use it as part of their journey of becoming. Another strong point with Kabilan's strategy is that he allowed sharing those reflections in a socially supported environment. The student teachers were working collegially in the presence of a facilitating supervisor. Those characteristics of successful teacher preparation strategy resonate with the features of a supported CoP.

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One drawback to such ambitious context is that it is an individual contribution by a teacher educator. Adopting such pedagogical tools of reflecting on reflections need to be adopted by policy makers, TEP designers and teacher educators, for successful application in the respective context. Educating mentors about reflective practice and guiding them on how to use it while supervising PSTs at school can also help both mentors and PSTs share different types of knowledge and improve practices.

Recommendations for future research. Research builds on, adds to and supports other research; however, it also leads to other questions to be answered and opens horizons for future research. This study has implications for future research in three main areas.

First, the study's complimentary theoretical framework is in line with socio-cultural perspectives. It represents a comprehensive approach since it takes into consideration the personal qualities of the learner (PSTs' prior experience and motives), the social and cultural contexts where TI construction took place (university and school-based practice), the nature of the TI and what was learnt (teachers' work and roles). The framework also supports the interview data with observation data, which revealed the tensions (power relationships) PSTs had to handle, but regarding which they chose to remain silent. This theoretical framework helped address the complex, relational and dynamic nature of TI construction and the journey of becoming a teacher. For future research, the socio-cultural approach could be applied in studies of larger groups of PSTs with diverse cultural, geographical and gender qualities. Additionally, the findings of this study may provide a starting point for research on PSTI in terms of abilities from sociocultural perspectives to predict the pre and post reactions to becoming a teacher.

Second, this study was an attempt to explore PSTs' identity construction by building on their past memories and reasons to become teachers and their learning experiences in

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simulated teaching classes and practicum. Future research could expand the span of the study to cover the first years of the profession, since teachers continue learning to teach (Olsen, 2008). Future research could probe whether PSTs learn to negotiate their identity development and pedagogical content knowledge. It may explore how previous experience with a TEP facilitates, or not, PSTs' interaction with their profession context in reconstructing their identities and continuing professional growth. In line with this perspective, future studies could explore whether students are able to cope with constructing their selves and professional identities.

Third, a future study along the lines of teacher education as a continuum could explore the connection between TI and commitment to profession or attrition. A similar study may consider TI development as a core part of continuous professional development to create positive attitudes towards the profession.

Fourth, power relationships within the university and school contexts and under the effect of the broader social context, proved to be counterproductive in constructing PSTs' professional identity. Further exploration of such power relationships can help educators reflect on them earlier with their PSTs, before they engage in training and struggle because of such relationships.

Finally, other studies that replicate this type of research with a different population of PSTs and in different ESL/EFL contexts are highly recommended to bridge the gap in literature pertaining to teacher identity construction in developing countries or ESL/EFL contexts (Izadinia, 2013).

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Conclusion

This study sought to explore the phenomenon of teacher identity construction during teaching practice, including a simulated teaching course and teaching practicum, by asking eight PSTs to describe their experiences. The study was aimed to gain an inside perspective on learning to teach by listening to PSTs. It sought to answer questions about what PI shifts PSTs experienced through their student teaching stage and what personal or social factors influenced PI emergence. The study was also aimed to understand how PSTs employed their adaptation strategies to meet the opportunities or challenges imposed by their context in developing a PI.

Thus, the social learning theory, possible selves' theory and the adaptation process were three complimentary theoretical frameworks that offered a relevant and useful lens through which PI construction and the journey of becoming (learning to teach) were examined holistically in the current study. As noted in past research, this study also proved that PSTs' journey to become teachers is complex, dynamic and personal in some aspects (Alsup, 2006; Beijaard et al., 2004; Cooper & He, 2012; Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2010; Merseth et al., 2008; Pillen, Den Brok, & Beijaard, 2013; Tsui, 2007, 2011). It is recommended to focus more on social collaboration, negotiation of meaning and reflection to unveil PSTs' understanding of their PI.

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