

Influences on Teaching: Perceptions and Experiences of
University Teachers

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Table of Contents

Attestation of authorship	viii
Acknowledgements	ix
Abstract	xi
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Introduction.....	1
Definition of key terms.....	1
Personal interest in and commitment to the topic of research.....	3
My learning, working and teaching in China	4
Masters study in New Zealand	6
Doctoral research journey	7
Development of research methodology	9
The significance of the study.....	11
Boundaries and limitations	14
Structure of the thesis.....	15
Chapter 2 Literature Review	17
Introduction.....	17
Influences at Macro Level	19
Globalising forces.....	19
The changing roles of higher education	21
Education reform in New Zealand	23
University culture.....	25
Influences at Meso Level.....	30
Departmental culture	31
Colleagues.....	32
Influences at Micro-level.....	33
The knowledge base of teaching	34
Conceptions of teaching	36
Responses to influences	39
Situating the research	45
Chapter Summary.....	49

Chapter 3 Paradigm Position, Theoretical Assumptions, and Research Design	50
Introduction.....	50
Research paradigm.....	51
Constructivism	52
Choosing a qualitative approach	53
Theoretical perspectives	54
Choosing methodologies.....	56
Grounded theory	56
Case study.....	56
University context	58
Participants.....	59
Data collection methods	61
In-depth interview	61
Stimulated recalls	64
Reflecting on interviewing.....	65
Documentary analysis.....	66
Interview data	68
Transcribing data	68
Reflecting on transcripts.....	69
Ethical considerations	70
Data analysis.....	72
Data analysis map	73
Data analysis as part of an ongoing process.....	75
Data analysis as a social practice	76
Data analysis as an encounter with complexity	78
Rigour considerations.....	81
Data and findings.....	82
Chapter Summary.....	83
Chapter 4 Presentation of Two Cases	84
Data	84
The case of D1	85

Findings.....	86
Personal factors	87
Family.....	87
Children’s education	87
Teaching experience	88
Learning experience and subject matter interests.....	88
Rewards from past students.....	89
Out-of-teaching life.....	90
Contextual factors.....	90
Policies and expectations	90
Leaders and programme status	91
Colleagues.....	92
Student characteristics	93
Student written feedback	93
Student classroom performance	94
Subject matter interests	94
Consequential actions and responses.....	94
Proactive responses.....	97
Features of D1	97
The case of J3	98
Personal factors.....	99
Martial arts instructor.....	99
Doctoral study.....	100
Employment status	100
Teaching experience	100
Contextual factors	101
Mixed messages in school	101
Teaching assignments.....	101
Colleagues.....	102
Student characteristics	102
Student feedback.....	102

Consequential actions and responses	103
Contrasts between the two cases	104
Chapter summary	105
Chapter 5 Historical and Current Personal Factors	107
Families as First Teachers	108
Upbringing	109
Children's education	110
Support of family members	110
Some distractions	111
Learning Experience	112
Influence of teachers' attitudes.....	112
Previous teachers' teaching strategies.....	113
Personal learning styles	115
Postgraduate studies and research	116
Teaching Experience.....	117
Working Experience	118
A nanny in Belgium	118
A backpacker.....	119
A dentist.....	119
An artist.....	119
A chef	120
Fitness instructor	120
Secondary school principal	120
Significant Others	121
Personal attributes	125
Interest in subject	127
Life style	127
Life cycle.....	127
Cultural Background	128
Summary.....	132

Chapter 6 The Influence of Context	133
Introduction.....	133
Global factors	134
National educational factors	135
University context	136
The changing status	137
Teaching – research pathways and role expectations	138
Institutional professional development provisions and opportunities	140
School context	141
School bureaucracy.....	141
Roles and responsibilities	142
School expectations/requirements	143
Resources.....	147
Class Size	148
Inner experience and responses	148
Students.....	150
Students’ characteristics - Who the students are	150
Student feedback – what students say about teaching and learning	152
Student learning performance – how students learn in class.....	154
Colleagues.....	156
Interaction with colleagues	156
Influences on thoughts and practical skills.....	158
Contexts in which colleagues were perceived to be influential.....	158
Influences being proactively sought	158
Influences through observation.....	159
Influences from interaction	160
Inner experiences and responses	161
Summary.....	163
Chapter 7 Data Interpretation and Discussion	164
Introduction.....	164
Teachers’ life experiences	165

Contextual influences	170
Responses and mediating factors	173
From the lens of Archer’s theory	178
Theorising influences -teacher’s identity, agency, and structure	184
Selfhood	184
The emergence of personal identity.....	185
The emergence of social(situational) identity	187
Reflexive deliberation and response in action	190
Chapter summary	193
Chapter 8 Conclusion	195
Review of chapters	196
The development of models and theory construction.....	200
Models	202
Challenges.....	210
Implications	211
Implication for teachers.....	211
Implications for teacher/academic developer	212
Implications for academic leaders and managers	213
Limitations and strengths of the study.....	215
My growth as a researcher	218
Future research	221
References	224
Appendix 1 Participant Information Sheet	251
Appendix 2 Consent Form.....	255
Appendix 3 Becoming a tertiary educator (A1)	257
Appendix 4 Profile of D1	266

List of Figures:

Figure 2.1: Model of Authenticity in Teaching

Figure 3.1: Research assumptions and design guideline

Figure 3.2: Theoretical framework

Figure 3.3: Iterative process of interviews

Figure 3.4: Coding process

Figure 3.5: Levels of data interpretation

Figure 8.1: Domains of influences

Figure 8.2: Interaction between influences at Macro, Meso, Micro and Personal levels

Figure 8.3: Ways in which teachers encounter influences

Figure 8.4: Teachers' thoughts and feelings about influences

Figure 8.5: The impact of influences on teachers' thoughts and action

Figure 8.6: The timing of impact of influences on teachers' thoughts and action

Figure 8.7: Teachers' responses to influences

Figure 8.8: A continuous cycle of influences

Figure 8.9: Inner conversation and response in a cycle of influences

Figure 8.10: Interaction of Self, Context, and Environment

Attestation of authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Abstract

This study attempts to deal with the complexity of academic life and what influences teachers and teaching in university. The case for the research rests on the premise that the complexities of the nature of influences and how they are perceived, experienced and responded to were underestimated and under-represented in the majority of previous studies in this area. The primary goal of this research is to offer a more holistic understanding of the phenomena by investigating perceptions, experiences and responses of a sample of 22 university teachers in New Zealand in relation to influences on their teaching thoughts and practices.

The inquiry began with the researcher's reflection on his personal experiences of teaching and learning in higher education, including key influences on his thoughts about teaching and teaching practices. This prompted an interrogation of the literature, which revealed that while a range of influences had been identified in relation to university teaching at macro, meso, micro and personal levels, there were limitations in findings concerning teachers' inner experience of and response to these influences, which provided a sound rationale for the conduct of this study.

The researcher remained open to various theoretical positions as evident in literature. The study design presents a *raison d'être* for a phased theoretical assumption to an alternative perspective of understanding and theorising the phenomena. Two different theoretical lenses are adopted. Firstly, epistemological constructivism and theoretical interpretivism are advanced as a suitable philosophical framework for the prosecution of the study that offers a methodological rationale for a qualitative investigation; grounded theory and a case study approach are applied in interpretative analysis. Second, ontological realism and epistemological relativism are imported in gaining insights from the perspectives of personal and social identities, human agency and structure as embedded in the data. The data gathering involved semi-structured interview, stimulated recall, and document analysis. Some data were collected from the participants' publications, conference presentations, and masters or doctoral theses.

The data highlight a complex array of influences perceived and experienced by teachers in relation to their teaching ideas and practices. It identifies the significance of personal life experiences, both historical and ongoing, that influence teachers. It also reveals the range of contextual or structural influences that interact with these personal influences to affect teachers' thoughts about education, conceptions of teaching, and approaches to teaching and classroom practice. For each participant, these influential factors obviously play out in both complex and idiosyncratic ways with one another to exercise various degrees of influence on teaching thoughts and action at different points in teachers' lives. Data demonstrate the significance of teachers' perceptions of personal agency and structural power as an important mediator of their internal conversations about influences and their actual responses to them.

Although the focus of the study concerned the various sources of influences on individual teachers at different levels, how they interacted with each other and how teachers inwardly experienced and made responses, what emerged has wider implications for teaching and learning in higher education, teacher development initiatives, academic leaders and managers and for other university teachers.

The study provides a more holistic way of looking at influences on university teaching and opens up new research possibilities. The inclusion perspective of social critical theory is seen as a potent means to add fresh insights into the dialectical nature of teachers' agential power and contextual influences, echoing an emerging trend in the research on influence in higher education.

Chapter 1 Introduction

Education is not a service for a customer but an ongoing process of transformation of the participant (Harvey, 2002, p. 253).

Introduction

In all universities teachers are influencing and are being influenced. This study focuses on the latter: teachers being influenced. Influences might be exercised on a range of aspects of teachers' lives. This study focuses on one of them: teaching in the university. In this study, which was based primarily on interviews with 22 university teachers, I investigated the influences on teachers' ideas about teaching and their teaching practice, and their responses to those influences as revealed by their self-reported experiences and perspectives.

This first chapter defines some special terms used, explains my personal interest in the topic and describes my research journey, presents the background to the study, specifies the problem to be addressed, describes the significance of the research, and presents an overview of the methodology used. I conclude the chapter by noting the boundaries and limitations of the study, and outlining the overall structure of the thesis.

Definition of key terms

Much misunderstanding in human communication results from people bringing different meanings to the words they use in speaking and writing. I seek to avoid this difficulty by clearly explaining the meanings I assign to key terms in my investigation. Some terms obviously can convey many different meanings. Among the most basic terms are those found in a project's title or topic question (Thomas & Brubaker, 2008, p. 90). In this thesis the following words are intended to convey a combination of meanings selected from those given in the Oxford English Dictionary (5th Edition) and related literature.

The word *influence*, as intended throughout this thesis, refers to the attitudinal and behavioural effect of a person or that of a thing upon another.

The concept of *experience* informing the study refers to events, actions, situations, feelings and cognitions that have been apprehended by the teachers.

The word *perception* refers to *the state of being or process of becoming aware or conscious of a thing through any of the senses*. It also involves a degree of processing of what people sense, including differentiating and grouping sensations and assigning meanings to them.

Teaching in this study is defined as the act of “taking into account, trying to influence and arrange conditions with the intention of facilitating learning” (Haigh & Katterns, 1984, p. 23). It is viewed as “an extremely complex activity that involves continual decision making and continuous interactions among teacher, [student], task, and contextual variables” (p. 24). I am also aware that, in a recent policy paper on the quality of teachers by the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (ATEE, 2006), teaching is seen as “a profession that entails reflective thinking, continuing professional development, autonomy, responsibility, creativity, research and personal judgements” (p. 3).

Influences on teaching, on which the present investigation focuses are external persons or things that impact on teachers’ thoughts about teaching and teaching practice.

University teachers, refers to participants in my study who were undertaking teaching activities in a New Zealand university. I understand that each teacher is different and that those participating in my research do not necessarily represent the whole spectrum of university teachers. They acted as windows through which I have gained some understanding of what is happening in the profession. As illustrated by an old Chinese saying, I am attempting to ‘recognise a leopard by investigating a spot on its body’.

Personal interest in and commitment to the topic of research

This research focuses on university teachers' perceptions and experiences of influences on their ideas about teaching and their teaching practice, and the ways they respond inwardly and outwardly to those influences. The research presented here is an extension of my long-term interest in teaching and learning within the context of adult and tertiary education. The research also draws on reflections on my past tertiary experiences as a staff member in a Chinese university, and as a postgraduate student in a New Zealand university context. Arising from these experiences are understandings and positions concerning university teachers and teaching.

These pre-understandings impact on my experiences with my participants and my interpretation of their perceptions and experiences. Reflection on particular contexts that have influenced my understanding of university teaching enables me to gain critical insights regarding the influence my life experience may have had upon my perspectives, interests, assumptions, and biases. It also enables me to make my positionality as a researcher clear (Goodson & Sikes, 2001), and gives the reader information that can enable them to locate, and thereby make better sense of, the research.

Considerations of positionality also point to the ambiguities and fluidities of research. I recognise that where people are positioned is rarely clear cut; they may hold views at different points on any continuum and may, sometimes, contradict themselves. People's views at any one time are dependent upon the conditions, circumstances and experiences relevant to that time, and these may well change. In the context of this research, my experience as a student working toward a doctorate has led me variously to confirm, challenge, and sometimes alter my views. My positions, as well as those of the people who participated in my research, were not necessarily fixed and immutable. Indeed, reflexivity should be an inherent and ubiquitous part of the research endeavour (Finlay, 2002; Mauthner & Coucet, 2003) regardless of which paradigm (ontology, epistemology and methodology) is employed. Where and how a researcher is positioned, the consequent perspectives the researcher holds and the assumptions which inform the sense he/she makes of the world, have implications for his/her

research interests, how he/she frames research questions, the theoretical position he/she takes, the methodologies and methods he/she prefers (Kirk, 2005). These assumptions affect how people conceive of and conduct research, and I return to reflection on my role as a researcher in greater depth in Chapter 8. For now, I turn to consider particular contexts in my life that I have perceived to be influential in my understanding of university teaching.

My learning, working and teaching in China

In China, the Confucian cultural background that I was exposed to provided me with the doctrine that education is a transmission of wisdom, that learning is a process in which people extend the breadth of their knowledge to support their intellectual growth and social advancement. I went to university as a student in 1983, which was only five years after the re-establishment of higher education in China. At that time, the infrastructures were recovering and human resources were experiencing a severe shortage after ten years of the Cultural Revolution. My teachers during my degree study were from diverse backgrounds: some had just graduated from the department they were working in; some were teaching English as a third language, as their major of Russian was not available for teaching in the department; some teachers from other countries joined the team. The teachers taught in various ways and assessed learning outcomes with quite flexible rather than standardized criteria. As students, we had no interest in why teachers taught in a particular way, partly because we were not supposed to challenge the ways teachers taught at that time. What we, at least some of us, were pursuing was a good assessment result. We were hoping that teachers would understand and support us, thus we could achieve our goals with a minimum of effort. We tried to influence teachers to act in the way we wished, for example, by prompting them to provide hints about examination tasks. However, few of these strategies worked.

I started my career in a medical university after graduation in 1987. Along with overseeing the international exchange and cooperation programmes, I had a number of opportunities to take initiatives in adult teaching and teacher training. For example, in 1988 I set up an English training programme in a teaching hospital for staff who

were interested in improving their English. The students were mainly doctors and nurses, aged from 18 to nearly 60. Their English competence ranged from beginner to intermediate. The motivations of students coming to the class varied from having fun, to passing the test, and preparing for English examination for promotion. I put students into three groups and adopted different approaches to teaching, which were themselves different from approaches I had previously experienced. In 1991, I worked in an English Enhancement Programme with teachers, who were selected by the university to study full time for a year to focus on improving their spoken English. I undertook part of the training with a prescribed textbook, a tape recorder and some tapes. Evaluations of my teaching practice showed a high level of satisfaction from students. In 1996, with an increasing number of international students studying in the university, my responsibilities included both teaching Chinese to international students and supporting other teachers who had teaching roles. I took on the roles of teacher, teaching coordinator, and student advisor. Alongside these responsibilities, recruiting international teachers teaching language, basic medical science in the university was also a major part of my job description. I did course evaluations for these teachers every semester, collected feedback from students and organised regular meetings with staff and students.

As the story of my early professional life indicates, I started out with certain responsibilities in the university context that did not include teaching, but somehow teaching entered. I became increasingly interested in and involved with aspects of teaching. My interest in and commitment to teaching grew, and concerns about developing relevant knowledge and skills emerged. My reflections on critical influences on me as an emerging teacher prompted me to take an interest in influences on other teachers. Coupled with this was the wish for new challenges, including venturing into another cultural context. As a consequence, in 2003 I returned to higher education as a postgraduate candidate for a Master of Education at the Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand.

Masters study in New Zealand

My postgraduate study started two weeks after my arrival in New Zealand in 2003. I was returning to postgraduate study as an adult learner in a completely new educational system and social environment with English as an additional language, and as a consequence I experienced a great number of difficulties in my initial postgraduate coursework. I was keen to know if other postgraduate students' learning experiences were similar. Could they be different for other international students or domestic students? This question became the focus for my MEd research which showed that the influence of students' prior knowledge and learning orientations was important. Contextual factors including lecturers, choice and integration of courses, and assessments were found to affect students' approaches to learning and to contribute to the variability of learning orientations. Work responsibilities, financial problems and family commitments also had an impact. Lecturers' preferred teaching and research styles and students' expectations of lecturers' support were found to be significant factors with regard to students' approaches to learning. One of the implications I suggested was that "lecturers might be aware of the diversity of students' characteristics and adopt appropriate teaching strategies for enhancing students' learning" (Jiao, 2005, p. 11).

My understanding of university teachers was enhanced by doing this research through two main sources: 1) interviewing students who were teachers; and 2) working with my supervisors. Some of the participants in my Master's study were university teachers. They shared their experiences of learning as postgraduate students. I assumed that their teaching was inevitably influenced by the way they were taught. Working with supervisors during my Masters' study allowed me to understand them through relational conversation. In addition to professional meetings about academic work, there were numerous occasions when we shared our stories, feelings and reflections. These occasions made me appreciate the complexities of influences on their teaching.

Doctoral research journey

Upon the completion of my thesis in 2005, having investigated influences on student learning, I was curious about how teachers would describe their teaching. I embarked on the journey of doctoral study in 2006. With this interest in influences on university teaching. I was keen to hear the voices of university teachers. What were their perceptions and experiences of teaching? In particular, I wondered what those perceptions and experiences might reveal about the influences on their ideas about teaching and their teaching practice. What could those influences be and what roles could they play in university teaching?

Conversations with and feedback from teaching colleagues about my research provided some initial insights into the influences that various factors may have on decisions that teachers made about their teaching. Some teachers were often torn between knowing what they wanted to do in their classrooms and feeling compelled to do just the opposite. Sometimes they were frustrated with the inability to match their practices to their beliefs, trying to find ways to deal with this internal conflict. There were some unique and distinct influences for each of the teachers I talked to. Presumably, at times, it's not just one influence determining or shaping a particular point of view or decision to work in a particular way. There might be several influences. I wondered what the various influences were impacting on their ideas about teaching, their philosophy, and their practices. In particular, I became interested in achieving a better understanding of the way various influences interact with one another in people's minds, how teachers make sense of those influences, how they weigh them up, how they make decisions when they receive different, competing, or conflicting points of views from different sources. Teachers may receive inconsistent or conflicting 'messages' about what is appropriate. If this occurs, how do they respond? How do teachers work through and resolve conflicting ideas? Therefore, I sought a more holistic understanding of individual teachers that could be represented in a model of factors relating to the quality of teaching.

The notion of the research 'problem' also developed during a literature review concerning issues related to the state of the teaching profession as it enters an era of rapid and constant changes. From the literature initially reviewed, one of the areas I

identified where research is limited is in relation to the various influences on university teachers. Such research was entirely absent at the time when I was studying. Within the last decade, the first sign of interest in such influences was the work of a couple of researchers including Fanghanel (2004, 2007) which provided a valuable knowledge base for my study to build on. It also became evident that little attention had been given to gaining a more holistic understanding of individual tertiary teachers (Barnett, 2000; Carr, 2006; Cherry, 2005). I noted a tendency to confine the focus of research to a relatively limited number and range of aspects of teachers' thoughts and/or actions. I also noted that tertiary teachers' construction of meanings with regard to their educational experiences and practices had not been widely considered (van den Berg, 2002). In addition, some researchers lost sight of the complexity and interdependency of teacher behaviour as a whole (Hayes, 2006; Lizzio & Wilson, 2006). Very few investigations have been undertaken of relationships between aspects of teaching thinking and teaching actions in university contexts in particular (Kane, Sandretto & Heath, 2002; McApline et al., 2006).

While others may have made similar inquiries in exploring various aspects of influences (Colbeck & Wharton-Michael, 2006; Cranton & Carusetta, 2002; Green, 2005; Huberman, 1999; Lueddeke, 2003; Pickering, 2006; Spiller, 2000; Wierstra et al., 2003), with regard to the characteristics of this research site and participants, there were few related studies that I could draw on, and I considered that some of the findings from those investigations might not be generalised to the specific university context, let alone to individual teachers. I could not locate any research that had a specific focus on a more holistic understanding of influences on individual university teachers and their responses to those influences in a New Zealand tertiary context.

As I reflected on the existing body of literature and engaged in informal discussions with teachers in the university where I was studying, and reflected on my own personal experience within the education system as a student, university teacher, and administrator in China, as a Masters and doctoral student, teaching and research assistant, and as a growing educational researcher, the focus for my research began to become apparent. The study would seek to consider and represent how a sample of staff at a New Zealand university perceived and experienced being university teachers.

In particular I would attempt to describe what, and how, influences shaped their identities, philosophies and actions as teachers and how they responded to those influences. The main research question was:

What do the perceptions and experiences of tertiary teachers reveal about the influences on their ideas about teaching and their teaching practice and their response to those influences?

Some of the key sub-questions to be addressed were:

- What, and how, do individual/personal factors influence teaching?
- What, and how, do contextual factors influence teaching?
- What are the complexities of possible interactions between the influences?
- How do teachers respond to different or inconsistent influences?

Several related assumptions that underpinned the research at the outset included:

- While there are many factors having a potential impact on teachers' perceptions and experiences that have been identified, other evolving unpredictable influences may be identifiable and need investigation in this rapidly and constantly changing environment.
- Personal and contextual influences on teaching ideas and practices can be differentiated although they are interrelated.
- Different sources of influences may interact in complex ways to inform teaching knowledge and practice decisions.
- Teachers sometimes perceive inconsistencies or conflicts within and between contextual influences.
- Teachers' responses to influences include processes of external adaptation and internal integration.
- Teachers' responses to influences may or may not support effective teaching and its continuing development.

Development of research methodology

At the outset of this research, the underlying paradigm with respect to epistemology was constructivism (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The methodology represents

an interpretative qualitative approach (Denzin, 2006; Schwandt, 1994). This approach has been adopted given the researcher's wish to understand teachers' perceptions and experiences of influences on their teaching and their responses in a New Zealand university context. It describes and interprets the phenomena with reference to contextualized personal individual meanings (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2006; Manson, 2002; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Radnor, 2001).

Interviewing postgraduate students for my Masters study was the first research I had done that was neither literary nor experimental. I had finally found a way to do academic work that was emotionally and intellectually satisfying. In spite of problems and complications everywhere in the research process, from conceiving the idea and contacting participants to writing up the results of interviews, this kind of work was and continues to be deeply satisfying for me. It was hard and sometimes draining, but I have never lost the feeling that it is a privilege to gather the stories of people through interviewing and to come to understand their experience through their stories. Sharing those stories through crafting vignettes of the people I had interviewed and making thematic connections among their experiences proved to be a fruitful way of working with the material and of writing about what I had learned. I gained intellectual and emotional pleasure from using interviewing as a research method in my Masters research.

Another experience critical to my understanding of the power of interview was my involvement in two research projects as a research assistant (Gossman, Haigh & Jiao, 2009; Smith & Jiao, 2008). It was in this context that I encountered experienced educational researchers in the area of higher education. I interviewed participants, transcribed interviews, made preliminary analyses, and had opportunities to discuss the work with the project leaders. Starting as an assistant in an educational research project inaugurated an apprenticeship not only in the higher education research sector, but also in research skills and applications. The experience helped me to translate theoretical notions of interpretative research and interview techniques into the practice of conducting qualitative studies of university teachers. Critically important here has been my appreciation of how the researchers conducted interviews, how the questions were asked, and how the data were analysed and interpreted. Through that

apprenticeship, I learned to appreciate even further that language and conversation are important ways toward knowing and understanding. I found my doctoral research project has become closely bound up with my identities as a beginning scholar and apprentice researcher. This personal experience made me even more ready to consider interviewing as a research method in my study.

In addition to the above, a significant influence at the outset of this research was the wider educational research community. My attendance at national and international conferences for educational research in higher education was inspirational. At the institution level, my participation in meetings about postgraduate research was beneficial, including postgraduate symposia, faculty postgraduate mini-conferences, school research seminars, and the postgraduate information sharing and writing support group. My presentations at these occasions (Jiao, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b; Jiao & Haigh, 2009; Smith, Billot & Jiao, 2008) have made my research design and data interpretation open to scrutiny. Within this community, I have been open and responsive to the insights and constructive feedback of others.

Nevertheless, the literature on qualitative research has been invaluable in how I approached the topic and made sense of the data. Scholars such as Denzin and Lincoln (1994), Crotty (1998), Creswell (2003, 2007), Glaser and Strauss (1999), to name a few, have influenced me in shaping the research approach and the subsequent process. Greater elaboration of these ideas occurs in Chapter 3 of the thesis.

The significance of the study

This research is worth undertaking because of its potential contribution to the development of educational theory and associated models, and for the practical implications the findings are likely to have for policy makers, academic developers and teachers themselves who are concerned with improving the everyday lives as well as practices of teachers.

Firstly, the research has the potential to expand the field of tertiary teaching research. The existing knowledge about teaching and learning in higher education has been influenced by particular perspectives (McAlpine, 2006). There is a need to critically review those perspectives in order to address current gaps and imbalances in

knowledge and understanding (Malcolm & Zukas, 2001; Skelton, 2005). It is important not to be confined to existing interpretations; there may be other equally valuable ways of making sense of the phenomenon in higher education (Clegg, 2007a).

This research is built on studies of researchers who have attempted to investigate aspects of teaching from different perspectives underpinned by a range of theories, e.g. the psychological aspects of academic life (De Simone, 2001); Teaching and Learning Regimes (TLR) in sociological territory (Trowler & Cooper, 2002); philosophical understandings of being university teachers (Dall'Alba, 2005; Scott, 1994); zones of thinking from a socio-cognitive perspective (McAlpine et al., 2006); re-theorising educational development work through lenses such as post-colonial theories (Manathunga, 2006). A number of models have been constructed representing the different interests of researchers (e.g. Day et al., 2006; Entwistle et al., 2000; Pickering, 2006; Pill, 2005). Taking the position advocated by Clegg (2007a), I did not lock myself into one, or several, particular theoretical lenses; as I travelled through the literature, I remained open to research which would provide me with insights compatible with my paradigm. My research attempted to extend the boundaries of existing research on university teachers by integrating existing models and constructing new ones, aiming to provide evidence to show that current understanding, realities and practices could be different. It also attempted to focus on a wider range of factors and to take a more holistic approach to the complexity of relationships between them than has previously been provided.

Second, the research is significant for its detailed description of the life circumstances and experiences that express particular issues around university teaching in New Zealand, where there is a paucity of research on teachers' responses to an increasingly complicated and rapidly changing educational environment. Understanding how teachers experience the teaching and learning environment and how they perceive the integration of their personal values, needs and attributes within institutional contexts is essential because these perceptions contribute to teachers' engagement, satisfaction, morale, overall work productivity, and the well-being of their universities as a whole (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005; Lindholm, 2003). Transformative change within higher education cannot occur without a vital, institutionally engaged teacher. The

research will help to illuminate the circumstances that influence these dimensions of teachers' lives and thereby provide sound evidence-based implications for the improvement of university teaching and learning.

More specific implications that are anticipated include the following:

This research provides valuable insights into the influence that institution, faculty, school, department and working group level cultures may have on teachers and their continuing development. An understanding of how culture can influence teachers' thoughts and actions is likely to be valuable for those involved in the design and implementation of teacher development programmes, especially when the effectiveness of traditional teaching techniques and professional development activities in higher education is being questioned and new practices are being advocated (Walsh & Gamage, 2003). It should also be beneficial for staff who have academic/learning and teaching leadership roles at these various levels and wish to promote cultures that support the continuing development of teaching.

For staff involved in teacher development, the findings help reveal the extent and nature of the influence that their activities may have on colleagues as well as reasons for their degree of influence. The study may also identify possible strategies and support structures that they might adopt in order to be more influential and behave in a more facilitative manner with the individual teacher.

This research project recognises the importance of teachers in the educational process and seeks to emphasise this by providing teachers with a voice to express their perspectives and concerns. Lampert (2000) contends that such research can contribute to the body of qualitative educational research which addresses the everyday lives of teachers, which have previously been somewhat neglected. Jones (2002) affirms this by stating that there is a clear and evident need for educational professionals to have a voice in determining what it means to them to be members of the teaching profession.

For tertiary teachers themselves, through reading accounts of individual teachers' perceptions and experiences, they can value the experiences of teachers who have struggled through situations similar to their own. Teachers may have opportunities to develop a personal perspective in the light of available knowledge, experience, values

and commitments revealed in the research and recognise the possibility of improving their teaching practices (Skelton, 2005). This study could provide readers with a tool for reflecting upon their own beliefs and practices. By actively weighing individual teachers' experiences against their own evolving life stories, readers may gain deeper insights into the underlying beliefs, assumptions, and experiences that shape their own teaching and research practices.

Boundaries and limitations

The present research focuses on the perceptions and experiences of a sample of university teachers in New Zealand to investigate the influences on their teaching ideas and practices. Unlike much of the research to date, it sets out to investigate what is experienced and perceived by teachers in university contexts. The study is not an evaluation of teaching practice although it may reveal influences on teachers' evaluations.

While this research focuses on the teaching role, I have also recognised that there are other roles that participants may assume as academics that may influence teaching. For example, I anticipated that teachers' views about the role of researcher might interact with and influence their views about teaching. However, these other roles of academics do not represent the primary focus of this study.

Having mapped out the territory in which research was conducted, it is now necessary to identify related areas that I did not pursue in this study. With its focus on teachers' perceptions and experiences of influences on their teaching, the study was bounded by the following:

- More consideration was given to why teachers teach in the way they do, rather than how they teach in practice;
- The emphasis was on why teachers conceptualise education or teaching in the way they do rather than what their conceptions actually are;
- Primary attention was given to the impact of influences on teachers' understanding and practice of teaching, rather than possible influences and associated impacts on other aspects of teachers' lives;

- The perceptions and experiences of participants were gathered within an open framework and possible trends were then identified, not vice versa;
- The study was conducted within a limited period of time as required by the doctoral programme;
- Data were collected from a sample of teachers in one university in New Zealand;
- Interview transcripts were used as the primary source of data.

All these factors may impose limitations on the nature and extent of the data gathered, and consequently the generalisability of findings. At the same time, readers may make generalisations to their own contexts.

Structure of the thesis

This thesis is presented in eight chapters.

Chapter 1, “Introduction”, sets the scene for the thesis as a whole in relation to the focus of the study, states the key research question, and describes the researcher’s positionality, the development of research methodology, the potential significance, the boundary of the research, and the structure of what follows in the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter 2, “Literature Review”, contextualises the present study by providing a synthesis of the literature on identified influences on university teaching that informed the design of this research. It also presents information about the New Zealand higher education environment. It then situates this research by a critique of closely related studies.

Chapter 3, “Paradigm Position, Theoretical Assumptions, and Research Design”, first describes the philosophical ideas that underpin this research, and how these ideas have influenced the shape of the research. It provides information about the research site and participants, and the data collection processes. It then illustrates the process of data analysis to make it open to scrutiny, and sets the structure for the following three chapters of data presentation.

Chapter 4, “Presentation of Two Cases”, presents personal profiles and findings in relation to influences and responses of two selected teachers, comparing the

similarities and differences between them. The intention is to show participants' uniqueness and illustrate the analytic and interpretive processes used to arrive at the findings.

Chapter 5, "Historical and Current Personal Factors" and Chapter 6, "Contextual Influences", present overall themes identified through data analysis across all participants, as well as the interrelationship between and among these themes, supported and illustrated with quotes from interview transcripts. Particular categories were selected for detailed presentation and in-depth analysis, setting an example for many other categories and themes which are analysed in the same way but presented in less detail. An important consideration here is the richness of data reflecting the complexities of the phenomena.

Chapter 7, "Data Interpretation and Discussion", discusses the themes with ties to existing literature and provides interpretation of the findings presented in the previous chapters.

Chapter 8, "Conclusion", provides my overall conclusions, research findings, discusses implications for educational practice, critiques the research process, presents my summary reflective thoughts about personal growth as a researcher throughout this process, and offers suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

We never think entirely alone: we think in company, in a vast collaboration; we work with the workers of the past and of the present.

John Stuart Mill

Man [sic] is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun.

Clifford Geertz (1973, p. 5)

Introduction

A large body of literature on the nature of university teaching provides a basis for the present study. In this chapter, I present an overview of research in relation to influences on university teachers and locate my research within the field. Firstly, I recognise that the influences on university teaching are diverse. The review focuses on three levels at which influences manifest: macro, meso, and micro (Fanghanel, 2004). I then turn to literature with a focus on how university teachers respond to influences that impinge on them. Finally, I situate my study within the literature by presenting the case for my research.

There is an extensive body of research on university teachers and their teaching that is relevant to the present project. Within that body is a relatively small but significant component that focuses explicitly on teachers' perceptions of influences on their thoughts and actions and their response to those influences. A range of influences has been identified in existing research on tertiary teaching, operating at different levels of practice but with a degree of overlap (Carnell, 2007; Day, 1993; Kember, 1997; Kember et al., 2006; Kreber, 2003; Lyons, 2006; Pill, 2005; Trowler, Fanghanel & Wareham, 2005).

At the macro level, globalising forces beyond institutions are profoundly affecting the policies of nation states, and specifically education policies. Different aspects of globalisation interact and influence one another in diverse ways, producing a complex and constantly changing situation where educational work is increasingly both controlled and fragmented. Being culturally and nationally mediated by different attitudes, values, and ethnic diversity, these forces have different impacts upon

different nations or organisations. In New Zealand, tertiary education polices have been advocated and implemented in response to globalising forces.

While globalising forces are mediated in the first instance by national character and culture, national policies and strategies are in turn mediated by university priorities and culture. At the meso level, institutional philosophies, policies and plans in relation to teaching and research state explicitly the institution's stance, and support for the development of teachers and of resources which enable it. These are further mediated by faculty, department, and immediate work colleagues, which are seen as 'joined-ups' (Trowler & Bamber, 2005), in the sense that these elements interact with each other and work together to impact on teachers' teaching ideas and practice. The meso level influences, as perceived by teachers, in turn impact on their thoughts about education, learning and teaching, and everyday teaching practice.

At the micro level, teachers are not merely passive vehicles when these influences impinge on them. They have inner capabilities which allow for individual judgements, perceptions and decision-making in relation to particular influences. Epistemological perspectives are also at the core of individual university teachers' decisions regarding such influences and ultimately their academic work. Similarly, existing educational conceptions are filters for the interpretation of external influences as well as individual experiences, and also inform teachers' preferred practices, including their continuing professional development.

Influences at different levels interact with one another. Though straightforward differentiations have been made by researchers, the multiplicity and complexity of influences mean that they cannot be neatly categorised under the labels of influences at these three levels. Identifying influences at each level is necessary but insufficient by itself to gain a thorough understanding of the nature of influences which may occur concurrently and weigh differently in certain circumstances. Teachers' day-to-day challenges are products of the interplay of the three domains. Teachers' attempts to deal with influences on one level may impact their capacity to address influences at other levels.

Faced with these varied sources of influences, teachers must make decisions concerning whether and how they respond, how they achieve and maintain a balance

between inner self and external world. When teachers process those influences into their own existing system, assimilation and accommodation occur. Teachers may also experience influences as either problematic and limiting, or challenging and enriching for their own development. Issues of consistency, inconsistency, identity and compromise play in teachers' minds, ultimately influencing their practical lives.

In the following part of this section, examples of influences at these three levels which have been previously investigated are reviewed to provide the background to this research.

Influences at Macro Level

Macro level factors refer to global context, educational movements in higher education, state policy, alternations in organisational routines, values and practices (Bottery, 2006; Stromquist, 2007). Many influences on educational practice have their origins at the macro level. Educational reform is globalising. National educational policies and strategies are set with consideration for the globalisation of large elements of the curriculum. In comparison with other nations and cultures in a global village, these policies and strategies inevitably influence the aim of education, university policies and programmes. At this level, globalising forces and university culture are investigated.

Globalising forces

Factors beyond institutions are profoundly affecting teachers' societies and their own practice. Current globalising forces are producing a situation where educational work is increasingly both controlled and fragmented (Bottery, 2006; Harrington, 2005; Hayhoe & Zha, 2004; Tynjälä, Válimaa, & Sarja, 2003). Different types of globalisation interact and influence one another in diverse ways, producing a complex and difficult world. Among many others, Bottery identified six types of globalisation, i.e., environmental, cultural, demographic, political, American, and economic globalisation.

Global forces and movements are both culturally and nationally mediated by different attitudes, values, political and ethnic diversity. In terms of educational policies, Levin (2001) suggested that whilst there are commonalities of context and strategy, there

are also profound differences. Each nation, underpinned by different cultural attitudes and values, attempts to adopt different approaches and strategies, which may have direct impacts upon educational institutions, and may lead to a sense of paradox and tension which teachers are likely to experience in their work. For example, teachers' attempts to satisfy greater demands for an improved service may be hindered by the need to reduce expenditure and increase efficiencies. Similarly, the concepts of efficiency, economy and profit will likely conflict with values of care and equity, and autonomy and creativity may be difficult to achieve in low-trust work environments which emphasize performativity and compliance (Harris, 2005). Such tensions are likely to be paradoxical by-products of both the fragmentation and the control of work.

While interpretations concerning globalisation outcomes vary, changes have happened and are continually happening, although uncertainty remains.

Globalisation is a set of identifiable practices that also produce dialectics and difference: the more intensive the forces of globalisation, the more intense are the surges of dialectic and difference. But even though educational institutions as we know them are under challenge they are not likely to disappear. There will, however, be pressure to reform, but with the tensions in the discourses ... it is difficult to know what the new formulation of education will look like, or even where in space it might be located. (Fitzsimons, 2000, p. 520)

As Bottery (2006) observes, these forces are "intimately connected with the way we view our place and meaning on this planet, and can thus provide unique avenues to self-exploration and self-development" (p. 96). Not being aware of, facing, and responding to these forces "leave the professional relatively powerless" (p. 96). Awareness allows professionals to understand the context they find themselves and their society in, and enables insights into the challenges they face. Teachers need to rethink their understanding of the nature of their work and responsibilities in this fast moving and constantly changing world, as relationships between the state and institutions and between institutions and individuals are being transformed (Harris, 2005). In this research, the extent to which global, macro level feature in the influences teachers identify is investigated.

The changing roles of higher education

The mediations of globalisation forces at the cultural, national, and institutional level have a direct impact on the formation of higher education policies and strategies at national and institutional level. This section firstly focuses on the history of universities and their changing roles over time, with an emphasis on universities' current roles and expectations people have of them. The second focus is on the current educational policies and framework of New Zealand, and other countries, which represent responses to global forces and international trends in higher education.

Universities, as a context for higher education, have played important roles in the history of human development. Currently, their multiple and overlapping purposes are typically assumed to include: the development and advancement of new knowledge; the provision of general and professional education of students; the promotion of students' personal development and civic engagement; and the stimulation of community improvement (Colbeck & Wharton-Michael, 2006). These core purposes of academic work reflect changing historical boundaries between the university and the wider world. Those boundary changes are evident when the medieval and contemporary university are compared.

In the medieval ages, the university was the sole site of knowledge production. The walls kept out the wider world. The key themes which underpinned the university included institutional autonomy, and the value of knowledge. The main work of the university was teaching and the student was considered a citizen (Fuller, 2003). The premodern university contained an internal moral order built around a sense of 'equivalent-but-different' (Barnett, 2000, p. 16) and the humanities were the central discipline. From the mid-nineteenth century, disciplines of sciences and social sciences were taking shape and gaining a presence in universities. However, the separate disciplinary elements of the university were similar in their ideologies and practices and so constituted a large unified community.

The development of the modern university was characterized by an emergence of various disciplines from separate faculties in the humanities, natural and social sciences. Each of these organisational units made a distinct but separate contribution to the whole entity. Academic identity was generally related to subject discipline

rather than to the institution itself. Though having international connections, the university possessed “a unity that could be projected towards the wider world” (Barnett, 2000, p. 16). Until the early 1960s, the hegemony of the traditional ideal in determining the nature of the university was virtually unchallenged (Salter & Tapper, 2002). The university acted as a community of scholars, organized its own affairs unrestricted by, and relatively unaccountable to, any outside body. Academic freedom was deemed to be the central social value. It is held that “such freedom is a necessary condition of the highest efficiency and the proper progress of academic institutions, and the encroachments upon their liberty, in the supposed interests of greater efficiency, would in fact diminish their efficiency and stultify their development” (Robbins Committee, 1963, p. 228, as cited in Salter & Tapper, 2002, p. 247).

Over the past five decades, the university has gone beyond the ‘university-as-ivory-tower’. Barnett (2000) proposes that, in the post-modern age, the university has no centre, no boundaries and no obvious moral order. The certainties and truths of modernity have been replaced with uncertainties, critique, and multiple forms of knowledge. Knowledge capacities have to be made available to potential knowledge users. The university maintains its connections with the wider society in relation to notions such as responsiveness and accountability, as one of many other sites of knowledge production in society. It is located globally and has become an example of the phenomenon of globalisation. The university’s values are sustained by the wider society in which it can find a living, and are affected by global forces, national policies, and the needs of consumers.

The ideology of education as an economic resource has become manifest in universities, which are expected to be responsive to national/international economic needs, and to organize in a way that maximizes their contribution to state economic development. Governments ensure that the institutions are held accountable to society for carrying out their economic role correctly. In the 1980s, a parallel discourse which was largely borrowed from the private sector began to emerge, assuming that the application of private sector management techniques to education would produce a net increase in “efficiency, effectiveness and economy” (Salter & Tapper, 2002, p. 248).

Education reform in New Zealand

These ideologies and discourses dominated the landscape of many nations and informed policy decisions at all levels of education (Stromquist, 2007). In New Zealand, prior to 1990, a well-differentiated tertiary education system comprised three types of institution: universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education (which offered pre-service primary and secondary teacher education). The boundaries between these institutional types were well maintained by legislation and accompanying regulation. However, following the major reforms of the Education Amendment Act in 1990, four distinct types of public tertiary institution were formalized (the wānanga was added to provide education for Māori in the Māori language) and the boundaries between the previous three types of tertiary institution were redefined. Codling and Meek (2003) explored and illustrated different perspectives of diversity amongst New Zealand higher education institutions, which have converged over the last two decades:

This convergence occurred during an extended period of deregulation in which the market has acted as a surrogate for overt government policy in shaping the direction of the system and the institutions within it. Even recent formal government policy supporting the development of strong and distinct institutional identities and greater differentiation amongst tertiary institutions has been thwarted by the same government's intervention to prevent system change by limiting the number of universities in the country. (p. 83)

From the perspective of the Treasury (a statutory body that provides economic and financial advice to government), the highly centralized tertiary education sector was failing to respond to changing economic conditions. In Treasury's view:

Information and knowledge are the business of tertiary education. They are also the fastest developing and increasingly central areas in the modern economy. Hence, unless the tertiary sector is enabled and given incentives to develop its core business as efficiently as possible, the discharge of its economic function will deteriorate and thus do increasing damage to the economy. (Treasury 1987, p. 195, cited in Codd, 2006, p. 44)

It appears that New Zealand universities were required to adopt more business-like management structures. Traditional academic cultures, collegial processes of decision-making and governance gave way to corporate managerialism and audit cultures (Codling & Meek, 2003). However, New Zealand was not alone in such changes. These trends were similar to those that were occurring in Australia (Abbott & Hristos, 2004; Halse et al., 2007; Harman, 2003, 2005; McInnis, Powles & Anwyl, 1995; Winter &

Sarros, 2002), Britain (Elton, 2000; Hare, 2003; Worthington & Hodgson, 2005), and North America (Andrews, 2003; Calson & Mark, 2002; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Madgett & Belanger, 2008). In these countries, universities were brought under the control of new regulatory regimes.

The subsequent establishment of organizations and implementation of policies after the 1990 educational reform in New Zealand influenced institutions who were trying to raise their profiles in response to the changing external policy demands in the tertiary education sector, which in turn influenced academic staff in terms of their priorities and academic identity. In 1999, the New Zealand Government announced the appointment of a Tertiary Education Advisory Commission (TEAC). Its agenda was to develop a strategic direction for tertiary education that would meet the challenges of “an increasingly global economy, rapid technological change, demographic changes, and the need for New Zealand to move towards a knowledge-based society” (TEAC, 2000, p. 32, as cited in Codd, 2006, p. 45). In 2001, the whole tertiary education system became centrally coordinated by Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Under the Tertiary Education Act 2002, this central agency took responsibility for coordination, funding and regulatory control over the sector. One of the main changes TEC brought has been a scheme for the assessment of research quality and the allocation of funding that is known as the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF), which was implemented during 2003 and has altered institutional expectations and accountabilities (Smith & Jesson, 2005). A more recent government-funded initiative which focuses on the teaching dimension of academic work is the establishment in 2007 of Ako Aotearoa, as New Zealand's first Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence. The role of the Centre is to promote and support effective teaching and learning across the entire tertiary sector.

This project provides an opportunity to gauge the extent to which such initiatives are perceived by teachers as significant influences on their teaching thoughts and actions (Jesson & Smith, 2007). These developments represent significant challenges for universities striving to meet external demands while protecting the qualities of academic life that define a university.

Universities are striving to find ways of sustaining themselves in a competitive and complex world while adopting ways that distinguish what they do from other institutions. They have to be highly adaptive to the changeable environment, adjusting teaching, learning and research in ways which help them survive and prosper. As Trowler, Fanghanel and Wareham (2005) pointed out in a critical examination of government policy initiatives in higher education in the UK:

To be successful nowadays, a university needs to play a number of different games. Each game has different goals and involves different rules. Some are about generating income. Others are about increasing funding through attracting greater student numbers. Some are about enhancing research, and research reputation. The goals are often incompatible, the rules are written separately, in different places by different people. And winning at one may involve compromising in others. The learning university plays to win in the games which are most significant to its survival and relative advantage. As it does so, it attempts to structure the practices of and constraints on the faculties, departments and individuals within it. This does not always, or even often, include enhancing teaching and learning. (p. 440)

In summary then, the history of universities reveals a succession of changes that have their origins in the relationships between universities and the broader social, political and economic environments within which they are located. As noted, those changes include: a move towards regarding students as consumers rather than citizens; universities becoming one of many knowledge creation sites rather than being the sole place; academic autonomy changing from being self-contained to being open to the wider society; the university status changing from self governance to being evaluated by and accountable to external organisations. External forces are increasingly influential and are likely to dominate the formation of university policies and cultures. Within this ecological and political context of professional practice, each university needs to make decisions in responding to external expectations without compromising its own characteristics. The mediations of these forces have a direct impact on the formation of policies and strategies at an institutional level.

University culture

The university culture influences behaviours of individuals, and underlies the system of assumptions and beliefs shared by culture bearers (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Silver, 2003;

Tierney, 2003). It provides a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus. For example, university policies might be expected to provide views and guidelines concerning the attributes of competent and outstanding teachers, goals and strategies for teacher development, career-long development requirements, expectations and rewards for teaching development (Haigh, 2005a, 2005b; Harman, 2003; Houston, Meyer & Paewai, 2006).

University teachers' perceptions of how their institutions define and evaluate roles are likely to affect the ways they work. A majority of teachers in Fanghanel's (2007) study indicated that aspects of their teaching practice were directly related to their institutions' stance on the role and function of teaching. Henkel (2000) addressed the implications of policy changes for academics, including their values, agendas and self perceptions. Meanwhile, Haigh (2005a) noted significant gaps and limitations within a university's policies and that there was considerable variation in the specificity of policy statements. They varied in the extent to which they provided explicit, detailed guidelines for the individual teacher and for those staff responsible for facilitating teacher development.

What follows are two examples of university level factors that are intended to directly influence teachers' perceptions, conceptions and practice: academic development programmes and the teaching-research nexus.

Academic development programmes

Initial 'training' of university teachers (though this in itself is a contested notion) and continual professional development are well established in every university in countries such as the UK, and are becoming increasingly common in other countries. In New Zealand, there is a very strong expectation, and sometimes a requirement, for academic staff in universities to engage in continuing professional development – and that reflects an international trend. That trend is reflected in the establishment of staff development centres in universities, which offer a range of related programmes and services. For example, the Centre for Educational and Professional Development (CEPD) at Auckland University of Technology, offers programmes for new and experienced staff that focus on learning and teaching, flexible learning, research development,

organizational development, management and leadership development. The centre is “committed to working closely with academic and allied staff to realize quality learning, innovation and best practice in higher education” (Centre statement).

Issues in the academic development community and the scholarship associated with their work that have particular relevance to this research are: what could/should be the role of academic developers (Holmes & Grant, 2007); how should the discipline and professional differences of academic staff be acknowledged in academic development work (Huber, 2002; Staniforth & Harland, 2006); how can the effectiveness of academic work be determined (Prebble et al., 2004); and how do teachers experience the support of academic developers and how do those experiences influence their teaching beliefs and practices (Haigh et al., 2009; Haigh & Naidoo, 2007). Research into the effectiveness of academic development has been characterized as limited in quantity and quality because of the confusion over criteria of effectiveness and the complex interaction of factors associated with professional development initiatives (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004).

The current study provides an opportunity for further investigation of the influence of academic developers on teachers (along with an array of other influences) and the teachers’ perceptions of the impact of academic development on their students’ learning. It allows the features of academic development that may account for its degree of influence on teachers and students also to be examined. In New Zealand, a national project funded by the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) is already underway in this area in universities, with an investigation of the relationship between academic development and student learning (Haigh et al., 2009).

Research and teaching

The university is the only organisation that focuses on dual core functions of knowledge creation and knowledge transmission through the process of research and teaching (Houston, Meyer & Paewai, 2006). The roles of most teachers include undertaking research and engaging in teaching. The work life of university academic staff is predominantly framed and shaped by commitments to and performance in these functions. In New Zealand, this is mandated in legislation:

Their research and teaching are closely interdependent and most of their teaching is done by people who are active in advancing knowledge. (Education Amendment Act, 1990)

The Tertiary Education Priorities (2005-2007) document stated that:

Excellence in research underpins effective teaching, generates knowledge and innovation and helps drive economic goals (6) and as part of providing for a successful learning experience, it is important that tertiary teachers are up to date with developments in their field and this includes knowledge of research. There should be a close relationship between research and teaching.

But there is a longstanding debate about the weighting attached to teaching and to research, and the nature and extent of possible relationships between these two activities (Brew, 2006; Hammersley, 1997; Jenkins et al., 2003; Nicholls, 2005; Reid & Petocz, 2003; Trigwell, 2005). It is an almost universal phenomenon that research activity reaps more individual rewards than activities associated with teaching. As Kerr (1975) noted more than 30 years ago, that:

Society hopes that university teachers will not neglect their teaching responsibilities but rewards them almost entirely for research and publications ... Consequently it is rational for university teachers to concentrate on research, even to the detriment of teaching and at the expense of their students. (p. 773)

Many academics believe these contradictions and issues still remain, though the international tertiary education environment has undergone significant changes. University teachers motivated by core academic and disciplinary interests are said to be increasingly challenged by greater expectations for measurable outputs, responsiveness to societal and student needs, and overall performance accountability (Alcorn, 2005; Armstrong & Goodyear, 2006).

In addition, the literature dealing with the relationship between teaching and research in higher education is both complex and contradictory. There are empirical studies that suggest there is little or no relationship between research and teaching (e.g., Feldman, 1987; Hattie & Marsh, 1996). Yet, paradoxically, academics across the globe continue to argue that such a relationship exists (e.g. Neumann, 1994; Rowland, 1996). A concrete example in a New Zealand university has shown contrasting voices of academics on the relationship between their teaching and their research (Robertson & Bond, 2001).

These contradictions indicate a need to reconceptualise the way in which research and teaching and their potential relation are explored as objects of study. It has been argued over the last decade that teaching and research should be mediated by scholarship, through an emphasis on learning and inquiry (Boyer, 1990; Kreber, 2005a, 2005b; Schön, 1995; Trigwell & Shale, 2004). These different voices need to be interpreted in terms of the context within which the research was conducted, which includes certain institutional characteristics and the political environment, legislative requirements, teachers' decision-making and engagement (Elliott, 2001; Evans & Benefield, 2001; Papatotiriou & Hannan, 2006). In terms of the university context within which the current study was conducted, institutional policies and strategic plans regarding teaching-research include the following:

The University's current strategic plan (2007-2011) includes the following key strategic theme:

AUT will conduct excellent research, advancing knowledge and practice in its areas of expertise and supporting its higher education programmes. (p. 5)

Our research will facilitate a climate of academic inquiry and debate. Our research will reflect Boyer's notion of scholarship and will cover the spectrum from embracing discoveries and innovations for their own sake to supporting our curriculum so that our students are leading practitioners in their professions. (p. 8)

While the University's current Learning and Teaching Framework does not directly acknowledge or elaborate on this theme, the Research Development Plan (2007-2011) does align with this view of scholarship which was first formally articulated in a report that prefaced the development of the plan:

At the core of [the] University's Research Development Plan is the concept of scholarship as teaching and learning, engagement, integration and discovery. As defined by the American Association for Higher Education, scholarship implies a philosophy of research and education that transcends the antiquated content/process, theory/practice, teacher/student dichotomies that have traditionally shaped higher education. Within this philosophical tradition, research, education and the development of activities of tertiary institutions are informed by scholarship ... Underpinning the wide spectrum of research activities and programmes in which the University is developing a leadership role, is the concept of scholarship which transcends teaching and learning, engagement, integration and discovery.

(University Research Framework and Trends, 2005)

At the end of 2007, the University formally made a commitment to *research-led teaching* and this phrase was first used in its Investment Plan 2008-2010. This document also notes, as a goal, “To align more strongly the links between research and teaching” and makes reference to “the philosophy of scholarship which underpins the University's distinctive approach to research-led education”.

In a recent report, Gossman, Haigh and Jiao (2009) provide a snapshot of the place of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in the lives of a sample of New Zealand university teachers (including teachers from the University), their aspirations in relation to future engagement in SoTL and a detailed account of factors that are likely to promote, support and reward that engagement. The study conveys a sense of the complex and often conflicting everyday environments that university teachers work in, which can make pursuit of SoTL problematic on a practical front. The nature of those environments with respect to the influences that bear on teachers have been highlighted in several recent studies, including two underway at the University (Haigh & Naidoo, 2007; Jiao, 2007a). While the helps and hindrances identified resonate with those in other comparable studies, they also reinforce the need to take into account the national, institutional, faculty, disciplinary contexts in which teachers teach. Similarly, the data also indicate that initiatives which could pull and push teachers towards desired goals need to be aligned with the distinctive features of teachers' contexts. The importance of context within which teachers teach leads this review to literature on influences at the meso level.

Influences at Meso Level

While globalising forces are mediated in the first instance by national character and culture, national policies and strategies are in turn mediated by university priorities and culture, and these are further mediated by meso level factors such as discipline and department culture, colleagues, teaching groups (Fanghanel, 2007; Gibbs, 1996; Knight & Trowler, 2000; Lee, 2007; Rowland, 2002; Viskovic, 2006). This meso level of the departmental community and colleagues has been seen as ‘joined-up’ (Trowler, Fanghanel & Wareham, 2005, p. 428). It associates with the effectiveness of government policies and university interventions, the quality of teaching and teachers' everyday practice.

Departmental culture

Though various subcultures have impact on the beliefs and practices of university teachers at different levels, in many institutions, one or more dominant faculty and student subcultures can be found (Godfrey, 2003; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Silver, 2003; Trowler & Bamber, 2005). Among these subcultures, it is well acknowledged in the literature that the culture of the department is a primary source of faculty identity and expertise and is found to have a strong influence on teaching (Becher, 1994; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Knight & Trowler, 2000; Lee, 2007; Lueddeke, 2003). For example, Becher identified four categories of discipline on the basis of cultural and epistemological differences, namely 'pure hard', 'pure soft', 'applied hard' and 'applied soft'. The core of each discipline defines the basic beliefs, values and norms of the local academic culture (Neumann, Perry & Becher, 2002). Lueddeke (2003) showed that teachers who teach in the 'hard' disciplines, such as physical sciences, engineering and medicine, were more likely to apply a teacher-centred approach, whereas teachers from 'soft' disciplines, such as social sciences and humanities, took a more student-centred approach. Healey (2000) argued strongly that "for most academics, developing the scholarship of teaching will only bring about change in their priorities if it is embedded in disciplines and departments" (pp. 172-173). The production of knowledge, as well as means for its communication, varies in each discipline; differences were also found in the social identities constructed in the different disciplines (Kreber, 2009; Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006; Ylijoki, 2000).

Elements of departmental culture include assumptions about what is worth knowing and how knowledge is created, about the tasks to be performed and standards for effective performance, and about patterns of professional interaction (Knight, 2002). An academic department establishes its own culture and becomes the locus for how its members define their roles and identify with their institution and academic discipline (Mills et al., 2005). It has been reported that university teachers have a strong allegiance to their discipline and department, which often outweighs their loyalty to the university (Knight & Trowler, 2000).

Departmental culture has close relations with teachers' everyday lives and teaching practice. It is there that academics engage together on tasks over the long term, it is

there that academics take actions and find how those activities are to be described and valued (Huber, 2002). Relations with colleagues in the working context, most importantly at the departmental level, were perceived to be a source of crucial influences (Knight & Trowler, 2000). Changes and influences at departmental level emphasised its significance as a meso locus of practice (Trowler, Fanghanel & Wareham, 2005).

In this research, the nature and extent of departmental influences on teachers' perceptions and teaching practice is investigated.

Colleagues

Academic colleagues are inevitably a potential source of influence, with the degree and nature of the influence being governed by such factors as their respective roles (e.g., mentor, co-supervisors, co-teacher, co-researcher). Teachers' interpersonal skills and the extent to which they have shared values and orientations allow agreement to be established on the important issues that work teams and departments or faculties face. Research has demonstrated a relationship between teachers' professional experiences with colleagues and their teaching practice (Norman, Ambrose & Huston, 2006; Mills et al., 2005; Young & Irving, 2005). Colleagues were found to be a source of both pleasure and stress (Pickering, 2006).

Palmer (1998) challenged teachers to form relationships with one another, to risk being personal:

... if we want to grow as teachers – we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives – risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract. (p. 12)

As teaching is perhaps the most privatised of all the public professions, personal intimacy can be hard in higher education, particularly in the divisive structures in educational institutions Palmer identified – fragmentation, competition, and bureaucracy (Palmer, 1998; Cranton & Carusetta, 2002). In addition to the influence of other teachers, the departmental head has been suggested as a pivotal figure for academics. Interactions with heads of department were identified as an uneasy aspect of academic life (Knight & Trowler, 2000; Staniforth & Harland, 2006; Tierney, 2003).

Bess and Associates (2000) called for a fresh look at traditional modes of teaching:

Although teaching has traditionally been dominated by the single faculty member alone in his or her classroom, as higher education is increasingly bombarded with external demands for more effectiveness in undergraduate education and with the infusion of innovations in methods and the introduction of new technologies, a fresh look at the traditional modes of organisation for teaching is called for – especially one that would involve the talent and input of many persons instead of the one faculty member per course that is the prevailing common technology for teaching. (p. xii)

In this view, a joint effort of many teachers and collaboration between many different individuals with distinct tasks and method competencies are called for to produce a lively and rich form of education.

External influences at different levels have direct or indirect impact on teachers' teaching. However, these influences should not be exaggerated. Trowler and Knight (1999) argued that structural changes in the workplace do not alone determine how people feel about or respond to changes. Human agency operated in the system of activities in the university, department or subunits. This means that there is choice and actions can be taken to "maximise work satisfaction in the face of structural changes" (Knight and Trowler, 2000, p. 72). As Ramsden (1998) concluded, while the academic environment influences the quality of teaching and learning in universities, "the key factor in the equation is the staff member's perception of the context of academic work" (p. 63).

The following part of the review now turns to research on teacher's personal knowledge, conceptualisations of teaching, and academic identities, which are influences at micro level.

Influences at Micro-level

Micro level factors include, but are not limited to, individual epistemological knowledge, pedagogical beliefs, and personal reflections (Entwistle et al., 2000; Hofer & Pintrick, 1997; Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001; Scott, 1994; Wright, 2005). Epistemology is at the core of individual university teachers' decisions regarding academic work. It shapes the way individuals view problems of discovery and learning as well as the types of questions they ask to address those problems (Fenstermacher, 1994; Hofer,

2001). Individuals who believe that knowledge is absolute and should be obtained through unbiased inquiry take an objectivity approach and are likely to perceive reasoning as the primary source of knowing and their academic peers as their principal community. Individuals who believe that knowledge is constructed through experience take a solidarity approach and are likely to value multiple ways of knowing and sources of knowledge (Rowland, 2000). These contrasting epistemologies, which may vary within as well as across disciplines (Lee, 2007; Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006; Nuemann, 2001), also give rise to different philosophies which incorporate different beliefs and conceptions about teaching (Entwistle et al., 2000). These epistemological differences might be relevant to teachers' response to influences.

The knowledge base of teaching

Human beings gain knowledge from a range of sources such as sense-experience, reasoning, authority, intuition, revelation, and faith, as suggested by Hopper (1967). Regarding the knowledge base for teaching, Shulman (1987) elaborated four major sources: 1) scholarship in content disciplines; 2) the materials and settings of the institutionalised educational process; 3) research on teaching, learning, and the other social and cultural phenomena that affect what teachers can do; and 4) the wisdom of practice itself. As teaching is essentially a learned profession, and as more is learned about teaching, any knowledge base for teaching is not fixed and final. Shulman acknowledged that, "as we proceed, we will know that something can be known in principle about a particular aspect of teaching, but we will not yet know what that principle or practice entails" (p. 12). More sources remain to be discovered, invented, and refined.

The knowledge base of teaching is defined as "all profession-related insights that are potentially relevant to the teacher's activities" (Verloop, Driel & Meijer, 2001, p. 443). Shulman (1987) outlined the following seven categories: content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge; curriculum knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational context; and knowledge of educational ends, purposes, values, and their philosophical and historical grounds. Among these categories, pedagogical content knowledge identifies the distinctive bodies of knowledge for teaching. However, these categories are being

constantly developed and extended. For example, in addition to Shulman's model, Knight (2002) suggested that there is an eighth category of knowledge, "knowledge of self, including awareness of our own self-theories" (p. 24). Similarly, Kreber and Cranton (2000) distinguished three equally important domains of teaching knowledge which are involved in the scholarship of teaching and learning: 1) curricular knowledge about the goals and purposes of teaching; 2) pedagogical knowledge about how students learn; and 3) instructional knowledge about instructional design and the instructional process. These domains represent the blending of content and pedagogy into an understanding of how particular topics, problems or issues are presented for instruction. While it is related to Shulman's model of knowledge base of teaching, this taxonomy is more concerned with the construction of knowledge through reflection in each domain on content, process and premise levels (Mezirow, 1998; Schön, 1983). It follows that higher education teachers may actually be involved in different kinds of reflection generating different forms of teaching knowledge (Kreber, 2006). Recently, conceptions of 'learning through dialogue' and 'community of learners' emerged as crucial elements in teachers' understanding of their teaching and learning (Carnell, 2007). Furthermore, Fitzmaurice (2008) argued that there is another type of knowledge to be considered and that is moral knowledge. While focusing on improvement of teaching effectiveness in higher education, equal attention needs to be given to the moral and ethical dimensions of teaching, to those features that make teaching responsible as well as effective. Both dispositions are important and the challenge is to integrate the two.

Adding to the above types of knowledge, Hargreaves (1998) posited that, as emotional and passionate beings, teachers' emotions are at the heart of teaching. Good teachers "connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity, challenge and joy" (p. 835). From another perspective, Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) articulated an essential but elusive aspect of teaching which they called 'presence'. Presence is defined as "a state of alert awareness, receptivity, and connectedness to the mental, emotional, and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments, and the ability to respond with a considered and compassionate best next step" (p. 265). To be present is to

come into relation, into connection, with students, their learning, subject matter and oneself. This theory of presence has antecedence in the work of Martin Buber (1970): “The real filled present, exists only in so far as actual presentness, meeting, and relation exist. The present arises only in virtue of the fact that the *Thou* becomes present” (p. 12). Presence arises when one comes to see the other and allows one’s self to be seen; it offers a moral imperative and an intellectual trajectory that can root the world of teaching and learning in its essential purpose.

While far more can be included in a knowledge base for teaching, these categories and domains present key elements. The personal knowledge of each teacher is highly determined and ‘coloured’ by his or her individual experiences, personal history (including learning processes), personality variables, subject matter knowledge, and so on. This personal knowledge base is the teacher’s filter for interpreting new information, which underlies his or her actions in a concrete and specific situation. All the knowledge a teacher has does not actually play a role in his or her actions. Teachers can consciously or unconsciously refrain from using certain insights during their teaching (Verloop, Driel & Meijer, 2001). Contrary to the knowledge for teachers which is assumed by others through interventions or initiatives, this is the “knowledge of teacher” which guides a teacher’s action at a particular moment (p. 443).

Conceptions of teaching

Teachers, generally, “hold on to certain beliefs as being central to their thinking, reasoning and action” (Tilema, 1997, p. 211). A body of research has shown that teachers’ conceptions of teaching act as a filter for the interpretation of experience and also inform the individual teacher’s preferred practices, both of which functions are highly relevant to attempts to develop teaching (Hativa, Barak & Simhi, 2001; Kember, 2001; Kreber, 2002; Pajares, 1992; Samuelowicz & Bain, 1992, 2001; Schonwetter et al., 2002). Teaching conceptions cover a range of categories from teacher/teaching-focused orientations to student/learning-focused orientations (Åkerlind 2004, 2008; Dunkin & Precians, 1992; Entwistle et al., 2000; Kember 1997; Kane, Sandretto & Heath, 2002).

Consistent with these categories of conceptions of teaching, Trigwell et al. (2000) identified five conceptions of the scholarship of teaching which are hierarchical in nature moving from a concern with what the teacher does to a focus on student learning: knowing literature on teaching; improving teaching by collecting and reading that literature; investigating student learning and one's own teaching; improving one's own students' learning; and improving student learning within the discipline. Teachers engage in the scholarship of teaching to varying degrees depending on the extent to which they are informed about the relevant literature, personal reflection, communication of insights, and have a teacher or student focused conception of teaching and learning.

However, it has been noted that studies exploring conceptions of university teaching reflect uncertainties in determining the degree to which conceptual categories function independently or hierarchically, and the degree to which conceptions can be seen as stable or subject to change in relation to context (Åkerlind, 2003). Furthermore, it also has been argued that the framework provided by the conceptions and approaches to teaching literature does not fully represent the complexity of the relation between teacher thinking and action (McAlpine et al., 2006). The authors identified four zones of thinking that represent a spectrum of specificity of thinking in relation to action. Between the conceptual zone and enactive zone are strategic and tactical zones which encompass the space from conceptions through to actions, yet their boundaries are fluid. The study reveals that whatever conceptions of teaching are held by a teacher, their achievement in practice is complex and difficult, resting on facility with thinking in other zones than successful enactment of that thinking. A decision-making process is based on four constituents: knowledge, skills, attitudes and awareness. The authors contended that:

Given the multitude of contextual variables influencing decisions within different zones, effective enactment of the conceptions may be difficult for others to recognize without extensive information on the teacher thinking that underlies the multiple decisions leading to that action. (pp. 611-612)

Educational context and developments bring unexpected problems. More than ever, teachers see themselves as exposed to unpredictable and unexpected environmental influences and risks. At the same time, externally imposed development and

educational objectives are frequently at odds with the personal experiences of teachers. Recommended methods of working and expectations usually do not correspond to the opinions of teachers about what constitutes 'good teaching' (Barnett, 2000; van den Berg, 2002). This means that the beliefs and identities of individual teachers are always at issue.

Lea and Callaghan (2008) pointed out that some researchers' exclusive focus on a single and specific teaching situation overlooked lecturers' perceptions of their teaching as a whole. Given that the functions of universities in current society remain decidedly confused and contradictory (Barnett, 2000), Prosser and Trigwell (1999) argued that "the same teachers may well have different conceptions, perceive their teaching situation in different ways and adopt different approaches to teaching in different teaching contexts" (pp. 156-157). They may harbour a number of contradictory beliefs and draw on each of them in their working lives, either to meet pragmatic demands or to justify their teaching practice.

In summary then, influences at different levels interact with one another. Though straightforward differentiations have been made, multiplicities and complexities of teachers' experiences cannot be neatly categorised under the labels of influences at macro, meso, and micro level. Addressing each of the levels is necessary but insufficient by itself to gain a thorough understanding of the nature of influences which may occur concurrently and weigh differently in certain circumstances. Teachers' day-to-day challenges are products of the interplay of the three domains. Teachers' attempts to deal with influences in one level may impact their capacity to address those at other levels. The uncertainties and complexities of teachers' decision-making in a real context show that the attempt to theorise a logical relationship between cause and effect is challenging. Different conceptions are held by different people or by the same person in different circumstances and for different purposes (Trigwell, Prosser & Waterhouse, 1999). Any attempt to understand the effect of teachers' conceptions of teaching must be situated in relation to a complex array of influences for change. There needs to be more emphasis on the change process rather than the outcome of change. In the following section, literature on teachers' responses to influences is reviewed.

Responses to influences

A complex situation exists where teachers are faced with a multitude of factors which interact in complex ways. It is a situation that teachers are all too familiar with. A university teacher may be faced, for example, with increased student numbers, new accountability requirements, changing promotion criteria, and become aware of emerging technologies and new teaching skills. Faced with these varied sources of influence, they must make decisions about whether and how they respond, how they achieve and maintain a balance between inner self and external world.

Teachers' perspectives on teaching are an expression of personal beliefs and values related to teaching that are often formed through careful reflection (Brookfield, 1995; Pratt, 1998; Schön, 1983). Through experience and reflection on that experience, teachers come to find their own way; they transform their habits of mind about teaching. They need to differentiate their own thoughts and values from those of the community within which they work, which is a part of developing authenticity. As Cranton and Carusetta (2004) argued:

When we critically reflect on social norms about teaching, and disengage ourselves from the norms we do not accept, we are differentiating ourselves from the collective of teachers, and this is the development of authenticity – knowing who you are as separate from (and the same as) the collective of humanity. (p. 6)

Authenticity is a multi-faceted concept that includes at least the following parts: a) being genuine – authenticity as the expression of one's self and preferences within the community and social context of work (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004); b) showing consistency between values and actions – authenticity as maintaining congruency between espoused theory and theory in practice, i.e., words and behaviour (Palmer, 1998, 2000; Schön, 1983); c) relating to others in such a way as to encourage their authenticity – authenticity as growing together with others (Buber, 1970; Jarvis, 2005); and d) living a critical life – authenticity as being autonomous and rational individuals within their social context through critical reflection and critical participation (Freire, 1972; Heidegger, 1962). The second element is of primary importance. This concept of authenticity is illustrated in the following figure.

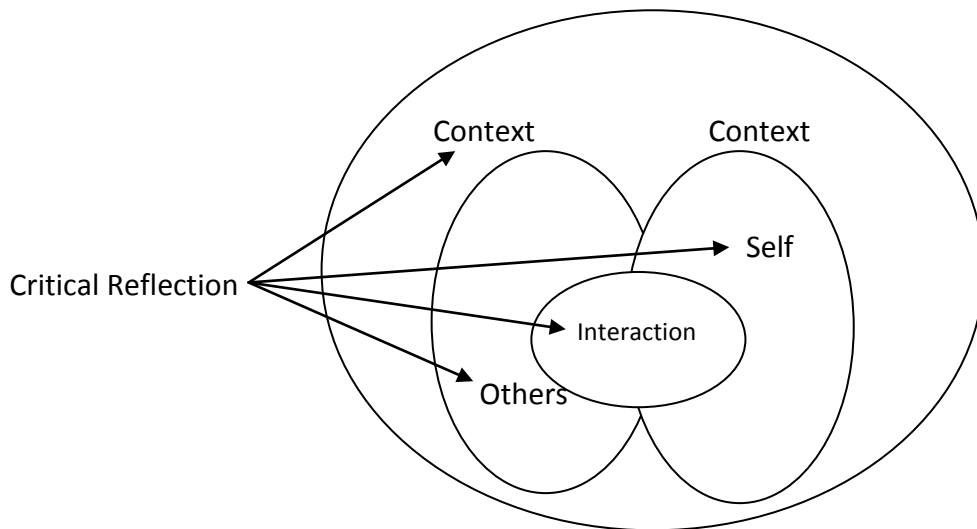


Figure 2.1: Model of Authenticity in Teaching (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, p. 20)

I believe that “humans will act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them” (Blumer 1969, p. 2). The meanings that an individual associates with the sense of self will significantly shape his or her action; the meanings associated with action will shape the sense of self. Through the complex whole of experiences of interaction with self and others, individuals meaningfully locate themselves in the world (Denzin, 2006; Jones, 2003). When individuals feel congruent with their values, goals and meanings, they experience authenticity. In contrast, people experience inauthenticity when they perceive incongruence with their values, goals and self-meanings (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Whitehead, 1994).

People cannot feel fully authentic or inauthentic at all times in the same ways. Vannini (2006) investigated the dynamics of professors’ experiences of authenticity and inauthenticity in their adjustments to changing role demands, with a focus on teaching.

The author argued:

We all fall in between the two extreme poles and oscillate from one side of the continuum to the other at different times, in different situations. Authenticity and inauthenticity, therefore, are somewhat ideal types and people experience hierarchies of authenticities much as they experience hierarchies of identities. (p. 238)

Among many diverse, and at times even contradictory meanings and values, individuals feel authentic when their conduct is congruent with those that are significant for them. Because different self-values, external values and situational meanings are often competing in a social context, individuals are torn by conflicting

social demands, overwhelmed by contradictory interpersonal relationships and obligations. They rarely enjoy complete autonomy when interacting with themselves and others. Instead, they often enter a process of negotiation between what is ethically desired and what is personally desired. When incongruence occurs, opting for one or the other entails a complex process of negotiation and settling for compromises of various sorts.

Barnett (2000) used the terms 'complexity' and 'supercomplexity' to acknowledge the demands of the situation in which the teacher is faced with challenges to how she or he actually understands her/himself, and concluded that:

... professional life is increasingly becoming a matter not just of handling overwhelming data and theories within a given frame of reference (a situation of complexity) but also a matter of handling multiple frames of understanding, of action and of self-identity. The fundamental frameworks by which we might understand the world are multiplying and are often in conflict ... [the supercomplexity] increasingly characterizes the world in which we all live. Working out its operational, cognitive and pedagogical implications for the university constitute much of the challenge ahead. (pp. 6-7)

In facing complexity and supercomplexity, teachers have to make choices that reflect a constellation of forces and processes. As they make choices, their beliefs inevitably meet "a dizzying array of value-laden forces" (Sawyer, 2001, p. 41). Some of their beliefs surface as they intersect with those ranges of forces. However, as Sawyer identified:

Often these forces are neither clearly consistent nor even clearly inconsistent with teachers' knowledge and beliefs, but rather are more ill-defined and ambiguous, placing teachers on a shifting and often politicised landscape ... These choices are intricately interwoven with a sense of identity. As individuals develop in multiple and often inconsistent ways, teaching approaches may also develop along multiple paths - within the same individual. (pp. 41-42)

Dissonance often follows from encounters with supercomplexity in the process of making choices (Postareff et al., 2008; Prosser et al., 2003). Potential dissonances identified include epistemic and curricular paradoxes, praxis-related issues, structural incongruities and hindrances, and collective and individual ideologies (Fanghanel, 2004; Lindholm, 2003). While each category contributes to creating dissonance, it is worth

noting that several factors can concur to produce dissonances. Ball (2003) addressed teachers' struggles of uncertainty and instability in such a situation:

There is a flow of changing demands, expectations, and indicators that makes one continually accountable and constantly recorded. We become ontologically insecure: unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, [and] to be excellent. Yet it is not always very clear what is expected... We are unsure what aspects of work are valued and how to prioritize efforts. We become uncertain about the reasons for actions ... A kind of values schizophrenia is experienced by individual teachers where commitment, judgement and authenticity within practice are sacrificed for impression and performance. (pp. 220-221)

Austin (2003) used the term 'meaningful work' (p. 13) when she expressed the desires of university teachers – work that enriches the lives of students with whom they interact, work that has a positive impact on the broader society, and work that is intrinsically and personally meaningful. Poole (1996) described teachers' meaning construction as:

... a dialectic process in that previous constructions of reality influence interpretations of new experiences and these new experiences influence the construction of reality. Individuals continuously test their assumptions and may confirm and instantiate those assumptions or they may disconfirm and reconstruct assumptions as new evidence emerges. (p.250)

Teachers' meanings often determine the decisions and efforts they make during their daily practice. Van den Berg (2002) argued:

These meanings are very existential, highly personal, resistant to persuasion, and quite evaluative. Teachers' meanings are also seen to determine the amount of energy they are willing to invest in their work. Their meanings are often quite intangible, sometimes undetectable, and not always manageable. (p. 580)

Some university teachers question whether the new working context would enable them to achieve 'meaningfulness'. According to Michael Pratt (1998):

Ascertaining whether or not one is 'congruent' with an organization is likely to involve retrospective interpretations of one's own values as well as those of the organization. This process, in addition, is likely to involve more than a simple 'matching process' considering that individuals and organizations have multiple and sometimes conflicting identities. (p. 180)

In relation to teaching practice, Parker Palmer (1993) acknowledged that good teaching comes in an astonishing array of forms, and reminded us that:

...while great teachers may have mastered a particular method of teaching, it was not the method that mattered: it was the congruence between that method and the teacher's identity that made the teaching great. (p. 12)

Where there is a lack of congruence, compromise may be required, as Churchman (2006) contended:

Compromise implies the relinquishing of something which is valued in anticipation of receiving something valued more. The degree and nature of compromise by staff is not consistent across the entire academic workforce, with a significant variable being the perceptions of academics in regard to their role and the role of their institution. In the case of academic staff, different aspects of academic work are understood as being of different value to individuals, their university and society. (p.5)

In her study of such dissonances and compromises, Carnell (2007) investigated teachers' response to the presence of a 'performativity' culture. 'Performativity' requires teachers "to organise themselves as a response to targets, indicators and evaluations" (Ball, 2003, p. 215), where teachers find themselves being constantly judged in different ways, by different means, according to different criteria, through different agents and agencies. Teachers need to fashion their teaching according to externally set standards. They need to suspend their own judgements about teaching, comply with what is expected of them, and display appropriate behaviour. This culture may clash with a teacher's personal views about what should be valued and performed (Middleton, 2006; Skelton, 2005; Smith & Jesson, 2005), and could lead to a "values schizophrenia" (Ball, 2003, p. 221). There are 'costs' if teachers want to maintain a balance, according to Carnell (2007):

If teachers resist aspects of 'performativity' they fear their courses will be awarded lower grades. If teachers 'play the game' they betray their principles, feel compromised and uncomfortable but are more likely to be promoted. Authentic social relations are replaced by judgmental relations. People come to think they are valued for their 'performativity' alone. (p. 35)

This complexity and dissonance and the potential impact for compromise shapes the identity or self of teachers. Teacher identity is conceptualised as resulting from interaction between the personal experiences of teachers and the social, cultural and

institutional environment in which they function on a daily basis (Burn, 2007; Cohen, 2008; Sachs, 2001; Zembylas, 2003). The process of identification within a university or discipline is complicated because neither the individual nor the working unit has a single identity or even consistency among identities. There is not one academic identity shared by all academic staff (Ashforth & Johnson, 2001; De Simone, 2001). Identity is not a static condition but an iterative process in which organisational members shift in response to extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

Much research literature demonstrates that knowledge of the self is a crucial element in the way teachers construe and construct the nature of their work. And events and experiences in the personal lives of teachers are intimately linked to the performance of their professional roles (Day et al., 2006; Gibson, 1998; Leary, 2003; Tice & Wallace, 2003). It has been shown that identity is a key factor influencing teachers' sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness (Churchman, 2006; Clegg, 2007b; Stets & Burke, 2003).

In dealing with multiple sources of influences, some academics took positions containing "a mixture of adaptative and oppositional elements" (Hall, 1980, p. 137, as cited in Fanganel, 2004, p. 584). Signs of alignment included the notion of feasibility, the ability to adapt practices. Young and Irving (2005) concurred in arguing for integrity of practice:

Changing times are best met with flexibility and adaptability, built on a secure framework of stability, in the form of well-thought-out values. This allows the maintenance of a sense of personal integrity with a willingness to make changes which are congruent with the environment and the needs of others. (p. 470)

Trowler (1998) identified four broad categories of academics' responses to the changing environment: 1) sinking – they essentially mutely accept worsening job conditions; 2) swimming – they essentially accept the spirit of the institution and the flexible curriculum and act within that paradigm; 3) coping – many academics developed coping strategies to deal with the changing environment; and 4) reconstructing – these academics took a "robust approach to their working context, acting as movers and shakers" (p. 126). Proactive reconstructive strategies included: curriculum innovation; syllabus innovation; reinterpretation of policy; policy manipulation; and reprofessionalisation. These categories of response are not

mutually exclusive; academics move from one to another in their professional lives, reconstructing in some areas and using coping strategies in others.

While Trowler (1998) recognised reconstructing as potentially the largest category of academic response to change, Worthington and Hodgson (2005) focused on strategies of resistance to quality used by certain academics, which they term “peer exploitation” (p. 97). The researchers demonstrated that, in some cases, peer exploitation is clearly a conscious strategy, enacted through tactical micro-political manoeuvring by certain individuals to enable them to avoid responsibility for, or significant involvement in, external expectations such as quality auditing or evaluations, at the expense of those who “do the quality stuff”. Some academics continue to “pursue their *own* particular personal research and career interests while others are left to shoulder their burden of responsibility” (p. 98, italics original). The authors identified four different roles adopted by those resisting the quality audit process, all of which involve some form of peer exploitation: 1) the devolver; 2) the shirker; 3) the ditherer; and 4) the deceiver (see pp. 102-106).

Building on existing data, the present research explored teachers’ attempts and actions to achieve a coherent academic identity as an outcome of their response to a complex array of influences.

Situating the research

While there is a voluminous body of research examining student conceptions of learning, perceptions of the learning environment and approaches to learning, similar research has begun to focus upon the university teacher only in the last decade or so. The findings and implications of empirical studies in this field point to the need for further investigation (Postareff et al., 2008). It appears that “examining lecturers’ experiences of teaching should be a significant research enterprise” (Lea & Callaghan, 2008, p. 171).

The majority of studies reviewed that explicitly focused on aspects of influences on teaching was conducted in the UK, Australia, America, Canada, and some European countries (e.g. Abbott & Hristos, 2004; Gale et al., 2005; Madgett & Belanger, 2008). University teachers in these countries work in different contexts, experience different

external forces and make different responses. The literature also indicated that some researchers have examined various aspects of influence either by investigating multiple sources of influences (e.g. Fanghanel, 2007; Trowler, Fanghanel, & Wareham, 2005; Trowler & Knight, 1999), or by looking at changes in influences and their impacts over time through longitudinal studies (Muchmore, 2002; Sawyer, 2001; Stoffels, 2004). A closer examination of research on influences on university teaching indicated variations in methodological approaches (Brawner et al., 2002; Cook & Payne, 2002; Hewson, Copeland & Fishleder, 2001; Leslie, 2002; Mayhew, Grunwald & Dey, 2006; Prosser et al., 2003; Sandretto, Kane & Heath, 2002; Steinert et al., 2006). These studies contribute to a better understanding of university teachers in general in this field of research. However, in comparison with the aim and characteristics of the current research, these studies may have provided only an incomplete picture of academics in a New Zealand tertiary context.

One example is the case study of 18 lecturers undertaken by Fanghanel (2007), from a socio-cultural perspective, which examined how university teachers understood what teaching and learning was about, how they perceived their teaching in practice, and why, as well as how, they positioned themselves in their work contexts. Seven 'filters' conditioning pedagogical constructs were identified, which operate at different levels: the institution, external factors, academic labour and the research-teaching nexus at the macro level; department and discipline at the meso level; and individual pedagogical beliefs at the micro level. A model representing these filters in the research attempts to provide a rich description of the context of practice and dynamic responses of lecturers. However, Fanghanel did not investigate (or may have chosen not to focus on) the complexities of the ways in which different influences interact and the manifestation of filters in practices. In addition, possible individual teachers' differences in their responses to influences were not examined. Furthermore, Fanghanel's study is a snapshot of teachers in a moment of time, capturing what the influences are perceived to be at that moment. Possible changes over time were not considered. There may be more influences to be included in the model. A more holistic understanding is required to represent the array of influences that concurrently impact on teaching, how teachers relate their teaching practice to personal beliefs and

attitudes, and how they react and respond inwardly to those influences (Barnett, 2000; Carr, 2006; Cherry, 2005; Skelton, 2005).

Few longitudinal studies in the area attempted to address the influences holistically. For example, Muchmore (2002) studied the life history of an experienced teacher over a five-year period. Sawyer (2001) followed three teachers over a ten-year period in the classroom and examined the roles that teacher agency and decision-making play in teacher development. Another comparative longitudinal case study, by Stoffels (2004), investigated two teachers. By observing and video-recording 25 lessons and by interviewing, Stoffels explored teacher's decision-making frames in the context of curriculum change. While each study provided valuable insights into individual teacher's teaching practice and changes over time, it is apparent that the authors emphasized different aspects of influences. In addition, the influences identified in these studies are far from exhaustive, as teachers had different approaches in different contexts. It is suggested that the decision-making frames that impact on teachers' practices are multiple. For other teachers a different set of influences might affect what they decide in practice, and they might react to the same influence in different ways or to a different extent. Further, the influences are not static and fixed, but are subject to change. What has been studied in previous research might no longer be an exact representation of what is happening currently.

While anticipating that findings from investigations undertaken in other countries could be generalised to, or have implications for New Zealand university teachers, the distinctive features of New Zealand's national environment, cultures, institutions, departments, subjects, and teacher and student characteristics need to be taken into account. The uniqueness of New Zealand higher education and the characteristics of the university within which my research is conducted may contribute to the diversity and richness of the knowledge base.

Some researchers have already undertaken related investigations in New Zealand tertiary contexts (e.g. Houston, Meyer & Paewai, 2006; Viskovic, 2006; Harland, 2005; Robertson & Bond, 2001; Staniforth & Harland, 2006). Awareness was also paid to the fact that a range of national research projects were underway in universities that had immediate relevance to my study. For example, one project focuses on the

relationship between academic development and student learning. The research is based on two key assumptions: a) that relationships between academic development and student learning can and do exist and that a critical mediating factor is the relationship between the academic developer and teacher; and b) that it is possible to obtain data that allows the multiple influences on both teacher and student learning (including academic development initiatives) to begin to be disentangled and differentiated (Haigh & Naidoo, 2007). The case study project highlighted the multiple influences on a university teacher. While acknowledging multiple and potentially conflicting influences on teachers and in turn their students, my research attempted to explore the complexity of the interplay between multiple sources of influences as the teacher thought, and made decisions, about aspects of teaching. Furthermore, within the university where this research was conducted, some researchers have already, individually or in collaboration with others, examined aspects of phenomena related to my research (e.g., Billot & Smith, 2007; Gossman, Haigh & Jiao, 2009; Haigh, 2000, 2005a, 2005b; Haigh & Naidoo, 2007; Jesson & Smith, 2007; Smith, Billot & Jiao, 2008; Smith & Jesson, 2005). For example, Haigh addressed an institutional perspective on teaching and learning (2005a), and made connections between university policy, personal theory and practice (2005b). Billot and Smith (2007) investigated the influence of research culture in two applied institutions. Gossman, Haigh and Jiao (2009) explored a range of 'pull', 'push' or 'drag' factors associated with teachers' engagement in the scholarship of teaching. These studies provided rich information for my investigation of the university context and possible influences on teaching within it.

My research took account of the changing context of tertiary education in New Zealand. I checked the generalisation of some findings to the New Zealand tertiary context to see whether similar influences prevail in the lives of university teachers, and what might be distinctive when particular regimes are operating in relation to teaching practice. In addition, this research was conducted in the youngest university in this country. Although universities share some features, this new university has its distinctive view of teaching, learning and research, and places particular emphasis on its priorities, which potentially impinge on the people who teach in it. I anticipate the

possibility that these features are distinctive to this particular New Zealand university, somehow different from those described by other researchers.

My research built on the existing literature and had potential to make a contribution to this research field through an expansion of instances and categories of influences. It was based on the assumption that while a broad range of influences have been investigated, some factors were yet to be identified. Other evolving unpredictable influences may be identifiable in the research context with distinctive features. If some different specific influences, or patterns of influences, are apparent, possible explanations would be explored. Furthermore, my research sought to investigate the interplay between influences, teachers' inward experiences of their interaction with perceived influences, how they respond to the influences, and how their responses influence other people, the structure and culture. My philosophical stance and theoretical lenses, as presented in the following chapter, assisted me to theorize the phenomenon under investigation towards a more holistic understanding of both extrinsic and intrinsic influences exercised in the context where university teachers find themselves.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the literature on influences on university teaching operating at macro, meso and micro levels, teachers' possible responses to those influences, and situated my research in the existing literature. In the next chapter, I articulate the philosophical foundation and theoretical perspectives underpinning the research design and practice, and the data collection process.

Chapter 3 Paradigm Position, Theoretical Assumptions, and Research Design

It is time now to worry about something that has been implicit throughout the discussion of methodology ... those mysterious procedures by which you transform what you see and hear into intelligible account.

Michael H. Agar (The Professional Stranger, 1980, p. 189)

Introduction

In this chapter, I first present my views about the nature of knowledge and reality, and theoretical perspectives which serve as fundamental principles on which I based my initial decisions about the methodology of the study. I then outline the methodologies which guided the research design, followed by a discussion of the specific methods utilised in the research. The research context, participants, and data collection are presented in the third part of the chapter. Consideration of research ethics and rigour are given in the fourth section. It should be noted at the outset that the methodology to a certain extent was an evolving one as the study progressed. Whilst I had clear ideas about how I planned and executed the study, some aspects and research approaches were changed along the research journey.

Before going further, some terms used in the chapter need to be defined to avoid possible confusion. I bear in mind what Crotty (1998) noted:

Research students and ... even more seasoned campaigners – often express bewilderment at the array of methodologies and methods laid out before their gaze ... To add to the confusion, the terminology is far from consistent in research literature and social science texts. One frequently finds the same term in a number of different, sometimes even contradictory ways. (1998, p. 1)

These terms include paradigm, epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and method. I acknowledge that though terms are sometimes defined and used differently by different scholars, the terms as used by Crotty (1998) guided the current study.

Paradigm refers to a set of assumptions and beliefs, and world views.

Epistemology refers to related assumptions within a paradigm about the nature, acquisition, justification and development of knowledge. It is “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (p. 3).

Theoretical perspective refers to “the assumptions about the reality that we bring to our work” (p. 2). It is an approach to “understanding and explaining society and the human world” (p. 3), i.e., “the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria” (p.3).

Methodology is “the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes” (p. 3).

Methods means the techniques or procedures used to gather and analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis (p. 2).

I concur with Crotty in that epistemology informs the theoretical perspective, that theoretical perspective grounds a set of assumptions that the researcher brings to his/her methodology of choice, and that methodology informs the choice of particular method(s), as depicted in the following figure:

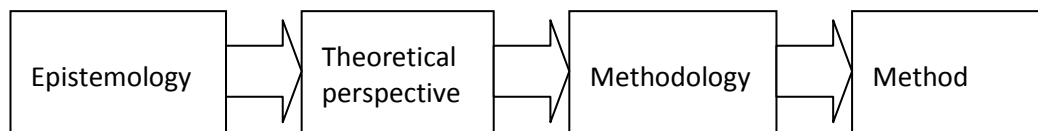


Figure 3.1: Research assumptions and design guideline (Source: Crotty, 1998)

These four critical components are illustrated in turn to provide a framework which guided the direction of the present research.

Research paradigm

I support the view that “good research is research that starts from a sound philosophical basis” (Wellington et al., 2005, p. 104), because philosophical issues are integral to the research process and constitute “what researchers ‘silent think’ about research” (Scott & Usher, 1999, p. 10). In the course of endeavouring to identify, clarify and articulate my epistemological stances and theoretical lenses, I became more reflective and rational in making decisions about research design and application of specific techniques (Creswell, 2003; Darkenwald & Merrian, 1982; Etherington, 2004;

Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2006). Furthermore, as I wanted my participants to make explicit their views and inner thinking, thus acting both ethically and in accordance with the principles underpinning qualitative research, it is only fair that I lay bare my own assumptions, especially those most pertinent to this research topic, at the outset of this study. Some shifts in the focus of my views occurred as the research proceeded, as discussed in Chapter 7.

Constructivism

Among the diversities of competing paradigms and ideological positions (Alexander, 2006; Anderson & Arsenault, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2003), I acknowledge a commitment to the paradigm of constructivism. Within contrasting epistemologies associated with constructivism (Geelan, 1997; Kanuka & Anderson, 1999; Muthu, 2006; Perkins, 1999; Windschitl, 2002), I believe reality is socially constructed and subjectively determined. Meanings are “constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43) and are born “in and out of the interaction between subject and object” (p. 45). Thus, my research is not only an individual activity but also a social practice; the methods I employ in research have the purpose of discovering how those constructions come about and the meanings that people give them.

My view is that when human beings engage with a reality and make sense of it, it is possible to make sense of the same reality in quite different ways; therefore there are as many realities as there are conceptions of it – multiple realities (Admiraal & Wubbels, 2005; Creswell, 2007). Differing ways in which reality is conceived may be attributed to a wide range of factors including human experiences, ideological traditions, individuals’ practical interests, their perceptions of surroundings and interpretations of their experiences. It follows that I also believe that teachers in my research, though they work in the same institution, will have perceptions of the situation that are not necessarily identical.

In the interactions between phenomena and people, meanings are constantly negotiated and our thoughts are developed. In a dialectic process of meaning construction, our previous constructions of reality influence the interpretation of new

experiences and these new experiences influence the construction of reality. Individuals continually test their assumptions; they may confirm and instantiate those assumptions or they may disconfirm and reconstruct assumptions as new evidence emerges (van den Berg, 2002). From this point of view, I believe that participants in this research may experience or perceive their situation differently at various life or academic stages.

As we interact with our environments, we undoubtedly encounter phenomena that are inconsistent with our constructed knowledge of the world. We process new information into a coherent system in one of two ways: when new information is consistent with our pre-existing schema it will be assimilated; when it is inconsistent with our pre-existing schema it will be accommodated. Assimilation is the adoption of new information that fits into a pre-existing view. Accommodations are changes in response to environmental influences resulting in the adoption of a new view (Kanuka & Anderson, 1999). In the literature, a constructivist framework had previously been demonstrated to be successful in revealing relationships between various aspects of scholarly work (e.g. Kreber, 2000). From this perspective, I sought to investigate and attempted to understand how university teachers in this study perceived, experienced, and responded to a multiplicity of influences.

Choosing a qualitative approach

While it is well acknowledged that both qualitative and quantitative approaches may be used appropriately with any research paradigm (e.g., Bryman, 2007; Creswell, 2003), I chose qualitative study as a primary approach. I also acknowledge some quantification of data as well, given the prevalence of particular perceptions, experiences and responses. The qualitative approach is more appropriate because of the nature of my research and my philosophical stance: that I am concerned with the individual teacher's perceptions and experiences; and that it is possible to discover motives and meanings of other persons through my connections with them, knowing that I can never 'know' – in the sense that I 'know' my own thoughts and feelings – what another person's experience is 'really' like. I want nevertheless to get as close to

that knowing as possible. I believe I can “get closer to his/her perspective through detailed interviewing and observations” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 10).

Among the many characteristics of qualitative research, Denzin and Lincoln (1994) identified:

Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials - case study, personal experience, introspective, life story, interview, observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994, p.2)

Creswell (1998) expanded on the definition by emphasising a “complex, holistic picture”, which “takes the reader into the multiple dimensions of a problem or issue and displays it in all of its complexity” (p. 15). Many researchers see a qualitative approach as the preferable way to obtain in-depth knowledge and insight regarding human experience (e.g., Amenkhienan & Kogan, 2004). These characteristics were considered to be consistent with the nature of my research and provided the rationale for choosing a qualitative approach.

Theoretical perspectives

Given the focus of my research questions, interpretivism and symbolic interactionism were theoretical perspectives that I chose to inform the methodologies. This decision resonated with the proposition that “all [qualitative] research is interpretative, guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” as argued by Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 13). An interpretive approach seeks to explain how people attribute meaning to their circumstances, and how they develop and make use of rules that govern their behaviour. The interpretive conceptions of research assume that there will be no absolute answers and emphasise the need for qualitative data.

This position was further supported by Schwandt (1994) who proposed,

... to understand this world of meaning one must interpret it. The inquirer must elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of social actors. To prepare an interpretation is itself to construct a reading of these meanings; it is to offer the inquirer's construction of the constructions of the actors one studies. (p. 118)

As a researcher, I am 'constructing' the descriptions of situations which could be understood as the 'constructions' of the participants in my study. My participants are constructing their perceptions and experiences of influences on their teaching. The meaning of their constructions arises from a process of interaction with their surroundings and themselves. Blummer (1962) calls this "symbolic interaction", which refers to "the distinctive character of human interaction based on people interpreting or defining each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other" (p. 186). The symbolic interactionism not only shows how meaning is constructed, but also implies that in order to capture the meaning, one needs to see things from the perspective of others. As Silverman (2001) comments, "[u]sing their eyes as well as listening to what people were saying these sociologists invariably located 'consciousness' in specific forms of social organization" (p. 228).

Along with the above situated nature of interactionism, another important aspect is its focus on the social self (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). As Bryman (1988) explains:

The idea of the social self draws attention to the individual as a complex mixture of biological instincts and internalized social constraints. These two facets of the self are captured in the distinction between respectively the "I" and the "Me" ... The "Me" contains our view of ourselves as others see us, an idea neatly captured in Colley's (1902) notion of "the looking-glass self". Whereas the "I" comprises the untrammelled urges of the individual, the "Me" is a source of reflection about how we should act in particular situations. (pp. 54-55)

So the key ideas of symbolic interactionism are constituted by 'definition of the situation', 'the social self', and 'the individual self'. Human beings do not simply act but activity is taken on the basis of how they define a particular situation they are in, how they think others and they themselves perceive it. Based on this theoretical perspective, my research is intended to capture the interpretive process used by people in dealing with the things they encounter (Blumer, 1962).

It has been shown that a cross fertilization of the ideas of interpretivism and interactionism can be powerful in understanding and explaining the phenomena under investigation (cf. Ricoeur 2004). From this stance, in order to gain a systematic understanding of knowledge about participants' perspectives, and thus to capture the perceptions and experiences of university teachers about influences on their teaching, grounded theory and case study were chosen as methodologies and methods such as document analysis, observation and interview were employed in data collection.

Choosing methodologies

Having explained my theoretical perspectives, I now turn to methodology, i.e., grounded theory and case study.

Grounded theory

Interactionism “spawn(s) the research methodology known as grounded theory” (Crotty, 1998, p.78). Grounded theory contains key elements of analytical induction theory and assures a connection between data and a theoretical premise (Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Strauss & Corbin, 1997) based on observation, interaction with and interpretation of the data collected with appropriate methods. Its emphases are on data themselves and theories arising from them. Grounded theory seeks to ensure that research findings and theories are inductively derived from the study of information collected. Its key ideas of constant comparison, maximisation of possibilities, theoretical sensitivity, and theory generating provided guidelines throughout the process of my research in selection of participants, collecting data, analysing and theorising data. Principles of grounded theory guided the conceptual coding, comparative analysis and theoretical sampling of the data in order to highlight abstractions and interconnections between the collected data. I discuss the application of grounded theory further in relation to each step of the data analysis process.

Case study

The emphasis on people's uniqueness, as well as the aim of understanding participants from their own perspectives, point to the utilisation of case study. Case study is defined as “a qualitative form of inquiry that relies on multiple sources of information”

(Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p. 249), and “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single unit” (Merriam, 1998, p.12). It allows a researcher to “reveal the multiplicity of factors which have interacted to produce the unique character of the entity that is the subject to study” (Yin, 1989, p.82). Stake (1995) clearly articulated the unique contribution of case study:

A case study is expected to catch the complexity of a single case ... We study a case when it itself is of very special interest. We look for the detail of interaction with its context. Case study is the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances. (p. xi)

Three types of case studies were identified (Stake, 2005): *intrinsic case study* for better understanding of the particular case; *instrumental case study* for insights into an issue for pursuing the external interest where the case is of secondary interest; and *multiple case study* or *collective case study* when there is less interest in one particular case, “a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (p. 445). It is instrumental study extended to several cases. Individual cases are chosen because “it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases” (p. 446). The three types of cases study are useful for thinking about the purpose of study; actual reports do not necessarily fit neatly into the three categories.

The case study approach was used as a strategy for conducting this research as well as a format for reporting part of the data (Wolcott, 2001). In order to gain rich data capturing the complexity of a single case, certain methods are required for data collection, interpretation, and presentation. Selected cases were presented so that they can be read with interest in the case itself showing the richness of data in one case and its uniqueness. Derived from these methodologies, the methods used in this research include interview, stimulated recall, and documentary analysis, which are discussed later in the data collection section.

So far, I have elaborated the paradigm including assumptions I bring to the study, theoretical perspectives informing methodology, and strategies lying behind research methods. They inform one another as depicted in the following figure:

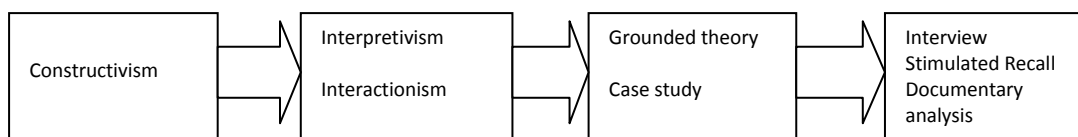


Figure 3.2: Theoretical framework

In the course of data analysis and interpretation I recognised that I had made significant paradigm shift, in particular as a response to my encountering the views of Margaret Archer, who is positioned in the critical realism paradigm. My ontological positioning was moving from relativism to realism. This shift led to undertake some additional analyses and to consider that in future research I would place more emphasis on endeavouring to discern the powers and generative mechanisms that might assist me to interpret the data and understand the phenomena. In Chapter 7, I reflected on my paradigm stance, addressed my shift of positioning to Critical Realism, and interpreted data from the perspective of Archer’s theory of social structure and human agency (Archer, 2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2007).

In the following part of this chapter, I first introduce the research context, and then move to the identification of participants. The process of data collection, transcribing and analysis are also presented subsequently.

University context

The University where participants were working attained university status in 2000, having had an ‘Institution of Technology’ status. That change brought new opportunities and responsibilities for academic staff which included teaching-research interdependence and a new expectation that all academic staff become ‘research active’.

The University had its foundation as a different educational institution and a somewhat different sense of its mission compared to traditional universities. It had strong traditions of teaching linked to the workplace (for example, with a history of vocational training and applied knowledge fields), declared its strong regional commitment and developed joint partnerships with many local and regional organisations. This close liaison and strategic commitments were highly evident in the university website and policy documents. The new institutional identity was forged by

building on former relationships and at the same time attending to external pressures. In this context, an attempt to develop adequate approaches to teaching is not simply a forced condition of new policy times; it is a central part of institutional identity, and it attracts staff desiring to work in similar ways. The University strategic plan for teaching and other documents in relation to teaching are reviewed later in the Documentary Analysis section.

Participants

The selection of participants was purposive and involved a maximum sampling strategy (Manson, 2002; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Patton, 2002; Robson, 2002). In order to fit the current study's aims and coverage, it was appropriate to include teachers who varied widely on several dimensions/criteria. This sampling technique was derived from 'theoretical sampling' proposed by Glaser (1978, pp. 36-54), reflecting a grounded theory methodology. The two terms, i.e., purposive and theoretical, were used interchangeably in this research. The criteria initially considered at for the selection of participants were:

- Different disciplines/Departments/Schools
- Experiences of teaching/length of time in the profession
- Educational and working background
- Levels of academic appointment (lecturers, professors...)
- Ethnic origin, gender, age to ensure a balanced demographic sample

There were two considerations in setting these criteria: a) these factors had been indicated in previous research as impacting upon university teachers' perceptions of, and responses to, influences; and b) participants might be differentiated and represent some features in the field of research (Hayes & Richardson, 1995; Lindblom-Ylänne et al., 2006; Mills et al., 2005; Trowler & Cooper, 2002).

The sampling approach started by interviewing a participant and then seeking a further participant who was maximally different in comparison to the previously interviewed person(s) on such criteria within the scope of choice (Patton, 2002). The first interview was conducted with AAA (pseudonym), who expressed his interest in my research during the preparation of my research proposal and volunteered to participate in a

pilot study. The next participant was selected on the basis of maximum contrast with AAA, in terms of identified criteria, as well as elements added to the existing criteria which emerged from the pilot interview. For example, highest qualification and career stage were considered in selecting subsequent participants. This process was repeated through to the point when data saturation was achieved.

Thus, theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) was a primary criterion in determining how many teachers were to be involved in this study, as “saturation is the key to excellent qualitative work” (Morse, 1995, p. 147). However, the literature provided “no description of how saturation might be determined and no practical guidelines for estimating sample sizes for purposively sampled interviews” (Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006, p. 60). A few studies provided guidelines for actual sample sizes but they yielded different ranges: Bernard (2000) suggested 36 interviews for ethnographic studies; Creswell (2007) recommended between five and 25 interviews for a phenomenological study and 20 to 30 for a grounded theory study; Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006) made evidence-based recommendations suggesting that a sample of six to 12 interviews may be sufficient to enable meaningful and useful interpretations. Using data from a study involving 60 in-depth interviews, they found that saturation occurred within the first 12, though basic elements for meta-themes were presented as early as six interviews.

In the practice of my research, I ended up with 27 interviews with 22 participants. In pursuing saturation, the size of the sample was determined by consideration of the information collected. The data collection was brought to an end “when no new information is forthcoming from newly sampled units ... redundancy is the primary criterion” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202). Although I believed there was always new information given the uniqueness of each individual, the focus of the research topic was my main concern.

The demographical profile of participants is as follows:

Age group

25-35	36-45	46-55	56+
2	8	10	2

Gender

Female 8, Male 14

Years of teaching in higher education

0-5	6-10	11-15	16+
4	7	7	4

Highest qualification obtained

Bachelor	Masters	Doctorate
4	11	7

Teaching discipline

Soft/Applied	Hard/pure (Beacher, 1994)
14	8

Ethnicity

Māori 1, Tongan 1, Pakeha 20

Data collection methods**In-depth interview**

In-depth interviews (e.g. Fontana & Frey, 2000; Legard, Keegan & Ward, 2003; Minichiello et al., 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 1995) served as the primary method for data collection in this study. ‘Depth’ means “getting a thoughtful answer based on considerable evidence as well as getting full consideration of a topic from diverse points of view” (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 76). This method has long been proved to be an efficient and valid way of understanding the details of people’s experience from their point of view (Kvale, 1996; Mishler, 1991; Schostak, 2006).

In terms of influences on university teaching, meaning is not imposed or transmitted by others, but is constructed by teachers themselves from their perceptions and experiences. Personal accounts were seen as having central importance in understanding the phenomenon among many other sources of data. The most straightforward way of gaining this information is to talk to teachers, as the power of language illuminates meaning (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995; van Manen, 1997). As Crotty (1998) asserted, “[o]nly through dialogue can one become aware of the

perceptions, feelings and attitudes of others and interpret their meanings and intent” (pp. 75-76). Dialogue with teachers provides opportunities for the researcher to “see how their individual experience interacts with powerful social and organisational forces that pervade the context in which they live and work” (Seidman, 2006, p. 130). Mutual engagement in a conversation creates constructed meaning with the input of both participants and the researcher in the process. In this project, the interviews were relatively open-ended as well as in-depth.

Among a range of positions on in-depth interviewing (e.g. Charmaz, 2002; Fontana & Frey, 2000; Johnson, 2002; Kvale, 1996; Warren, 2002), I supported what Kvale (1996) called the ‘traveller metaphor’, set within the constructivist research model in which knowledge is not given but is created and negotiated. The interviewer is seen as a traveller who journeys with the interviewee through conversations as “wandering together with” (p. 4). The meanings of the interviewee’s “stories” are developed as the traveller interprets them. Interviews are based more on conversation than questioning, and are designed to enable participants to articulate insights about their perceptions and experiences (Seidman, 2006), to encourage participants to develop their own ideas, feelings, insights, expectations or attitudes and in so doing to allow the participants “to say what they think and to do so with greater richness and spontaneity” (Opie, 2004, p. 111).

In this study, the interview questions were designed to generate answers that aligned with the research questions. The interviews primarily focused on the perceptions and experiences of a group of university teachers, revealing the influences on their ideas about teaching and their teaching practice, and how they respond to those influences. Understanding of the following aspects of teachers’ perceptions and experiences was sought:

- The teachers’ ideas about teaching
- Teachers’ perceptions of personal and external influences on their ideas and practices, and experiences that illustrate such influences
- Teachers’ perceptions of how they have responded to particular influences
- Teachers’ everyday experiences that they can recount that illustrate particular influences and their responses

- Teachers' perceptions and experiences in relation to inconsistent or conflicting influences, and how they responded to them
- Influences and associated responses that teachers perceive as having helped or hindered their teaching, and its continuing development
- Other issues or questions

The interviewing style used 'grand tour' questions to initiate an interview (Spradley, 1979), followed by other types of interview questions to capture a range of information. Spradley developed five major categories of descriptive questions: a) grand tour, b) mini-tour, c) example, d) experience, and e) native language. With participant characteristics and actual interview context in mind, a combination strategy of different categories of question was employed.

Starting an interview with a grand tour question required a broad focus and included questions such as: What influenced you to become a teacher? What influenced your teaching practice? How did you respond to those influences? These questions did not ask about a specific type of teaching activity but instead allowed the interviewee to reflect retrospectively on his/her journey. The responses allowed me to start constructing general schema upon which other specific information could be built. When participants answered grand tour questions, I preferred to listen quietly and take notes, without asking any questions that might break the flow of ideas and continuity of stories. I noted possible follow-up questions as I listened.

The mini-tour questions arose directly out of interviewees' responses to grand tour questions when I noticed details that could be further pursued. For example, when responding to a grand tour question, one of the participants spoke about how he enjoyed his interaction with colleagues. I asked him to explain what happened between them and how that experience influenced his future teaching, through questions such as "Can you tell me more about your colleagues?" Though it was a mini-tour question promoted by responses to a grand tour question, I was actually asking another grand tour question in that specific area. As interview questions were narrowed down to specific activities, questions stemmed from answers so as to provide supporting evidence.

Given the scope of topics to cover, multiple interviews were undertaken with some participants. Due to time restriction and a sense of data saturation, second or third round interviews were not conducted with every participant. I did three interviews with one participant over a course of eight months, and two interviews with three participants with an interval of two weeks. In total, 27 interviews with 22 participants made up the primary data of this research, over one year (I did the first interview on 15 October, 2007, and completed the last on 23 October, 2008). Time for each interview ranged from 45 minutes to two hours: 40-60 min (4) 60-90 min (17) 90-120 min (6).

The interviews required an iterative process of data collection, coding, analysis, and planning what to study next. The following figure illustrates this process.

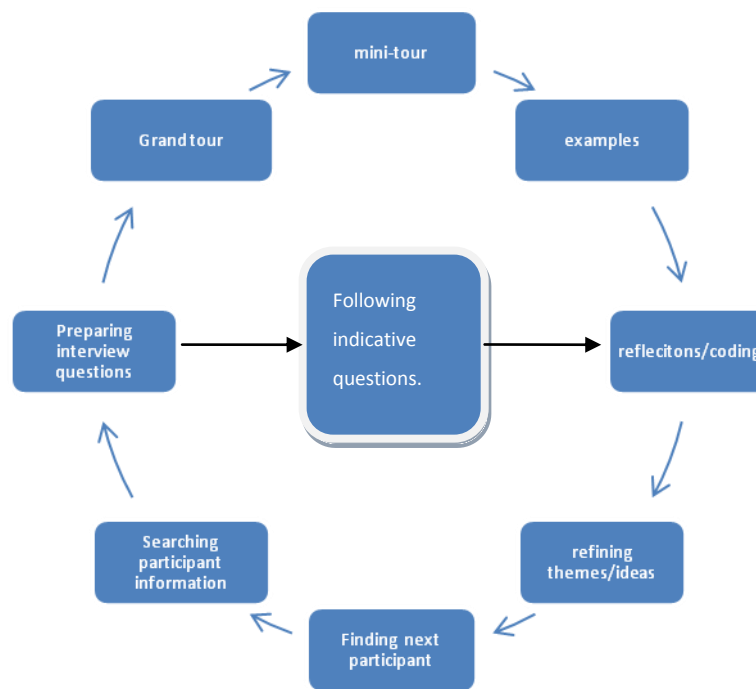


Figure 3.3: Iterative process of interviews

Stimulated recalls

While interviewing revealed how people perceived their experiences, the method of ‘stimulated recall’ was employed for gaining further insights (Bell, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). This denotes a variety of techniques to prompt and assist a participant’s recall of his/her thought processes at the time of the particular behaviour, and relevant ideas which informed the activity (Calderhead, 1981;

Kagan, 1990; Lyle, 2003; Meijer, Zanting & Verloop, 2002; O'Brien, 1993; Reitano, 2005; Sandretto, Kane & Heath, 2002).

The rationale for using the stimulated recall process was that it provided another avenue for prompting participants to talk about an array of possible influences on their teaching practice. In collecting data, I sat in on three participants' lectures to observe their teaching practice. One class was audio-taped; notes were taken for the other two observations. Then I described what I had observed back to participants, and invited them to make further interpretations about what was happening, why a particular action or strategy was adopted, how their teaching ideas were manifest in their teaching practice, and what influences they could relate to their practice in the classroom. Data were thus enriched by adding teachers' interpretations of their practice in context, and my concern for data triangulation was supported, as discussed later in this chapter.

Reflecting on interviewing

As noted, my research started with interviewing a voluntary participant to test the appropriateness of interview questions, estimate time requirements, and fine tune my practical interview skills (Light, Singer & Willett, 1990; Maxwell, 2005; Ritchi, Lewis & Elam, 2003). Subsequent pilot interviews with one of my supervisors provided me with further opportunities to obtain feedback on the alignment of the research questions with the interview questions, including the unplanned and follow-up questions. In interviews with other participants, I knowingly avoided asking leading questions about influences which I assumed to be relevant or significant. Rather, I asked relatively open questions, and stayed with responses spontaneously offered. While I was wondering whether there could conceivably be other influences, I chose not to name such influences or to ask whether those were additional influences. I perceived what participants brought to the foreground, what influences they identified as the most salient and uppermost in their minds at the moment of interview in response to the questions I asked.

Documentary analysis

A further aspect of data collection involved documentary analysis, which provided knowledge of the history and context surrounding the specific setting (Fossey et al., 2002), portrayed the values and beliefs of participants in the setting, as well as articulating the priorities of policy makers (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In this research, I familiarised myself with national and institutional documents that I felt teachers might refer to and followed up documents that were referred to by participants in the interviews; I was interested in knowing whether certain documents, assumed to be significant or influential, were actual influences from the participants' perspective. The relevant documents included:

- National: Annual Reports of the Ministry of Education and Tertiary Education Commission; The Tertiary Education Strategy (2007-2012); Statement of Tertiary Education Priorities (2005 – 2007).
- University: mission statement, strategic plan, annual report, teaching and learning policy, teaching evaluation, promotion and teaching excellence award criteria.
- Faculty/Department: job descriptions; faculty and school documents relating to teaching; curriculum and materials.

Space precludes analysis of all documents to demonstrate the possible impact of multiple forms of public rhetoric on teaching. Here I take one document from the Tertiary Education Commission, the Tertiary Education Strategy, and the University Strategic Plan (2007-2011) as examples:

Government has clearly signalled its commitment to improve the quality of teaching and research, and requires tertiary education providers to:

Take responsibility for, and actively work to improve, the quality of their teaching to ensure that all students and learners gain the best value possible from their participation in tertiary education; ensure that students and learners access excellent education and training that is relevant to their needs, to those of employers and community groups and to New Zealand's broad national goals, and that students and learners increasingly progress to higher levels of learning and qualifications; and enable their knowledge, teaching, and research activities to better support innovation in all aspects of New Zealand life and the social, economic and intellectual development of New Zealand.

(Tertiary Education Commission, 2005)

The Tertiary Education Strategy (2007-2012) states that:

The scholarship of teaching, and links between research and teaching more generally, must be strengthened and the government will support this, particularly through the distinctive contributions of universities.

(Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 25)

The University Strategic Plan (2007-2011) connects teaching with international recognition, technologies, students, research, quality assurance, and recruitment:

- We will continue to place emphasis on the quality of our teaching and student support; our connections with the industries, professions and communities that the University serves; the accessibility of our programmes; the relevance of our curricula; and the importance of our quality assurance processes. (p. 6)
- Our success in increasing research activity will result, inter alia, in a research rich environment for learning and teaching, an improved Performance Based Research Funding (PBRF) rating, increased consultancy contracts and more commercialisation of intellectual property. The University's reputation for research in key areas will lead to increased research collaborations, both nationally and internationally, and we will be the leading provider for doctoral study in these areas. (p. 8)
- Our staff will include an appropriate mix of academically qualified staff, inspiring teachers, experienced industry practitioners and leaders. Our academic staff will engage in a portfolio of research, teaching, professional practice and wider academic administration and leadership activities appropriate to their level and field of endeavour. (p. 12)
- The University will continue to adjust the profile of our staff in order to support changes in our student, teaching and research profiles. (p. 12)
- Ensuring through management, employment and other arrangements that academic work has an effective balance of teaching, research and administration. (p. 13)
- Creating a framework for sharing and using knowledge, acquired through the University's operations, to enhance learning, teaching, research and other activities. (p. 15)
- Investing in our infrastructure to provide outstanding teaching and learning and research facilities. (p. 15)

Additional documents (e.g. course handbooks) that participants mentioned or referred to during the interviews and other sources of information (e.g. statements of affiliated organisations), were also followed up and reviewed. A data file for each participant

included such records as blogs, portfolios, publications, public presentations or written materials on their ideas about teaching, lecture notes and other materials connected with the teaching of particular courses, as well as other data such as art exhibitions and visual art by some participants.

Other forms of data were also collected. These data included participants' Master's and doctoral theses, course materials, conference presentations, journal articles and other publications, web profile, student feedback and course evaluation results. Some of these materials provided valuable insights into participants' perceptions and experiences of influences on their teaching thoughts and actions, as evident in A1's reflection on his becoming a tertiary educator (Appendix 3).

In summary, a combination of data compiled from a diversity of sources enabled me to understand the meanings of teachers' perceptions and experiences. Transcripts of interviews, documents and records collected, and notes taken during the course of the research were archived in individual folders for each participant. By using these sources of information, the inquiry was contextualised, meanings were constructed, phenomena were interpreted, understood and theorised, in answering the research questions. I now turn to the process of transcribing interview data.

Interview data

Establishing the trustworthiness of interview transcripts is regarded as a fundamental component of rigour in qualitative research (Poland, 1995). It has been noted that transcription is used with little consideration for its properties and or significance in the research process. Critical examination of transcription as a process is still in the beginning stages (Tilley, 2003). It is not just the verbatim words as the product of transcription that are important; equally valuable is the process of doing and reflecting. Hence, my understanding of the process of transcribing data and reflection on transcription is discussed.

Transcribing data

There are multiple ways of dealing with interview data. Each researcher makes choices about whether to transcribe, what to transcribe, and how to represent the record in

text. For example, Hughes, McGillivray and Schmidek (1997) advocated using the terminal unit (T-unit) and communication unit (CU) when dealing with the issue of segmentation of transcripts; Gravois, Rosenfield and Greenberg (1993) provided evidence that coding directly from audiotapes was sufficiently reliable for their evaluative research, thus the transcription step may be omitted; while Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) recommended the full tape-transcribe-code-interpret (TTCI) cycle. For my interview data, I favoured the full TTCI process with verbatim transcription. This has been proved to be “more complete, accurate, and unbiased”, and preserved data for analysis in a “more permanent, retrievable, examinable and flexible manner” (ibid, p. 77).

I transcribed the first few interviews and understood that transcribing is an interpretive act (Denzin, 1995; Green, Franquiz & Dixon, 1997; Poland, 1995). However, as interviews progressed, I was unable to do it on my own due to time constraints. I asked ‘Jane’ (a pseudonym), a professional transcriber, to help me complete the task. Jane was asked to reach a reasonable match between sound file and text file; she was experienced in documenting additional contextual information including emotional responses, hesitations, and silences.

Having made this decision, I also kept in mind what Tilley (2003) argued, that researchers who delegated transcription work to others became distanced from the process of representing interview data as text, during which a number of decisions has to be made by those who are doing the actual work. Thus, every time I received a transcript, I listened to the disc with transcripts in hand and was attentive to pieces eliminated that may have been important to the interactions. I also reviewed notes taken during interviews and memos written afterwards, to recreate the context and obtain a better understanding of the transcript.

Reflecting on transcripts

Writers on transcription have pointed to the understanding that “transcription represents an audiotaped or videotaped world, and the record itself represents an interactive event” (Lapadat & Lindsay, 1999, p. 81). By creating transcripts “as cultural texts that represent experience” (Denzin, 1995, p. 9), I created worlds one step

removed from the real interactions I had had with participants. Even prior to this step, by interacting with my participants, I had already created a world one step removed from their perceptions and experiences. The worlds revealed by transcripts are not simply re-presentations but are textual constructions. Every step and attempt to re-present resulted in another re-creation, another “unrepeatable event in the life of the text, a new link to the historical moment that produced it” (ibid, p. 10).

Each *re-presentation* was in some ways less than the original because some understandings and possible significant elements of conversation are lost. The original voices, intentions of asking and telling, and interpretations cannot be recovered. However, in another sense, each re-presentation may be more because of the intervention of the researcher. There is always the possibility that the researcher constructs, organises, and interprets textual presentation into a new other world of creation. I supported what Denzin (1995) argued: “Behind the text as agent is the author of the text doing the interpreting. The ‘other’ becomes an extension of the author’s voice” (p. 15). Transcripts are assembled by researchers and mediated by the researcher’s interpretive stance.

Indeed, in dealing with interview transcripts, I noticed that there were other things in addition to what was inside the text, that I could see and sense at the time of interviews being conducted, e.g. what was said seemed ambiguous; what uncertainties were conveyed in tone of voice; what was quite clear to me at the time I felt; what was written on participant’s face that may reveal dissonances. It wasn’t the words in the transcripts conveyed to me; I was reading within and beyond the words themselves. I acknowledged there was a certain subjectivity involved in what I was reading of what participants were saying and how they were saying it. In reading data in the analytical interpretive process, as presented in the following chapter, my awareness of the nonverbal aspects of the data and my subjectivity might be inevitably involved.

Ethical considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical standards set out by the AUT University Ethics Committee (AUTEK), which reviewed and approved my ethics application, participant Information Sheet (Appendix 1) and Consent Form (Appendix

2). “Information Privacy Principles” and the rules of “Respect for Rights of Privacy and Confidentiality” and other relevant guidelines on the AUT university website about ethics (see www.aut.ac.nz) were followed.

The ethical principles of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, respect, and do no harm were central to the conduct of this research. These principles were interwoven with research practice throughout the process. Every decision and act was measured against the researcher’s ethical standard. The entire process can be viewed in terms of its implications for the participants involved, e.g., the conception of the topic, research design, finding participants, interaction with participants, data analysis, and writing up.

Participation in the study was voluntary, and the participants were free to withdraw at any time or to participate in ways they felt comfortable with. They were fully informed as to the nature of the study and commitments required for participation. Participants were also given the opportunity to review full transcripts to make changes and comments and are further invited to review the quotes used in Chapters Four, Five and Chapter Six specific to their individual accounts. Pseudonyms were used when referring to participants and their schools. No one other than ‘Jane’ who helped me to transcribe interviews, had access to the original voice data, and no one other than my supervisors had access to full interview transcripts.

While these general ethical principles were followed, particular attention was paid to the specific ethical requirements created by undertaking research within the institution where I was both studying and working. I have studied at the University for a few years, so I had insider knowledge not only of systems but also of individual teachers (some of whom participated in this research). I worked part-time in a school and an independent centre in the university as research assistant in a number of research projects, so I had insider knowledge of the university research culture. All these indicated that I was not able to distance myself from the research setting and detach myself emotionally from the research context. I was aware that the research itself may be sensitive to some teachers; it may be subject to value judgement and have ethical implications (Cockburn, 2005; Lampert, 2000). Thus, ethical consideration for me was more than a superficial clarification of my project achieved through the

Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form; it was the conceptualising of research as social practice and mutual activity which has personal consequences other than a thesis as the end product. Costley and Gibbs (2006) are insightful here:

This involves more than the written, signed statement to the university that ethical issues have been considered. It involves a ‘real-world’ consideration of our interaction with others, and an examination of the context of the research which informs and constructs the social realities of the situation and the identities of practitioner researchers and researched. (p. 96)

Being a doctoral research student as well as a research assistant in the research context, I conceived the notion of ethics as a process of transformation of my relationships with participants from researcher-researched, under general research ethics, to a “merging in the process of understanding” (ibid, p. 96) within the context where participants are teaching and researching, where I am working and studying, and therefore where an “ethics of care” ought to prevail (ibid, p. 89).

Data analysis

Glaser and Strauss (1999) indicated an ideal type in the process of data analysis, which they referred to as a process of “constant comparison”. They suggested steps which fall roughly in this order:



Figure 3.4: Coding process (Source: Glaser & Strauss, 1967)

In a sense, I did this, but for clarity I will indicate precisely my procedures of data analysis and how the data will be presented. Some terms firstly need to be clarified and defined:

Concept refers to the underlying meaning, uniformity or pattern within a set of descriptive incidents;

Category is used for a higher level abstraction of concepts;

Property is a concept of a concept at a lesser level of abstraction than a category;

Coding is to conceptualize data “by constant comparison of incident with incident, and incident with concept to emerge more categories and their properties” (Glaser, 1992, p. 38).

Data analysis map

Analysis started with ‘open coding’, in which an event or idea was coded and then repeatedly compared to other coded incidents to see if they belonged together in a temporary category. Data was analysed line by line, each sentence was coded. As the analysis proceeded, codes emerged, and connections became obvious, and familiarities grew along the way. As the analytical process was fine tuned, the amount of time spent on each case reduced. During open coding, no perceived thought is laid on data which may force or distort the meaning of the perspective of participants. Open coding came to an end when it yielded a core category. Through this process, abstract meaning was taken directly from the data to the open-coded incidents, pertaining to the initial discovery of categories and their properties.

With the second step of ‘axial coding’, the categories resulting from the open coding analysis began to cluster into broader conceptual categories. The meaning was abstracted once again from those coded incidents into broader conceptual categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1997). These two levels of analysis are also referred to as unitising and categorising the information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

With the third level of analysis, ‘selective coding’ was employed (Strauss & Corbin, 1997) to find linkages among broad conceptual categories. This is also called thematic coding, referring to the underlying message of these categories as ‘themes’ (Harry, Sturges & Klingner, 2005). It is in the process of seeking the interrelationships between themes that theory is constructed. The theoretical premise becomes a recursive “search for consistency and logic” (Strauss & Corbin, 1997, p. 156). It integrates key “research strands including those that complement and those that compete for meaning” (Hunt, 2006, p. 66).

Through this iterative constant comparison process, the development of theoretical explanations of phenomena occurred. My procedures have been essentially as illustrated in the following table, which is arranged to be read from bottom to top

attempting to reflect visually the inductive nature of the process, although some deductive activities are involved at Level 4.

Level 6	Theory	Demonstrating multiplicities and complexities in answering research questions
Level 5	Interrelating the themes	Identifying interrelationships among the themes and trying to map a model of interrelated explanations
Level 4	Testing and developing the themes	Examining the relevance of themes to incoming data from multiple sources; working both inductively and deductively while remaining grounded in the research data
Level 3	Themes	Constructing a set of interrelated categories as themes
Level 2	Categories	Clustering the discrete codes according to conceptual categories that reflect commonalities among codes
Level 1	Open codes	Coding incidents or ideas that generate theoretical properties of the category
Level	Purpose	Features

Figure 3.5: Levels of data interpretation

I noted that this orderly, procedural visual representation of a complicated cognitive process was a vast simplification of the way I actually arrived at interpretation. As discussed above, the process of analysis can seem quite ‘routine’: I read and re-read interview transcripts; I then highlighted some interesting extracts and started to apply codes or key words to the data; I then re-read the ‘condensed transcripts’ and applied the constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1999) to refine the codes; I then ended up with a collection of extracts for each code to present as findings. This tended to appear as an isolated and linear process. However, Figure 3.5 is far too condensed to tell the full story. Thus, while I acknowledge it is one possible representation of the data analysis process, I recognise that the implication of overall process and strict linearity needs to be avoided. There was ample evidence in my research practice

showing that data analysis was an ongoing process, a social practice, and an encounter with complexity.

Data analysis as part of an ongoing process

Data analysis was always an ongoing process that started prior to the first interview (Rapley, 2007). As described in my introductory chapter, I began this research with my interest in tertiary teaching. I then began to collect literature in this area. Those readings were informative and guided my thinking, together with my conversations with supervisors and colleagues, as well as my reflections on the literature and interactions with academic staff, which gave me an initial focus on the influences on university teaching. The research focus was further refined during the course of a year's preparation for candidature proposal. Thus, my interest, readings, writing, and research proposal provided me with initial ideas about possible interviewees, interview questions and analytic themes. I then piloted my interview skills and questions, and recruited more interviewees. I chose those specific interviewees based on my preliminary analysis of the previous interview(s). Before I went to the interviews, I had already made some specific analytic choices about what type of teacher, which discipline s/he was working in, along with what sorts of topics might be discussed with this particular participant.

Conducting interviews involved a process of re-analysing previous data while receiving and constructing new data. Subsequent reflection was another unit of analysis. After the interviews, I wrote up my notes on the encounter, my observations about the interview process and possible improvements to questions being asked and other skills. I then revisited the trajectory of my research with consideration of some of the ideas and forthcoming interviews.

Listening to recordings and reading transcripts were major parts of analysis, as I discussed previously. After an interview, I repeatedly listened to the recordings until I had a vivid mental picture of that participant. The majority of interviews were sent to a transcriber for a textual version. Serious attention was given to the quality of transcripts. I always checked transcripts against the recordings and listening again to the recordings while re-reading the transcripts. This allowed me to get a sense of the

context of the interview, not only focusing on *what is said*, but *how it is said* as well. The immersion in data led to coding and re-coding, and writing and re-writing. In addition, as I tried to interpret data, I was also thinking about the profiles for case studies, as presented in the next chapter.

Writing is a process of data analysis. Writing “mediates reflection ... fixes our thought on paper ... and externalises what in some sense is internal ... creates the reflective cognitive stance that generally characterises the theoretic attitude in social sciences” (van Manen, 1997, pp. 124-125). Writing taught me what I know, and in what ways I know what I know. I became thoughtful by seeing myself mirrored in the text. Textual reflection, structure and restructure of ideas, provided me with ample opportunities to revisit the nature of my research, reinterpret the data, look into the essence of teachers’ experiences, and attempt to identify the multiplicity of their interrelations. Writing turns into a successive process of rewriting which is characterised by re-thinking and reflecting (Richardson, 2002). Through this writing and rewriting process, multiple layers of meaning were constructed, coming to the foreground while ambiguity and uncertainty remained.

It can be seen that, from the initial interest in the research topic, through collecting and interpreting data, to the final textual product, continual analysis plays a significant role. However, this ongoing process should not be conceived individualistically, that is, as a relationship between me as a researcher, a set of data being collected, and the phenomena under investigation. Rather, I see data analysis as a social practice rather than a discrete set of decontextualized individual skills or techniques. It is about meaning making and learning to produce knowledge in particular communities.

Data analysis as a social practice

As Malfroy and Yates (2003) argued, the process of meaning making of and from data in doctoral research is “an enterprise of the group, not just of an individual” (p. 128). In my research, a group of people were involved in this process: participants, critical friends, and supervisors, and research community, to name a few.

The contributions from participants were apparent: they provided me with their valuable accounts as primary data for this research; they reviewed interview

transcripts, quotes I selected and profiles I crafted; they offered constructive feedback on my preliminary findings at the early stage of data analysis.

Insights from critical friends were also valuable. A group of doctoral students in the university met formally and informally to share our research journeys. Students from other institutions were also invited to participate. I thus had opportunities to access alternative perspectives on my research topic. When I shared my interpretations of data at the meetings, I gave little instruction about marking what is of interest in selected quotes from transcripts. I asked my fellow students to trust themselves as readers and mark whatever caught their attention. Despite the diverse sources of input, I often found considerable overlap among my critical friends in what we had 'bracketed'. Participation in this kind of research group broadened my understanding of different research methods, ways of 'knowing' and interpretive practice.

Input from my supervisors was paramount. Our joint analysis of selected cases at the early stage of data analysis formed the basis of ongoing interpretation of the research data. The dialogue with my supervisors was an occasion to seek guidance, to affirm or otherwise, and to gain alternative perspectives. After being prompted by my supervisors to select contrasting cases to capture the uniqueness of individual teachers when dealing with multiplicities of influences, the power of this form of presentation was immediately apparent. When the first profile of a selected case was crafted, it became the basis of dialogue with my supervisor prior to commencing the process with the next case. Often these profiles were immediately rewritten for a better representation of the participant. During this time, my interpretations were challenged, the quality of case presentation was discussed, and my subjective understandings or prejudices became a matter for debate.

My interpretation of data has been laid open for consideration through regular communications with supervisors. In particular, my supervisors' 'talking-out-loud' strategy has had powerful effects on my interpretive writing. For example, at one supervision meeting, when my critical stance and clarity of expression were found to be missing from my writing, the supervisor had my text displayed on the computer to model how I might foreground my own point of view, with the text work and changes occurring in my presence. I was part of the process as my supervisor talked about what

he was attempting, questioned me about the text, and experimented with amendments on screen. I was both witness and participant as the text changed before my eyes. The 'live' conversation provided a scaffold for me to learn how to make textual connections between my writing, interpretation of data, and interview transcripts, thus finding my place in the field of knowledge production. While the new text was created in this collaborative way, my understanding of the data was deepened. The revised text speaks with greater accuracy, authority and authenticity.

In addition to the above, my participation in the wider research community played a significant role (Jiao, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2008a, 2008b; Jiao & Haigh 2009; Smith & Jiao 2008; Smith, Billot & Jiao, 2008). Scholars and colleagues offered insights and constructive feedback about my research design and data interpretations. In this context, I have recognised my limitations and identified blind spots. Also I have come to acknowledge that objectivity is never completely possible given the infinite and ever evolving nature of human understanding and the complexity of the phenomena under investigation.

Data analysis as an encounter with complexity

The interactions between me, data, participants, critical colleagues and friends, supervisors, and wider communities have constantly transformed my views of the nature of research and the phenomena under investigation. Understandings emerging throughout the project have led me to reconsider the assumption that orderly relationships could be established between teachers' experiences/perceptions of influences and their thoughts/actions around teaching, as well as the probabilistic relationships between various influences; that through collecting and analysing data I would be able to generate findings that would have predictive as well as explanatory power. By acknowledging the complexity of phenomena being investigated, I have come to look for theoretical lenses to help me interpret the data and have found that my understandings resonate with perspectives offered by complexity theory (Cherry, 2005; Davis & Sumara, 1997, 2005; Heylighen, Cilliers & Gershenson, 2008; Kuhn, 2008; Lemke & Sabelli, 2008; Morrison, 2008). As Davis and Sumara argued:

Things do not get simpler as you zoom in or zoom out ... Linear relations and correlations, linear trajectories, linear report formats and linear narratives make for very poor

representations of complex phenomena. Whether embedded in quantitative analyses or qualitative descriptions, such Euclidean forms are of limited interpretive value and have virtually no predictive value, as is proven daily in stock markets, classrooms and personal lives. (p. 313)

Complexity investigates emergent, non-linear dynamic and self-organizing systems that interact in ways that influence the probabilities of later events, by which “everything is connected to everything else” (Urry, 2005, p. 3). Complex systems display behaviours that result from the interactions between components, which specifically include the spontaneous emergence of new forms of order at critical points of instability. Relationships between variables in the components can be non-linear with unexpected switches occurring, so the same ‘cause’ can, in specific circumstances, produce different effects.

Complexity theory brought to my awareness the paradoxical nature of systems. According to the theory, various systems operate simultaneously in particular phenomena and they are nested in each other; clear-cut boundaries are unlikely to be identified, and complete understanding of one isolated system without reference to others is therefore not possible. Complex systems consist of a number of interacting elements that are subject to change over time; each element’s future action may be modified accordingly to adapt to evolved/evolving changes; interactions between elements lead to the emergence of unpredictable phenomena.

Along with the development of complexity theory, chaos theorists have shown that tiny changes in crucial parameters can lead to dramatic consequences, known as the “Butterfly Effect – the notion that a butterfly stirring the air today in Peking can transform storms systems next month in New York” (Gleick, 1988, p. 8). This means “a small and imperceptible disturbance could lead the system in one direction rather than another” (Hodgson, 2000, p. 70). Chaos theory rejects the common sense notion that only significant cause can produce large changes in effect.

With respect to this research, my interpretation of the data was assisted when I kept complexity theory in mind. Perceived influences including ongoing influences on teachers are consequences of teachers’ interactions with internal and external conditions as well as interactions of multiplicities of influences with one another. None

of the particular elements within the systems represents a stable contributing or decisive factor. A minor influence in one case might lead to major outcomes across the entire system in another. Similarly, within one case, an initial happening which the teacher was less aware of at the time might be recalled and have significant impact at a later stage. Conversely, an imperative element in one person's systems may have negligible impact in another's'.

While unpredictability is acknowledged, systems are not complete 'anarchic randomness' but there is an 'orderly disorder' present (Urry, 2005, p. 8). Instead of focusing largely on disorder and chaos, complexity theorists also stress the emergence of 'order out of chaos' and the sustained behaviour of complex systems 'at the edge of chaos' (Cohen & Stewart, 1994, as cited in Hodgson, 2000, p. 71). For example, while emphasizing the nature of strong interactions occurring between the parts of systems, Urry also recognises the frequent absence of a central hierarchical structure that 'governs' and produces outcomes. An overall pattern that may persist can be discerned through engaged investigation and insightful delineation. In this sense, knowing any system, to a certain extent, is possible.

Though it is theoretically possible, we have to acknowledge that our knowledge of any complex phenomena will always be limited. We cannot make complete, absolute or final claims about complex systems (Cilliers, 2005). When we face opposite tendencies between the increase of complexity and its reduction, we need to simplify a highly complex system by choosing a few relevant variables and then investigating within and between them (Capra, 2000; Hodgson, 2000; Nowotny, 2005). These insights had important implications for my research when understanding and presenting a rich set of data. Two cases and one aspect of influence were selected for closer investigation. From the perspective of understanding a complex system, this decision did not mean that other aspects were not equally important, though some aspects were inevitably left out of consideration. The parts which were left out may interact with the rest of the system in a non-linear way and we can therefore not predict what the effects can be.

Complexity served as another, or rather a complementary, view, along with my constructivist stance. By connecting complexity theory with the data of the

phenomena under investigation, I became critically reflective of the assumptions I was holding and frames of reference of others (objective reframing) and of myself (subject reframing), as described by Mezirow (1997):

A significant personal transformation involving subjective reframing, that is, transforming one's own frame of reference, often occurs in response to a disorienting dilemma through a three part process: critical reflection on one's assumptions, discourse to validate the critically reflective insight, and action. The action depends upon the nature of the dilemma ... The outcome often involves a reintegration. (p. 60)

Rigour considerations

The research process was reflexive and integrative (Koch & Harrington, 1998). The decisions made within a research project, including the construction of the text and arguments, reflect the researcher's values, histories and interests (Crotty, 1998). A reflexive journal was kept to record my observations and reflections on the research process (Cho & Trent, 2006; Lobo & Vizcaaino, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Moore & Kuol, 2007). When the decisions of the researcher are explicitly stated, transparency of the process is achieved; the auditability of the research is raised (Cole & Knowles, 2000; Finlay, 2002; Mauthner & Coucet, 2003).

Triangulation is described as confirmation that is commonly sought through multiple methods of investigation so that different sources of information provide support for the findings and observed relationships (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In this study, in order to produce a more thorough and rigorous piece of research, interview, stimulated recall and documentary analysis research methods were used in conjunction for data collection. Data collected in the interviews were related to the accounts and explanations offered through the stimulated recall process; the latter in turn was raised in interviews; documentary analysis provided background information for influences on teaching ideas and practices. Considering different viewpoints and obtaining data from several sources provided a better understanding of the influences on university teachers revealed by their perceptions and experiences of teaching. Therefore, consistent attention was paid to triangulation to enable me to remain confident that findings reported were consistently valid and reliable, and to ensure the

research met the criterion of trustworthiness used to judge goodness in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As a researcher, I always keep in mind that my research endeavours need to be trustworthy and have rigour, meeting standards that have been set. I tested out my thinking by engaging in conversation with participants, colleagues, supervisors, academics and wider communities. The trustworthiness of this research project can be seen in how transparently the process has been laid open for consideration and public scrutiny. The feedback of others showed me that I was researching and approaching understanding in a way shared by at least a group of people with an interest in the area though this neither suggested that this was the only appropriate approach nor that I gained complete understanding of the phenomena under investigation.

Data and findings

The gradual building of a picture for each participating teacher through collecting data from diverse sources culminated in the development of two broad themes: personal historical factors, and contextual influences and associated responses. The total amount of data collected presented a considerable problem for the data analysis phase. The initial identification of details brought more complexities into play, and the range of data and interpretive commentary made its presentation challenging. Although theoretically it was possible to engage in a highly systematic procedure with each case for an in-depth understanding, in reality I encountered too many practical problems, particularly in the amount of time involved. It soon became apparent, that the time required for a more fine-grained analysis, further interpretation, and the preparation of a doctoral thesis, would be considerably longer than had been originally estimated. The timeframe for doctoral research impeded a more comprehensive presentation of data description, analysis and interpretation. As a consequence, with the intention of not compromising breadth and depth, I adopted a selective approach to the presentation of cases.

My selection was made with the following criteria in mind: a) the extent to which the particular case answered the research questions; and b) the extent to which its characteristics had been widely shared by all participants.

Thus I selected two cases to highlight the wide range of potential influences on teachers and their idiosyncratic responses to those influences, contrasts between teachers in relation to these aspects, and specific features of the data analysis methods. I aimed to give a compelling representation of the vast range of individual experiences and complexity of influences without generalising about the connection between influential happenings and individual characteristics.

The two cases are presented in Chapter 4. I presented key findings across cases in Chapter 5 (historical personal factors) and Chapter 6 (contextual influences), to demonstrate the variations in influences across participating university teachers.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined my philosophical foundations, theoretical perspectives and guiding principles in doing this research. I also provided rationales for my choice of specific methodologies and methods, and discussed related issues including the process of transcription, research ethics and rigour. Finally, I outlined the structure adopted for presenting findings, which provides the rationale for the three illustrative chapters that follow. The next chapter turns to the case studies of two selected participants.

Chapter 4 Presentation of Two Cases

The first case, D1, was selected on the basis of the impression formed during data collection and analysis, that some features of D1's thoughts and consequent actions provided a contrast to those reported for teachers in other studies (e.g. Bourgeois & Nizet, 1993; Carr, Hamilton & Meade, 2005; Colbeck & Wharton-Michael, 2006; Cranton & Carusetta, 2002; Green, 2005; Hardré & Sullivan, 2008; Major & Palmer, 2006; Richardson & Watt, 2006) as well as those of many participants in this study, for example, D1 showed significant influence of explicit commitment to particular philosophical and sociological ideologies. In addition, based on the high level of rapport established with D1, the data I gathered was straightforward and more complete, as became evident in the analysis.

The subsequent case, J3, was chosen on the basis of its apparent degree of dissimilarity with D1. After the case of D1 had been closely analysed, I was starting to form tentative hunches arising out of the phenomena described by one particular teacher. These hunches needed to be tested and challenged through a serial comparison with someone who at least seemed to be very contrastive in some features. While acknowledging each participant in this study was different, the case of J3 appeared to incorporate additional features with respect to influences, which were not apparent in D1's case; in particular, different types of responses to influences were evident. Thus, the case of J3 was likely to disconfirm, which in turn would indicate individual differences among all participants and extend insights into the findings.

Data

Three verbatim (two for D1 and one for J3) transcribed interviews were the primary data source. The two interviews with D1 were conducted before the one with J3. I interviewed J3 once only because I preferred to stay with the responses she spontaneously offered, which I viewed as the most salient to the interview questions at the time of interview. I sent interview transcripts back to both offering them opportunities to remove, change or add thoughts and ideas. Both clarified some points

in the transcripts and suggested ethical issues for me to consider; no major changes were made.

Other forms of data were also compiled. For D1, this included his Master's and doctoral theses, course materials, conference presentations, journal articles, web profile, and classroom observation. For J3, this included her doctoral thesis, my record of our conversations while attending the same workshops, student feedback and course evaluation results. Drawing on this data I compiled a profile for D1 and vignettes for both. I aimed to "find and display coherence in the constitutive events of a participant's experience, to share the coherence the participant has expressed, and to link the individual's experience to the social and organizational context within which he or she operates" (Seidman, 2006, p. 120). I hoped that they would provide insights into the complexities of what was being studied in a compelling and believable way. The vignettes for both D1 and J3 in this chapter and the more extensive profile for D1 (Appendix 4) in particular, were crafted and presented with these aims.

The case of D1

The participant started working at the University in 2002 as a senior lecturer in a medium sized school. He had had 30 years of teaching experience, in primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities in New Zealand. His first teaching position was in a primary school, and then he became head of a department at a coeducational high school. He was then employed as a lecturer in pre-service education in a college of education. After that he worked in a teaching and leadership position in a newly established private organization which sought to provide educational services from a Christian viewpoint. He was extensively involved in curriculum development at course and programme levels and subsequently became Chief Executive Officer of the organization. After eight years in the leadership role, he resigned to take care of his mother until 2002 when he was employed by the University. In his last position, he was a founding and executive member of the Teacher Education Forum Aotearoa New Zealand (TEFANZ), which gathered together providers of teacher education to advocate politically for quality degree-based teacher education.

D1 arrived at the University when the school was very new and programmes were under development. His responsibilities included writing and teaching papers for

postgraduate studies, coordinating and teaching courses of a professional study programme, and supervising. D1 was also voluntarily involved in the school research committee. He was nearing the end of his doctoral study, which focused on the teacher-student relationship, when interviews were conducted.

D1 believed that teaching is a serious business that involves the formation of character. His aspiration was *“to be a ‘fully-presenced’ educator who influences others towards relational education”*. He would continue to advocate and model:

- The experiential and relational ‘essence’ of teaching and learning
- A ‘critical’ perspective which supports the centrality of the teacher-student relationship
- Educational experiences which are relevant, meaningful, emancipatory and holistic
- Professional practice which shows education as dynamic, embodied and ‘in-play’
- Leadership that attends to the ‘lived’ techné and phronesis of each moment as this influences the relational culture of educational organisations.

Findings

The data revealed a wide range of influences in relation to D1’s thoughts about education, conceptions of teaching, and his teaching practice. My analysis broadly categorised them as either a) personal factors, or b) contextual influences. This broad distinction between historical and current personal life influences and contextual teaching-related influences moved away from the framework suggested by Fanghanel (2007), which mainly focused on contextual filters. Each factor within and between the two broad categories was experienced and perceived as being influential on D1’s teaching. They interacted with one another and impacted in complex ways: for example, influences earlier in D1’s life appeared to have continuing impact; influences out of his teaching life seemed to have concurrent significance; influences in particular contexts tended to have more or less impact at particular moments of time; and some influences changed over time.

My challenge was how to provide a holistic representation of my data while acknowledging this complexity. Given the research questions aimed to identify influences, describe possible experiences in relation to those influences, and outline some ways in which teachers responded, there were three broad categories of data: a)

what were the factors that D1 perceived to be influential? b) how did he experience, think and feel about those influences? and c) how did he respond to those experiences? I present the findings from these three perspectives in turn, then some summary features of D1 are described.

Personal factors

Personal factors included: family upbringing, parenting own children, teaching experience, learning experiences, subject interest, and everyday out-of-teaching life.

Family

D1 grew up in a Christian family whose beliefs were a significant influence on his life as a parent, a teacher, a teacher educator, and a lecturer. He believed that people are created in the image of God and that the world is connected through being the Creator's creation. Relationship shows the connectedness of the planet; people are unique individuals and are worthy of respect. D1 also believed that people are created with the ability to be creative, which allows them to think new thoughts in the reflective process. He considered himself called to teach: *"that's a very responsible calling, in a sense of my character, who I am, and pattern of my life, is turned towards people, and their development and their growth"*. He believed that education is about the community and *"one of the great outcomes of education is formation of character, about who they are"*. For D1, teaching was about conversation and relationship with students.

Children's education

As a parent, D1 saw parents as a child's first teachers, and the role of the school was to support parents in their educational endeavours. Thus he enrolled his children in a school that with a special character that supported his values. From his children's learning experience and parent-teacher interviews, he found teachers who really connected with his son. But he also found teachers who just didn't seem to recognise the uniqueness of the individual he knew: *"hold on, if teaching is about person, how come these teachers don't recognise who my son is?"* His conversations with his children about, and his observation of, their learning experiences revealed his concerns about the importance of the personal touch in teaching.

Teaching experience

D1 said he was influenced by his own experience as a teacher in non-university context. His early teaching experiences at low socio-economic schools made him reflect on the goal of education and teachers' influence in students' lives. His first teaching position was in a primary school. He chose to live nearby, felt for the students he was teaching "*poor and lovely*", and realised that students were more important than the educational content, and product "*because I was sensitised about their families and who they are as people*". He followed the students into high school in the same neighbourhood, feeling privileged to be with his students in a big part of their lives. He realised that he was influenced by the students and also that in his role as a teacher; he influenced students "*more than I teach them stuff*". In addition, his observation of and interaction with colleagues were influential. For example, he sat in on the class of a colleague for a year and learned much about how to provoke student thinking. In contrast, some colleagues' practice confirmed for him that was not what he wanted to be like. As he recalled:

One of the most negative experiences was in a single-sex high school, teaching mathematics. My boss told students they were not allowed to talk, weren't allowed to move around the room. I saw that pain, I felt it wasn't education, it was abuse. So I vowed to myself, I never wanted to be a teacher like that, a teacher who couldn't have voices of students.

In his subsequent teaching positions, D1 was involved in rewriting intended learning experiences to make them more meaningful with supporting tools. He became increasingly aware of the opportunities teachers had to construct influential teaching-learning experiences for students. During his time in pre-service teacher education programmes, D1 found that the importance of teacher education programmes in the preparation of beginning teachers was increasingly apparent.

Learning experience and subject matter interests

Teachers in D1's undergraduate study appeared to be influential. D1 went to teachers college when he left school. When he talked about teachers he really respected, he said it was not just their practice but they as people that they influenced him, through their beliefs, values, and some of their ideas. He then realised how value-laden teaching practice really was. D1 recalled his interactions with one teacher, over 30

years ago, which showed the teacher's caring and humanistic concern. The teacher was described as *"being alive in his teaching, interacting with us as if he was personally interested with us"*. D1 felt this teacher could sensitively read him as an individual in his presence. This teacher's action caught D1's attention, and the relationship influenced his decision to embark on a teaching career.

D1's postgraduate studies were seen to be influential on his teaching. D1 became interested in educational philosophy and educational sociology during his Masters degree. His supervisors and people he worked with opened up his thoughts from different sociological and philosophical perspectives. He had maintained ongoing connection with them and viewed them as part of his educational and life experience. A recent meeting with past supervisors and others in their community at a conference confirmed him in his educational beliefs and assured him that *"a great proportion of adult educators in New Zealand share my ideas"*.

D1 acknowledged that his doctoral study on the lived experiences of teaching and learning made him much more aware of teacher-student relationships than ever before: *"I have been shocked about the nature of a really good teacher-student relationship and I have been shocked about teacher-student relationships that are very dysfunctional, even awful"*. He became sensitised to how people experience these relationships, how students' experiences as well as his own were taking a place in his teaching. He often taught out of some of the stories of experiences related in his PhD.

Rewards from past students

The rewards D1 received from his continuing connections with former students encouraged him to teach in the way he valued. He had seen changes happening in his students' lives through his teaching. He described a recent meeting with one student:

I had a BBQ with a student I had taught in a Year 5 class in 1983. Over the course of the evening and the many stories that were recalled about particular classroom experiences, I was reminded of the transformative power of education which can 'enable' our students, and teaching as a serious relational business was put into a person's history and can never be taken out. Surely, this is what sustains us as teachers!

Out-of-teaching life

Out-of-teaching life impacted D1's teaching practice as much as anything else. For example, the recent passing of his mother and sister made him more sensitive to others and reminded him what was important in life:

I got less worried about whether a student needs an extension on an assignment. My question is why do they need an extension, what's happening in their lives ... When a student comes along and says 'my uncle passed away', I feel deeply for them because I know what it feels like. When a student says 'look my child kept me awake last night', well I think 'I've got five kids I know what that feels like'. Or 'I've had a terrible night', 'I'm under a lot of pressure', or 'I'm not a fast reader', 'I've failed a paper', I know what that's like.

While D1 could empathise with students from his own experiences and tried to understand the influences on student learning, he admitted that he might teach or had taught unsatisfactorily if he was personally distracted:

When I have a very happy home I think a lot more deeply about my teaching. When my children are upset or going through issues, my mind and my heart is partly with them and so what I can give to the energy and emotion of teaching is a lot less. Recently we've been contemplating whether we buy a house or not ... I guess the pressure of mortgages and thinking about which house to buy and whether we should buy a house, it distracts me and comes into my teaching. Sometimes I don't give myself fully enough in my teaching because I'm distracted.

Contextual factors

Contextual influences included: national, university and school policies and expectations, heads of school, colleagues, and students.

Policies and expectations

D1 saw alignments between national, institutional, and school policies and expectations, because *"there were a lot of managers and people trying to put systems in place for accountability and compliance"*. But he was frustrated with the alignment between the organisation and himself because he thought their priorities were more towards management than teaching and learning for students.

Education policy does not reflect a democratic society, [or] the culture and history of New Zealand, and I think completely foreign to it. Under the current policies, there is a divergence between what I value and what the institution is measuring.

He also believed that a lot of people shared his ideas, such as members of the Quality Public Education Coalition (QPEC) which was set up to challenge those policies.

I like to believe that people who work in education are more humane than the policies you have to work under. Teachers are more concerned about students than what policies are saying. Policies are about achievement, efficiency, effectiveness. But I think teachers are more concerned about students, and about what happens in the formation of their lives. I really respected who for me bridged the gap between the needs of the organisation and the needs of students

For example, The Performance-based Research Funding (PBRF) was perceived as having a negative impact. D1 said his values clashed with what he was required to do:

It has caused us to have to value things that before we took for granted as being part of our collegial environment. Before, we would offer consultation, we would care for our colleagues, we would pass around academic papers. Now we have to document some of these things in the name of Peer Esteem and other categories ... I don't want to value those things. The person we're involved with is more important than the numbers that I crunch in the name of a PBRF.

Leaders and programme status

Data indicated the influences at school and programme levels changed over time. These were classified as follows:

At time 1, D1 was supported by the head of school and programme leader. He had the freedom and space to write and teach original courses which reflected his fundamental beliefs.

At time 2, D1's ideas were developed and core values were enhanced through his designing and teaching practices at the early stage of postgraduate programmes.

At time 3, when student numbers increased and the programme came into operation, D1 felt his flexibility was lessened and his creativity stifled. Constraints were perceived.

At time 4, when the people in leadership roles changed, new policies were implemented, constraints increased and clashes of values were observed.

At time 5, D1 would not compromise his beliefs, values and integrity as a teacher. While he tried to influence the context and people in it, data indicated that if D1 felt he could not find a fit, he probably would consider moving on.

Thus, as time went on, people changed, as did the programme's developmental status, so changes in D1's experiences of teaching were likely to follow.

The change of leaders: The initial head of the school knew D1 for a long time and trusted him to develop and create top quality courses: *"He just gave me the space and freedom to teach and write courses which reflect my deepest beliefs and values"*. He valued this sort of leadership encouragement, however his experience at the University wasn't always like that:

There have been leaders who value more holistic forms of education. They have kept me safe in my job, because they share my values. Then when I have a leader who is primarily concerned about compliance, not about me as a person, then I ran into problems... there was a time when the Vice Chancellor spoke the language that I really appreciated, [and] the head of the school had the encouragement and information to affirm my creativity. [Then] the Vice Chancellor changed, the faculty head and the head of school changed. Changing people brought in, for me, a great concern about management. And that lined up how they thought about education, increasingly caused a gap between me and the institution. I increasingly felt what I did was at odds with some of those in leadership. My freedom of speech ... my attitude was questioned.

The development of programme: When D1 joined the University in 2002, the school and its postgraduate programme were very new. Few people were teaching at postgraduate level, and he was only the second supervisor in the school. He felt a lot of freedom in teaching. As the system slowly came into place and more teachers came, particularly those who had been teaching at the University for a long period, D1 felt the flexibility he had was lessened

It is more likely that the larger the numbers, the more constraints the courses are under. I wonder whether the creativity get stifled a little bit.

Colleagues

D1 described many of his colleagues as *"genuine educators, people of like minds who are concerned about education"*. They talked about the *"bigger ideas"* and looking into the same phenomena from different perspectives. He acknowledged that *"they have been very important to my encouragement and for me to cheer them on"*. In particular, D1 was empowered and encouraged by his colleagues in the school research committee trying to build a sense of community, to influence the collegial relationships and thus the culture that existed in the school.

Student characteristics

D1 described what he perceived as a variety of student characteristics in the school. How well students would cope with dialogue appeared to be one of D1's concerns. He said his teaching did change, and *"the biggest shift would be the difference between a first year undergraduate student and all the other students I teach"*.

If you're in the third year of an undergraduate programme there are similarities in the way I would teach them to postgraduate. Even in a second year of an undergraduate programme there are still similarities. The levels of dialogue, the philosophy, the sociology are really important but I find the greatest challenge is first year [undergraduate] students.

In discussing why he taught them differently, D1 made the following tentative explanations:

Some of them bring school practices with them and school ways of thinking and learning, they just want to know what the assessment is and when is it going to happen... they haven't really thought about their own life experiences so it's hard to take them into the deep importance of education...I wonder whether the reason why I like teaching second years, third years and postgraduate is that if they've been teachers they've now been on practicum, they know what it looks like and they've started to think about who they are as a teacher ... We can get into some of the bigger ideas, they've done the shift from just having 'oh let's go teaching, good idea' to 'I really want to be a teacher'.

He argued that, for critical conversation to occur, students' understanding of the course/ideas needs to reach a certain level for them to *"handle some of the more difficult questions"*.

Student written feedback

D1 was analytical of student feedback. He understood that *"adult teaching can go a long time before people stop and say hey thank you"*. He also felt that his teaching was not fairly evaluated.

It might be argued that it underpins the curriculum but most often what students are expecting ... is the teaching practice but what they go away with is the teaching practice plus the bigger philosophies and sociologies that are behind the practice so they get both but they're only typically assessed on teaching practice.

He invested an *"enormous amount of time and energy in teaching"* and this influenced his response to student feedback.

I am physically drained and emotionally exhausted by the end of a course and the end of a term and it's always been like that. Teaching for me is not something out of my head and

so when I get criticism I prefer criticism which is very carefully worded where somebody is appreciating the relationship and is working towards refining my practice for the benefit of all, rather than someone who just talks about the readings or the assessment or something else.

Student classroom performance

D1 sought student feedback from a range of sources, including what happened in the class when he was interacting with students, and through their assignments:

[In the classroom] they gave me feedback, their body language, I see their enthusiasm, their excitement, I see them chewing on things we have been talking about ... how they write their assignments, suddenly their written work starts with big ideas and links them down to practice. It's something you see, you hear, and you sense when students are really on to it because the way they talk, [and] the questions they ask are different.

He also noticed and accepted that some students did not want to think and learn in the way he practised:

There are students that don't want to think like that and I have to accept that they're there to pass courses and they've paid for it, okay fair enough I can't change that. I will try my hardest to motivate them but if they are not hooked in, well I can only do so much.

Subject matter interests

D1 acknowledged that one of the influences on teaching was his interest in topics. In most of his courses, he tried to find ways of hooking students into the sociological and philosophical issues underpinning the course content; he tried to make the content problematic and attune students into real issues by linking into a bigger picture of what education was about. However, his personal interest needed space to be exercised and developed. He had had opportunities to develop original courses and teach programmes which reflected his interest in philosophical and sociological issues in education. But there were also occasions when he had to teach courses that he had less interest in. In these cases, D1 tried to make a link between the curriculum and his own interests.

Consequential actions and responses

At the time of the interviews with D1, University and school-level policy appeared to be inconsistent with what D1 thought it should be. Though there were values clashes, D1 did not lose sight of why he was there. His own fundamental beliefs and

assumptions were not disturbed, his integrity as a teacher was maintained. As influences changed over time, his experiences of influences and responses changed. The following responses were identified in data.

In response to the national policy on PBRF, D1 said *"I won't play the game"*.

We have a clash of values. What I value in a humane and critical education is not counting of numbers. I don't see that the PBRF ends up with a solution that measures the quality of teaching and research ... it's a mechanism for the distribution of funds rather than the enhancement of educational research and so I'm disappointed and I won't play the game.

In response to the divergence between what he valued and what the institution was measuring, D1 said *"I won't compromise my integrity"*. He also indicated that if his satisfaction could not be maintained, if he was increasingly frustrated in finding a fit, he would consider looking for an alternative position or career.

My students' achievements need to speak more strongly for me than any evaluation of my teaching practice. My integrity is my students come first. My integrity as a teacher gets best part of me. If progressively I don't fit with what the institution values, then I guess I have to move on.

It appeared that D1 would hold onto his beliefs about education, maintain his integrity, and aspire to be a "fully-presenced" educator, though there were constraints of policies and divergence between personal and external values. He saw his classroom teaching role as giving him opportunities to exercise his beliefs and values. One of the strategies he adopted was *"closing the door"*:

Even if there are constraints from above, when I close the door of the classroom, all of a sudden, it becomes me and students.

For D1, closing the door, he didn't just close students into the classroom, he also closed the world out of it:

I am going into a classroom to trust my instincts and believe that in the experience of working with students, creativity ... new thinking ... will occur. I believe that takes place in classrooms. When you close the door with a group of students and you look into their eyes ... I feel responsible to be creative, to be someone who is feeling ... sensitive ... trusts my hunches, provokes thinking, who asks questions that I don't know the answers to...

Though his core beliefs remained unchallenged, his teaching practice was influenced in particular circumstances. For example, based on his valuing of creativity and dialogue about ideas, he prepared and taught the course in an integrated way:

I give a lot of time to think about the lesson, for it to slowly sink into me, and for key ideas to emerge. I don't go into a classroom with certain objectives in mind. I am expecting in the classroom to be having conversations that are absolutely original about those ideas that I am taking along. I don't have the last word. My lesson plan doesn't have the last word either though I plan meticulously. I am trying to find a way into my students' thinking, to open up the topic, and leave them to the topic, leave them to me – we think together, we think more deeply.

In response to the school requirement for him to teach a course of less personal interest to him, D1 believed there was not one way only of teaching the paper. He reorganised the course to link it to his interest in philosophical and sociological issues in education.

I would present the content which they have to know but do it in a way where I'm able to talk about sociology, philosophy and keep it problematic. What I'm looking for is those bigger ideas that are more interesting for me when the content isn't so interesting.

As a consequence of particular events in his out-of-teaching life, D1's teaching practice was significantly influenced, although he was not satisfied with himself *"if I taught in a way that was giving information"*.

I might find that the personal pressures are too great on me and I don't have the energy for dialogue, [and] interaction. When I am personally distracted then I might teach that way. I don't give myself fully enough in my teaching because I'm distracted. You start to get in a rush.

In responding to student written feedback, he seriously considered what students said. He was encouraged by the positive comments but tended not to easily adjust his practice to meet all the criticisms.

I weigh up what they're saying but I don't see myself as having to meet all the things that they raise. I'm not answerable to my students in the first instance ... I'm answerable to myself as a teacher, and according to the things I value ... If what they're saying to me is very insightful and I have a blind spot and they're showing me that, great - I thank them for it. If what they're telling me is that ... I'm causing them to think, well, I'm not going to change, I celebrate that.

As a consequence of the perceived characteristics of first year students, he acknowledged that his teaching for them was a bit different:

I don't really want to confess to it but it just seems to me that in first year teaching there's a little bit more entertainment that you've got to provide which doesn't have to happen later on. A bit more extrinsic would be a better word for it.

Proactive responses

While contextual influences were obvious, D1 was not a passive receiver of them. He worked from his fundamental beliefs and exercised his personal power to influence the courses he developed and taught, his colleagues and students, and the culture of the school. For example, as one of the co-authors of a Masters programme, he was determined to put into it a particular essence of his expertise. His initiatives were put forward and his colleagues agreed:

We fought very hard to make this degree about leadership, not about management ... slowly people come around to say we had a unique contribution in leadership.

Another example was D1's work with his colleagues in the school research committee which was formed voluntarily. They introduced many initiatives such as an annual conference and a monthly research newsletter. As D1 said, *"we are not going to wait for the infrastructure. We're going to put in place certain elements of a culture that's proactive"*.

Features of D1

D1's fundamental beliefs concerning education and teaching remained stable and appeared to have an enduring impact on his teaching practice. Various contextual influences appeared to be either changeable (e.g. programme development and leaders), or relatively stable (e.g. colleagues, students' traits), or fluctuated moment by moment (e.g. student classroom performance). These interacted with personal influences in complex ways. In the midst of various contextual influences, D1 held to his core beliefs and maintained his integrity as a teacher. When there was congruence, he utilised opportunities to work in line with his personal views; but he adopted different teaching strategies in responding to incongruence between his personal values and external powers. At the same time, D1 did not passively react to contextual constraints. While keeping his personal values unchanged, he also worked proactively to influence people and structures. However, his everyday life seemed to have concurrent influences: some events had enduring impact on his attitudes and feelings towards students, while other distractions have had significant and immediate impact on his teaching practice, though this might be temporary.

Though beliefs were fundamental, D1's teaching practice was context determined with contextualised approaches. The threshold of D1's tolerance of influence from people with contrasting values and beliefs was obvious in the data. He did not expect recognition from those with different views. However, the discrepancy between what D1 expected and the reality of teaching seemed to disturb his internal-external balance. When inconsistent elements accumulated and reached a certain level, when he continually felt he could not fit in, he would probably choose to leave and find an alternative career or position where his beliefs could be practised.

The case of J3

J3 was selected as the second participant for intensive study on the basis of two criteria:

1. J3 was a novice casual teacher on contract rather than an experienced tenured teacher like D1; and
2. Data indicated that there were a number of features of J3's perceptions and experiences of influences on teaching that were significantly different from those associated with D1's case.

The format of the presentation of this case employs the structure that was used in D1's case. Thus, following a brief portrait of J3, I present data concerning J3's experiences in relation to influences, categorised into personal and contextual influences with reference to thoughts and feelings J3 appeared to have about particular influences. Then I reviewed responses J3 made given such thoughts and feelings.

J3 was in her fifth year of a contract teaching position in the University. She usually taught streams or ran tutorials for students in their early years of degree study. She had taught in three different schools in a range of disciplines - politics, sociology, management, marketing. J3 classified herself as like quite a junior lecturer.

J3 started her teaching career at the language school run by her martial arts instructor. She taught English to international students for three years there, and then started her first contract with one school in the University. The contract was monitored and renewed every six months. J3 said she was "*about to become permanent*", and she was focusing her doctoral research on student learning.

J3 had been doing martial arts for 15 years. Her martial arts *sensei* and his ideas about teaching and learning impressed and continued to influence J3. She believed that good classroom management was important for her teaching and student learning. She also held the view that *“you don’t really start learning any subject till you start teaching it”*. She adopted different strategies for the students and refined them as she taught students at different stages. J3 endeavoured to help students with their learning and bring out the best in them.

Personal factors

Martial arts instructor

J3’s accounts indicated that she was significantly influenced by one person - her martial arts instructor:

I’m still very influenced by my martial arts instructor ... I always follow his philosophy of teaching ... He’s all about creating unique individuals in his martial arts, and not everybody can say that. He likes people to have good structures to how they do their different techniques, but he wants them to be unique and so perfect for themselves.

Her teaching ideas and approaches were also significantly influenced:

He will take into account what you're like ... what your opponent is like and there’ll be a perfect blend. I’m always trying with my students for a perfect blend.

J3 applied this martial arts model in her teaching when she began to see that students weren’t safe in class, that is, they didn’t respect each other. While acknowledging that *“we all have different understandings of what we are teaching”*, J3 learned from her martial arts experience that:

...good teaching is primarily about good classroom management. Unless you have [that], all the other things fall away. I learned that the hard way.

She conveyed the idea that *“there will be one person in control [in the classroom] and that’s me. There is a very clear idea that I am running it, not them [students]”*.

The influence of the martial arts instructor tended to extend to J3’s perception of pedagogical literature, which she saw as *“evangelical ... it doesn’t bear much resemblance to my classroom [or] to my martial arts sensei who has been teaching for 40 years now”*. J3 admitted that her instructor is *“probably very evangelical too, but it’s*

okay because I like his ideas". In addition, J3's experiences showed "that if people impress you when you are young ... it tends to continue to impress you".

Doctoral study

J3's doctoral study focused on student learning experiences, which she saw as relevant and beneficial to teaching:

Well they've given me a lot of knowledge when I work with different cultural groups, different ethnic groups particularly. So that's always helpful.

Employment status

Being a temporary staff member, J3 had to have her contract renewed every six months. Her employment status appeared to be her primary concern and had a significant influence on her teaching actions and responding strategies. For example, though her doctoral study was helpful, she chose not to use her expertise in that particular research area at this stage:

I don't very often get to actually teach this stuff in my PHD. I expect I might do more later, but to be perfectly honest, it's really unlikely because I'm a junior lecturer so I will just go where they want me to go right now.

On the other hand, the fact that J3 was not a full member of the faculty meant that she provided other perspectives on teaching:

When you are a contractor, you come in from the outside and you have fresh eyes and you see things very clearly that some of the staff who have been there a long time don't see, and those ideas are very important.

Teaching experience

J3's experience of teaching English at language school and her previous years of teaching at the University contributed to her current awareness of students' needs and the strategies she adopted. For example:

Because I've taught for a long time at the lower levels, I'm very aware of students with language difficulties or differences, various barriers [or] different kinds of learning styles. So I like them to have information that comes in written form that they can read and take away and consider. As I speak there's slides up behind me saying similar things but not exactly the same. So I like to have the double information coming in ... I make sure it comes multi model.

Contextual factors

Mixed messages in school

There was no evidence in the data showing J3's concern about issues outside the schools in which she was teaching. But she was aware of mixed messages from colleagues:

One person will say 'do it this way' and another person will say 'yes, yes, but I think you should do it that way', and they're very convincing, and sometimes you just ... because you'd always have some political agenda.

Teaching assignments

J3 was asked to teach streams or run tutorials. She was required to follow materials and outlines created by other lecturers. She mainly taught *"in the order [and] in the way that they ask me to do it"*. As teaching guidelines were given by other lecturers, the content was determined by and aligned with those lecturers' teaching. One extreme case was illustrated:

They wanted us not to change anything and the course was absolute chaos. I wanted to change things but the rules were very strict [so] I presented it exactly as I was asked to, and I've never had so much trouble from the students as I did in that course.

J3 said she noticed that *"things were missing"* from the first day she began teaching. Some of the course materials and the lecturer's approaches to teaching and student learning were inappropriate. It was difficult and painful for J3 because students were uncomfortable and *"their rights were breached"*. Though she could not do much about it, *"where there is a room"*, she tried to *"shuffle the material around until I think it's going to work"*. The changes that J3 made were minor but represented her best efforts in her situation.

She had taught a range of courses in three different schools. Her interest in the topics was developed throughout the process of preparing and teaching varied courses:

You get different understanding ... from the first time you teach a course and when you complete your teaching, your understanding of the subject changes ... you don't really start learning any subject till you start teaching it ... something you have learned refines the course ... Knowledge is constantly changing so the ways people think about things change anyway ... I think that anybody who is passionately interested in learning should do teaching because that's the way to truly understanding anything.

Colleagues

J3 sought advice from her colleagues when she encountered difficulties:

There's a lot of things that are really very hard and I don't figure out how to teach them, I do a lot of consulting and I ask other people how they've done it and what they think, and we sort of try and figure things out together

But the interaction was limited to discussion of 'technical stuff':

I don't think we actually share our philosophies too much. We are a bit careful. I don't mind so much what my colleagues think because I am not teaching them. If they have something they want to tell me, that's cool. I have asked them more technical stuff, how do you do this, but how we manage our self, that's up to us surely.

Student characteristics

J3 described students in the three schools she taught in as 'mild', 'cheeky', and 'self-assured' and explained how these traits influenced her teaching:

In the A school, the students are or have been more mild. They were more obedient ... When I taught in B school, the students are more cheeky ... they were very much like ... energetic high school students in the sports team ... I now mostly teach here and it is very different students – the C school students. They're very self assured and you have to deal with them perhaps being more self assured than I am. They assess whether or not they're going to accept what you have to say. When they think that something is wrong, they will almost certainly go to somebody higher up to complain because they understand the structure very well. They're very clear about what is best for them and they want to get their money's worth.

Different strategies were adopted for students from different schools, from 'being a big sister' to being more professional and 'sophisticated':

I have a very different strategy for the students here than I have in School A or B [where] I was like a great big sister and we'd play ball together. We'd talk about things and they'd be really ... cheeky, and [we'd] laugh. In School C, I have to be more sophisticated and more professional and careful. I can still make jokes ... but nonetheless there has to be a very clear sense of professionalism or they can't respect me.

Student feedback

J3 showed a clear concern that the satisfaction of students should be specified. This was particularly evident in her account of student feedback. She expressed her 'fear' of the uncertainty that followed from her situation. She was quite *"scared of the students not being satisfied"*. She considered that student feedback was imperative, and paid

more attention to what students said for her renewal of contract and long-term tenure plan. She felt that it would reflect on her personally if some students decided not to continue in the major she was teaching, and that might end up getting her into trouble.

[I am] more worried about the students because getting good student reports means that I can get more contracts ... it's very, very important for me to be good at my job.

J3 also indicated she learned about student learning from their assignments, because *"the students all have different takes on things. Students wrote essays that gave J3 opportunities to "get ideas about how things might be seen from their viewpoint", which offers "another way of thinking about things"*.

Consequential actions and responses

With respect to the teaching material prescribed by others, J3 said *"I didn't like it but I did what I was told"*. If there were mixed messages in the school, J3 tended to follow the advice of the head of the school:

The only thing that you can do [is] to go with the highest authority because maybe I didn't want a favour from the head of school.

When J3 had fresh insights into the teaching practice and understood about how to improve the courses, she tended to keep her ideas secret to protect her job security:

... after you become an experienced contractor, you don't just give those ideas away for free... I don't want to give my ideas to someone who's permanent, who can change the paper and make it better, but I have no job.

But J3 implied she would not always keep innovative ideas as her own property:

I knew I was waiting and you buy and you sell information like you buy and you sell your contract, you know.

When opportunity arose, she put her ideas into action:

I've been a contractor for a long time and I began to realise I was going to stay here in this department ... I finally revealed last semester how much I have learned and there was a big shock and I've made a big change on two or three papers... they went 'ohhh'. And now I have an office, computer. So it matters.

In interaction with colleagues, she was cautious about her impression management:

A lot of the time I don't like to reveal that I don't know what I'm talking about. It's not a good position for a teacher. It's usually easier to sort of half answer things and then I try and figure it out later.

In responding to student feedback, J3 endeavoured to satisfy students by being flexible and accessible. Adjustments and compromises were often made. J3 recalled one occasion:

... one person in one class said that I didn't come to classes with all my material prepared. And so the next semester I made a real effort to try to prepare all my material in advance ... then one of them said I was often late which was strange because I'd only been late once, but I really worked on timing for the next semester. I was really clear about the time, and they still complained that I was late, and I was really puzzled by that. Then I realised what actually made the difference was that I made a big performance about them being late ... When I stopped making a big deal about them being late, now upon occasion if I turn up late, it doesn't usually end up in the feedback form.

In J3's case, the influence of her martial arts instructor seemed to be significant and had enduring impact on her teaching ideas and practice. Her employment status appeared to be the primary concern in her decision-making about sharing innovative ideas, making adjustments in response to student feedback, and in interaction with colleagues. Among the contextual influences, student evaluations of her courses tended to have the most immediate impact on J3's teaching practice, given its significant role in maintaining her employment contract.

Contrasts between the two cases

One of the contrasting ideas lay in the understanding of theories in their teaching. For D1, theory was seen as a body of knowledge to be understood and applied to teaching approaches combined with sociological and philosophical ideas. Students were introduced to conceptual material leading them to engage in more philosophical, sociological and theoretical debates. For J3, literature on pedagogy did not appear to be more helpful than her classroom practice and her martial arts learning experience. D1's interest in philosophy and sociology appeared to relate closely with his teaching practice; for J3, her interest was unlikely to be considered when she had to follow other's materials and outlines.

It appeared that what was important for J3 was students' understanding of the content and their positive feedback. She was looking for correct interpretation and use of particular tools. At this stage in J3's career, modifying major teaching and learning objectives, which were prescribed by other lecturers, was not possible. It was also

evident that, in those circumstances, challenging students' assumptions, as D1 did, might not be readily considered.

D1's and J3's responses clearly differed in respect to mixed messages they received. While D1 had value clashes with some people in leadership roles and refused to make compromises, in J3's case divergence between her values and others' was avoided by following the highest authority. When there were constraints, D1's ability to derive satisfaction from factors intrinsic to teaching allowed him to remain committed to and essentially satisfied with teaching; in contrast, J3 was controlled by *fear*.

Autonomy in organising teaching materials was contrastive. While D1 was able to organise courses in line with his values and interest, J3 had to accept materials prepared by others and follow their teaching outlines. D1's classroom teaching appeared to be more flexible than that of J3. Although J3 observed that students needed to be assessed in a variety of ways in order to measure what they had learned, the possibility of modifying course structures might not exist.

There was considerable disparity between D1 and J3 when the issue of interaction with colleagues was raised. While D1 found his colleagues were supportive and encouraging, J3 said she had limited communication with colleagues and kept secrets (her own views about teaching) from them.

The perceptions of and responses to student feedback were also aspects in which there were marked differences between D1 and J3. Both teachers gave attention to evaluative criteria for the content of acceptable response that they hoped to elicit from students. They varied, however, in their concern with this element. D1 was more likely to attend to transformation of student thinking rather than to superficial responses limited to the scope of assessment criteria. J3 tended to look for student satisfaction in the course evaluation.

Chapter summary

This chapter has highlighted the idiosyncratic nature of participants in this study and the data derived from them. The data reinforced my view that there was a great deal of complexity to deal with from a research perspective. D1 and J3 had different life experiences in which their understanding of education and teaching developed. Their teaching contexts were not identical, which added to the complexity and the variability

of their perceptions and experiences of teaching. With these differences, even when they encountered similar situations in teaching, such as teaching students at various levels or from different schools, they might analyse the situation in similar ways but ended up with different strategies they perceived appropriate. A range of factors contributed to the formation of D1's and J3's responses, among them D1's life experience and J3's employment status played a part.

This chapter has also highlighted the nature of the data and my analytic-interpretative processes. The structure is followed in data presentation in subsequent chapters: historical and current personal factors in Chapter 5 and contextual influences in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5 Historical and Current Personal Factors

Each of us has a rich and interesting personal history and, whether we are aware of it or not, our histories come with us daily to our professional practice.

(Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 27)

Life experiences and background are obviously key ingredients of the person that we are ... to the degree that we invest our 'self' in our teaching, experience and background therefore shape our practice.

(Goodson, 1991, p. 40)

As stated in Chapter 1, the present study examines the influences experienced and perceived by teachers on their teaching ideas and practices. This chapter is organized in terms of the three specific sub questions posed in Chapter 1.

1. What, and how do, individual/personal factors influence teaching?
2. What are the complexities of possible interactions between the influences?
3. How do teachers respond to different or inconsistent influences?

Given the complex nature of the phenomena as reviewed in Chapter 2 and shown in data, and the participants' uniqueness as illustrated in Chapter 4, it is obvious that these questions need to be answered in an integrated manner. My entry point in this chapter is to examine the role individual life experiences played in the formation of teachers' ideas about teaching and in their conduct of teaching practice. In presenting the major factors that university teachers identify as influencing their teaching thoughts and practice, I acknowledge that participants may recall their past sense-making, may also engage in retrospective sense-making, and that their responses are based on (re)interpretations long after the event, and so must be treated with some caution. But it is worth noting that teachers' responses do highlight critical incidents in their lives and provide an indication of their current thoughts. I also note that the analysis separates the teachers' accounts from them as individuals and from the context in which they were given; I hope I have done their ideas justice. In comparison with the two selected cases in the previous chapter, this chapter incorporates a briefer method of presenting data so does not give a picture of the teachers as presented for

D1 and J3. I aim to provide a good sense of teachers' accounts from the selected quotes and a broader picture of multiple facets of the phenomena.

Data revealed a range of factors in individual teachers' lives that were perceived as being influential. In the interviews participants tended to link many of these, attesting to the multi-faceted nature of perceptions and experiences of influences on their teaching ideas and practice. Indeed, it was difficult to separate the data into distinct categories as a complex interdependence was evident. There was evidence that a) some teachers talked about more specific influences than others did; b) some teachers talked more about one point than others did; c) teachers nested one point in various range of aspects of other sources of influences; and d) rarely did a teacher talk about one influence without mentioning another, or at least aspects of others.

Seven key categories explicitly related to teaching ideas and practices emerged from the data. Again, these were reported most commonly as inextricably linked, rather than as distinct categories, although I present them as the latter to assist reporting.

1. Families as first teachers
2. Learning and research experience
3. Teaching experience
4. Working experience
5. Significant others
6. Personal attributes
7. Cultural background

Data related to all these factors are presented below to provide a snapshot of the entirety of historical and current personal influences. For each category, I describe what the category represents; provide evidence from a sample of transcripts and other sources that illustrate references made by the participating teachers; and offer preliminary interpretive comments. Space precludes the provision of further evidence from the data; it was not feasible to take each one for detailed illustration. So after presenting all these personal influences, I chose one aspect, cultural background, to add further data with intention of illustrating its significance.

Families as First Teachers

Family background was a commonly occurring feature of the accounts. Within their families the subjects cultivated and managed relationships which impacted on their world views, values, character formation, and wider aspects of their personal

development. There were two aspects to family as an influence: the family that included the participant's parents, siblings and extended family members; and the family that the participant was a parent or partner within. In the following part, I differentiate these aspects and provide illustrative data for influences perceived and experienced by participants.

Upbringing

As shown in Chapter 4, D1 attached significance to family. This was also apparent from the accounts of other participants. For example, A1 acknowledged that his confidence in learning and teaching went back to his early years, when he argued with his father, *“who always initiated debates and respected arguing”*. Expectations by A1's parents that he was going to be successful gave him a positive attitude towards trying difficult things. A1 recalled how his confidence was built up when he was a young child, and how that influenced his understanding of student learning.

Knowing that I could actually achieve anything if I really put my mind to it and try it hard enough, I always believe most learners can do that. I think we teach they can't do it too often, instead of teaching them they can. (A1, Male, 60-70 years of age, 20-25 years of tertiary teaching experience)

J2 was the first person in his Māori family to access higher education. His initial motivation came from shouldering the responsibility for passing on cultural heritage and indigenous knowledge to the next generation. In contrast, while N2 was also the first one in the family to go to university, his early career memories and motivations were quite different. He described his decision to be a teacher.

I was the first person in my family to go to university so there were no precedents for that and that meant that there tended not to be any discussion about a university education and I went to teachers college first. I went to teachers college because I wanted to be a teacher. (N2, Male, 50-60 years of age, 20-25 years of tertiary teaching experience)

As these accounts revealed, teachers' early childhood experiences and upbringings were frequently recalled when they talked about influences on their teaching. Influences at this stage did not necessarily have direct connections with education or teaching, but dispositions formulated appeared to be significant, either for or against their practice in their future lives. These dispositions were deeply rooted in their personal life experiences, being the very essence of who he/she was as a person, and they were immutable to change.

Children's education

One fourth of the teachers clearly stated that children influenced their teaching thoughts and practice. They drew from their experiences with their own children and children they met along the path of life. For these participants, that was when and how they came to think about education, to know more about teaching. For example, J2's current motivation was to pass everything he was teaching (Māori language, culture, protocols, customs) on to his five boys, *"so they can grow up in two worlds"*. D1 found that some teachers really connected with his son at school while others did not seem to recognise the uniqueness of the individual that he knew well. This frustrated him as he thought that *"teaching is about person"*. N1's experience as a parent gave him another perspective on teaching from his expectation of quality education for his children:

I expect my child to have top education in the area of their choice ... you hold a certain view about what is quality teaching, how well your child is learning [and] is being taught, and how much enjoyment the child is having as a learner at the school. (N1, Male, 50-60 years of age, 15-20 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Similarly, H1 drew a significant part of her understanding of student learning from watching her children and her friends' children learn in different ways as they grew up. However, J1, who had worked in the early childhood sector and reflected on her experience of teaching her own children and students, emphasised the collaborative nature of education in the wider communities where people need each other:

My own experiences with my own children were relevant to what I learnt about children, about teaching, about learning ... We need teachers, parents, all sorts of people to raise children or to teach children or to teach each other...I would see it as a network... I could be more effective with other people's children and they might have been more effective with mine. (J1, Female, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Support of family members

Data revealed that partners were supportive in course preparation, practising teaching skills, discussing ideas and sharing reflective thoughts. It was evident that family members played a role in teachers' understanding of and engagement in teaching.

I have this wonderful wife who shows me time and time again what service means, what unconditional means, and all those to me are applicable to teaching and learning. (D1, Male, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

My partner is just as good as me in terms of knowledge of leadership, we discuss a lot about theories and I am using her as a bouncing board. (J2, Male, 35-45 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

For some teachers, family support extended to their classroom teaching practice. One participant had brought his wife to the class:

Typically I will take her to the first class and to the last class. What I'm trying to show by that [is that] who I am as a teacher is who I am as a person ... my credibility is confirmed by my wife being present ... I'm trying to give my students a message that I'm a human being just like them. (D1)

J2 brought his children to his classroom, the Marae that he used for cultural aspects of the course.

... so when we're at the Marae, I bring my children ... so that the students will see I just don't talk, I do the walk as well. (J2)

Some distractions

There was considerable strength of feeling expressed by three participants about what in family life they perceived as distractions which took them away from fully engaging in teaching, as shown in D1's case in the previous chapter, "*in these times, my mind and my heart are partly with them and so what I can give to the energy and emotion of teaching is a lot less*". Another teacher worried about his son, diagnosed with a particular syndrome. He and his wife were "*distraught*" about his child's future. He was experiencing a "*funny stage*" in his life and a "*kind of mid-life crisis*". It appeared that family issues were integrated into teachers' everyday teaching. Such experiences disturbed the teachers' sense of well-being as a parent, teacher, brother or sister, son or daughter.

you have to be at the right stage of your life to study and if you're not in the right frame of mind, if you're not ready for it ... because there's too many other distractions on your life ... it's about priorities isn't it ... What are our priorities - our family, our friends, our religion, our culture, our work? Then all the other things like sport and exercise and study, and so it's a matter of if these things are taking up too much of my time, I can't devote the right amount of time to succeed in my teaching. (P2, Male, 40-50 years of age, 15-20 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Learning Experience

Participants' learning experiences appeared to be influential, as evident in one participant's recall of his early childhood Montessori experience,

... it taught me to be a creative thinker, a critical thinker, an abstract thinker and ... to love learning. I really believe in myself as a learner. This had the biggest impact on me in terms of myself as a teacher... (S1, Male, 30-40 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Participants shared a range of experiences of, and formed various concepts from, being students themselves. The way they were treated and taught, knowledge, skills and the lessons they learned, had an enduring effect on their teaching ideas and practice. They had both unpleasant experiences and fond memories of being students. Various aspects of their teachers' teaching were considered influential; they were teaching in the way they were taught, or in the opposite way.

Influence of teachers' attitudes

When A2 was in a strict boarding school, her teachers were negative: *"I was a problem or a nuisance"*. Being treated without respect destroyed her confidence in herself as a person. Having had that experience, A2 emphasised the importance of confidence in relation to education:

You as a person and just the confidence that you have in yourself at whatever you can do. So some people might be very academically capable and get that kind of job but other people for example put fences up in farms so they have to have practical skills. But if they can believe in themselves they can earn a good living, be a good husband, be a good father and contribute to society whereas if they don't believe in themselves they can't do any of those things. (A2, Female, 50-60 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

With the importance of students' confidence in mind, A2 always treated students with respect and a positive attitude. She appreciated every effort from students and was critical in ways *"that never would destroy them as a person"*.

D2 had been embarrassed by clinical tutors when she had learning difficulties in her undergraduate study. She felt the way tutors behaved *"wasn't appropriate"*. Having had that feeling, in her teaching, whenever there are students having personal issue or learning difficulty, she would help them with patience and respect. She had developed

good relationships with students *“as a result of my own experience”*, because she understood that if she treated students in the way she had been treated, then

all the students will focus on is what they’ve done wrong... and for the rest of the session they won’t be able to move on ... they become uptight about the fact that they’ve made a mistake somehow and they can’t let it go (D2, Female, 40-50 years of age, 0-5 years of tertiary teaching experience)

J1 had been frustrated by her Masters supervisor’s way of supervising. It appeared that J1’s experience would be unlikely to happen to her students.

... she came from that old school of the teacher as facilitator and that frustrated me ... I knew that she was an expert in a particular area and if she had just wanted to tell me about her expertise I would have been really grateful. So as a learner, I wanted her to teach me something new... I do want to help [students] access books, good education...(J1)

On a positive note, participants had vivid memories of teachers who inspired, cared, and loved them, as the following example shows:

the teachers that I remember the most were the ones that were very passionate about their teaching. You could tell they loved what they were doing ... That always inspired me, and I’m lucky. (S1)

The participants were impressed by what their teachers did in the classroom; various aspects were considered as being influential, including passion about teaching, personality (*“that was a personality thing”*), characteristic (*“they are really natural teachers; it was their personality that influenced me”*).

[W]hen I was starting to think about the teachers that influenced me and I realised that it wasn’t just their practice, ... it was their person, ... I suddenly realised, if their person influences that means their values and some of their beliefs and ideals are influencing me as well. (D1)

Previous teachers’ teaching strategies

When their own learning experiences were recalled, some participants related them to their current teaching: they were teaching either in a similar way, or in an opposite way.

S1 used the methods of his teacher in undergraduate study:

I used a system I learned from a teacher that I was in a class with ... it’s Socratic method ... this professor had our names on a 3x5 card and, when your name came up, he would ask you questions and you got graded on your answer ... So I brought that into my classroom. (S1)

R1 was educated by teachers who prioritised critical thinking particularly at postgraduate level, which contributed to his practice of extending student thinking rather than feeding them with prescribed information. *“They should be independent thinkers, critical thinkers on the area, and bring their knowledge, their experiences, into classroom”*. Two participants gained instructional concepts and strategies from their training in martial arts. R2 acknowledged that *“the teaching that I learnt was actually from karate”*. J3 applied the model her instructor practised in her classroom management.

Half the participants who related their learning experience to their current teaching learned more about how not to teach. The majority of them did not have an interactive learning experience; *“they just presented information like a tape recording, that’s pre-programmed”*.

I don’t think [I’m teaching the way I was taught]. I’m teaching how I would like to be taught. (J4, Female, 25-35 years of age, 0-5 years of tertiary teaching experience)

When I think about my own schooling, it wasn’t anything like the way I teach. It was the opposite ... I think you have to ease people into knowledge by getting them to engage in it. Not just presenting a big block of stuff and say there you go ... That was my experience when I was at school. (L2, Male, 40-50 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

One participant attributed the difference to environment change in education:

I’m teaching very differently from how I learnt. I found learning hard and also ideas of learning have changed. Now when I get to teaching, we are told that we have to teach differently ... in small groups and things like that. That didn’t use to be the case when I was at university. (J3, Female, 25-35 years of age, 0-5 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Another participant followed the disciplinary tradition within which her learning happened.

All of us are a product of a very similar learning situation when we’ve been learning and this discipline tends to be taught in this manner no matter where you go. If you walk into any dental school or hygienist school in Australia, it’s probably very similar in terms of the way that the clinical teaching set up is. It’s the same at Otago. So probably all of the people that are here as teachers, our products are very similar teaching environments, and so that’s probably what’s recreated because they perceive that as being successful. I don’t know how much research there is out there on how good it is in terms of teaching people clinical tasks and so on, whether this is the most effective or whether it’s just this is the way it’s always been done and so this is what we continue to do. I don’t know. (D2)

Personal learning styles

Participants drew from their own experiences as learners. For example, D2 had her learning comfort zone. Her preference was to receive information from experts. While acknowledging that active and involved learning is great, D2 still kept to her comfort zone:

I'm more than happy to go into a learning situation and sit there and be taught to and take in the information, and that's my comfort zone ... Sometimes it's a relief to sit there and have somebody give you information which you can go reflect on and think about at a later stage ... Too much of any one thing is probably not a good thing. Too much of any one style ... is probably not necessary. (D2)

H1 had realised when she was studying that *"it wouldn't have mattered what happened in the classroom I would have learnt things"*. P2 was only ever an average academic at school, but when he came to a tertiary institution and had a choice of what he could study, he suddenly became a B student and then an A student because he was interested in what he was learning: *"I just loved it and it flourished"*. He shared his experiences and wanted students to have that self awareness: *"if you are really interested in what you're learning, learning will be easier"*. But P2 emphasized that learning is still hard work.

No matter how good my teacher is, if I can't do a few hours a week studying, I'm not going to retain [and] understand that material. I'm going to be on a slippery slope and forever feel like I'm losing. That's an awful feeling because I've been there. (P2)

S1 learned different things from each teacher when he was an undergraduate student.

... one of the things I tell them [students] is no matter how bad a teacher is, their goal as a student should be trying to get at least one good thing out of that teacher...because this was my attitude as an undergraduate, I made this decision in my freshman year because I had some bad teachers and some good teachers, but ... it was my job as a student to find something good in a teacher. (S1)

R1 shared that experience:

I was educated by some people who were Socratic and some people who were totally 'I'm the teacher, you're the learner, this is the way you learn things'. For me, it's a blend of my personality, the person that I am and probably some of the strengths that I've seen in teachers that I value and that I admired. (R1, Male, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Postgraduate studies and research

Seven participants talked about the impact of their postgraduate studies on teaching. These comments were highly positive. They learned from the topic they were investigating; they grew in the intellectual process of doing research.

D1 became more sensitive about teacher-student relationships through doctoral research, which

influenced me from the first time I read something about my research. It enormously affected me when I did my first interview ... I can't teach without thinking about my own experience of what's currently taking place, what is the experience like for a student sitting in my class, how are they experiencing this class ... The question for me is very powerful and it keeps me on edge. (D1)

H1 learned the value of student engagement from doing Masters research:

[It] made me start to realise that it's student engagement in the learning that's most valuable ... that knows themselves, knows who they are and knows how to encourage others to want to learn. I don't see it as a skill anymore. (H1, Female, 50-60 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

L1 was researching intercultural competence for doctoral study, which was having a beneficial effect on his teaching:

[W]hen you're doing a PhD and can get to understand different cultural influences, then you can handle the student much better. If you know a student is from a society which is individualist, it's more comfortable putting them in a situation where they're doing presentations and ... roles where they have to stand out from the other students. But if a student's from a collectivistic society, you can't do that because they're not comfortable in putting themselves on pedestals over and above their other students, right? They're more group focused than individual focused. (L1, Male, 35-45 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Accounts of participants with doctorates indicated that academic qualifications brought more confidence and autonomy in teaching. C1's experience was not atypical; he felt he was not often challenged about what he was doing:

... if you talk to somebody and they've only got a bachelors degree, maybe you'll find they have a very different experience than I do. But I came here with a PhD at a point when very few people had them ... so nobody questioned me. The programme leaders didn't have as many educational credentials as I did so they're not going to say hey 'what are you doing?' (C1, Male, 45-55 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

All participants who talked about research acknowledged the benefits they gained from doing research and believed that *“when you do research and all that, some of the findings are bound to impact on your curriculum, the way you teach, your practice etc, etc, etc. Sometimes you do it consciously, sometimes you do it subconsciously, but it is bound to affect”* (N2). P1 saw himself as a better teacher *“because I have published one or two things but not because of the content in the publication but because of the process of thinking about how to go about researching it”*. He holds the view that *“if you investigate, if you research teaching, you have to construct something to research so inevitably you must think about how you teach; you can’t research it without thinking about it”*. R2 concurred that research is closely related to teachers’ understanding of *“the high level of the work that they are teaching”* which results in *“using the principles at a high level”* and that’s always *“what the papers about at a university”*. One teacher brought her joint research product – visual art made of rubbish - to the classroom to help students understand ecological sustainability.

Teaching Experience

Data revealed that while some participants progressed directly from their university studies into higher education, the majority had their first experience of teaching outside of universities. Some had taught in primary and secondary schools, other higher institutions, a refugee centre, or a language school; one participant had run training courses for industrial managers. Some noted that they had always been teachers in some capacity. For A1, teaching happened long before he made the commitment to enter the profession of ‘formal’ teaching: *“My career as a teacher began at age 12”*. For others the teaching was not within a traditional institution at all; for example, S1 was a karate instructor before he started teaching at university.

Early teaching experiences impacted on their teaching in various ways. N1 had taught in a number of universities and tertiary institutions in Australia, New Zealand, India, and Asian and South Pacific countries. These experiences add to his perspective as a teacher, researcher, and a human being: *“it grows on you”*. Based on her experience of teaching students with various religious and language backgrounds in a refugee centre, H1 had few problems teaching large classes *“because I’m used to having to put lots of different ways and reach out in different ways to be able to make connections with all*

the different people that are in there...It particularly helped me with the international students at the university". Two other participants gained similar insights from working with students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. By seeing the differences between current university students and managers attending his training course in the 1980s, L1 adjusted his teaching approaches which had been very successful when running that course:

...They [university students] have got more access to technology now than they did in those days. They [employee trainees] were adults so they knew more basic stuff than the students do now...from that point of view the approach is slightly different. It's just a different delivery mechanism. (L1)

R2 was a karate instructor before he started teaching at university. He acknowledged that part of his university teaching came from karate teaching:

If the teacher can't get into the student's head then the teacher isn't necessary. I learnt that from karate ... My karate has done a lot for me to actually listen. A lot of karate is about the other person. It's not about me, it's about you. It's not what I'm going to do to you. It's what you think you're going to do to me. That's what karate is about. (R2, Male, 40-50 years of age, 15-20 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Working Experience

Participants in the research had a wide range of life experiences, including, among others, a nanny in a foreign country, a backpacker, a dentist, a chef, a gym instructor, and a school principal. The majority of them benefitted from their practical work experiences, which gave them a rich source of anecdotes for teaching, different perspectives, and credibility. As such, the results presented here are significant in increasing awareness of previous professional experience and related knowledge and skills as influences in university teaching.

A nanny in Belgium

A2's experience of working in different languages helped her understanding of international students she was teaching. A2 went to Europe when she was 19 and worked as a nanny for a German family living in Belgium. She had to speak German or French for two years which she found very difficult: *"I used to be really, really tired just from listening, working out how to answer, translating in my head"*. As a result, A2 was *"always conscious that some students are just listening but some students are listening*

and translating and in first year if they've just come as international students that's actually a really hard thing to do".

A backpacker

C1 spent time as a backpacker and saw himself in the tourism literature: *"I saw that people were writing about things that fit my own personal life"*. When he applied tourism models and theories to his own life, he found it was more interesting and thought *"I should teach it this way with insight being the real goal"*. For example, in a class on tourist behaviour,

I make them understand they are tourists, they exhibit tourist behaviour. All the material in the class can be applied to them because they are tourists and they do the things that the authors are writing about and theorising and conceptualising. So we study different things and I make them appraise how good it is in terms of how well it fits them. (C1)

A dentist

Based on her 20 years worth of clinical practice, D2 saw that the *"trust and confidence relationship between the patient and the practitioner is really important"*. She also believed that *"practice makes you credible as a practitioner [and] students have a bit more respect for you if you are currently practising"*.

...the more patients that you see, the more clinical situations you are put in, the more problem solving ... so the more that you can bring back into the teaching situation ... as long as you're prefacing that information to the students by saying to them 'this is what I've found in practice ... and this is what the best practice method is which is based on evidence' ... So I think it's fine to introduce that stuff that you do anecdotally. (D2)

An artist

J1 was working in an art community while teaching at the University. Theories about art provided her with *"different ways of looking at the world"*:

There's always ... a different way of seeing this and that even in terms of my personality, and why I work in an interdisciplinary way is I'm always curious as to how it looks from the other side. When I was a teacher I went to the art world as much to nourish myself I suppose. It helped me work differently with children and understand what they were doing quite differently because ... artists operate in this world differently to teachers. They're not quite so constrained and limited. (J1)

A chef

L2 had a trade cooking qualification and had been in hospitality for nearly 30 years. He was employed as a chef lecturer. He considered, in that particular discipline, real working practice is crucial in teaching: *“how can they convincingly convey information giving real life experience when they don’t have real life experience given that hospitality is a doing industry?”* His experience provided him with rich source of anecdotes for teaching.

I always tell stories to back up the theory ... from my life or from my working life ... So that adds real meaning to it because they can see a real application. (L2)

Fitness instructor

P2 had worked in the fitness industry and found students like to hear stories from his experiences as a personal trainer or sports coach. From his stories he felt students might have a chance to see themselves in real practice through the role model of the teacher: *“it’s keeping their vision alive”*.

Secondary school principal

N1 was a school principal and taught for 10 years in a secondary school before he joined the university teacher education programme. This experience supported his interactions with students and school teachers: *“that gives you a massive perspective because you are always rooted in practice”*.

In summary, teachers’ teaching approaches and strategies were largely influenced by their early experiences. One benefit that resonated for the participants included the telling of anecdotes from their previous professional lives in their teaching. Data showed teachers’ perceptions of former education professionals’ integration into academic responsibilities, connections to and experiences with their university community, and relationships with their colleagues were influential. Some did not seem to feel they measured up to the politics and culture of academic institutions. Similar results were also found by Larocco and Bruns (2006), where a majority of participants described ambivalence about feeling prepared to teach, to conduct research, or to publish.

Significant Others

In addition to the experiences presented above, there were significant others who enhanced or challenged participants' existing educational beliefs, their attitudes towards teaching, and their commitment. Significant others were people outside the university environment and beyond immediate families, and included individuals in teachers' everyday lives, students they had taught, like-minded people, fictional characters in movies or novels, and organisations. For example, J2 viewed learning as continuous, as shown by his aunt who was 97 years old and still learning, and by a woman who had recently graduated with a degree in her 80s. Early encouragement from a teacher gave him confidence and growing enthusiasm in teaching:

One of the teachers here said 'I think you'll make a good teacher' ... so that same enthusiasm came into my teaching. I enjoyed it, so I want to pass on that enjoyment. (J2)

Friends of participant J1 seemed to be influential. When J1 was beginning in adult education, one of her friends said that as a teacher, she just needed to remember a little more than students by reading the book one night before the class. However, she soon found out that was not the case: *"Its faulty thinking because you could have someone in your class who's read all the books that you haven't and could know the subject"*. J1 also told of a child who said 'all teachers are fools', which triggered her reflection:

He had insight but he also had a rebellious spirit. His mother was a teacher ... All teachers are fools and that is so true ... We can be really superficial because there are teachers who teach us a compulsion to do what you do yet fail to understand yourself ... Those who can't do, teach. There's truth in a lot of these... fool I may be and acknowledge my foolishness as a teacher. (J1)

A2 said *"it doesn't matters if you don't succeed academically but it matters a lot if you've got no confidence in yourself"*. This was evident in her nephew, who struggled at school academically but had a successful career. A2 attributed that success to her nephew's strong self belief. Thus in A2's teaching, respect for students and building up confidence were highlighted.

Another participant echoed in this view,

...you're not teaching student to do something, it's like you are teaching them how to understand life, how to live the life in a certain way. You need to understand people from different perspectives, different angles... (S1)

A neuro linguistic programme exercise in the classroom showed L2 that *people who teach wield a huge amount of power and people will be compliant to what you say*. It taught him that *as a lecturer, he has the power without a gun*.

Significant others could be people on video. P2 gained valuable insights from video clips of King Robinson on You Tube:

[It] is a valuable thing to watch if you want to be a teacher. If I'd watched it in the formative part of my teaching career, I would have maybe come to the realisation that I can be my own teacher a lot sooner instead of waiting for that seven years to 'oh, should I be a bit of a radical and get off the main highway?' (P2)

Significant others could also be fictional characters in novels or movies. For example, J4 actively sought ideas from different sources, *"I aspire to be aspiring"*. She was impressed by the teacher in the movie of The Dead Poets Society, *"who helps students learn in the most exciting way"*.

Students whom participants had taught were also influential. Eight participants recalled rewards they received from students, rewards that were both immediate and delayed. Some received positive feedback and encouragement from students in the classroom, some during the course of study, some at the end of the year, some maybe after a long period of time. As one participant observed, students' learning is not limited to classroom teaching: *"real learning actually happens once you have left the classroom if you can make an impact on them"* (J1). Delayed reward was related to the features of adult education – *"you can go a long time before people stop and say 'hey thank you'"* (D1). J1's engagement with one student pushing the student's thinking in complex ways, and subsequent success was rewarded with *"tears in her eyes"* and appreciation of *"working in tandem with other people"*. One student introduced J1 to her daughter as one of her favourite teachers; P1's students revealed good teaching moments two months later; J2 met a former student in Mexico, saying *"I was on your Face Book yesterday"* and was proud of his students. Encouragement and reward from students would, in D1's words, remind teachers of *"the transformative power of education [which] sustains us as teachers"*.

Educational philosophers, theorists, researchers and commentators whom participants came across when they were reading, researching, doing professional development, or interacting with others were perceived to be influential. The development of teachers'

philosophies about education was also reported as an influence on their understanding of teaching and teaching practice. For some, the philosophical foundation of their teaching was partly influenced by their familiarity with and acceptance of the views of specific philosophers. However, influences also included broader theories and perspectives. Postmodernism, post-structuralism, constructivism, complexity theory, critical theory, philosophy of Ata (the Māori perspective), were mentioned, along with philosophers such as Raymond Williams, Vygotsky, Carl Rogers, Ernst Glaserfeld, and Brent Davis. Among many different schools of thought, individual teachers read, thought about, and tried the one(s) that were to the fore, seemed to make more sense and could be put into practice. Those ideas helped teachers articulate their understandings of the world. Once teachers internalised those ideas, the influence would be obvious. For example, A2 encountered postmodernism:

The best thing that happened to me was when postmodernism was starting to be spoken about and that really changed my thinking... that was like a big explosion in my mind... I tried to be like that before but I didn't have a way of articulating it and we didn't have the readings around it that showed it to the students ... that there's no one way of doing anything, keep an open mind, keep thinking that there are multiple ways of bringing up children, multiple ways. So I guess teachers are less judgemental ... We've all got an idealist construct of the way we would like to be but sometimes we're not like that. (A2)

Whereas J1 worked from a post-structuralism paradigm:

I'm a post-structuralist. I see things in networks and multiplicities ... There are things about how we negotiate culture. Culture affects ... the way that we live in this world, [and] influence once another. Nothing is sacrosanct, things change over time, and the way that we negotiate how we be in this world ... My fractals remind me of the way that things blow apart ... The good thing about life is the tensions between what I espouse and my practice. It's those tensions that create that interest. (J1)

H1's philosophy is that of Ata, a concept embedded within the Māori world view. It translates to mean the care and deliberation with which people talk, listen, respond, move, and stay. Application of the ideas of Ata brought significant changes in H1's teaching conceptions and practice:

Before I was confident and familiar with the philosophy of Ata I used to struggle a little bit when I was given a new paper to teach on because I had to go away and research and I always, I don't think the students ever knew but I always felt a little bit like a fraud because I felt that the students thought I was somebody very knowledgeable here passing on information to them and I actually wasn't knowledgeable in the subject area at all ...

Next Tuesday's lesson plan says we're doing this, right I'd better read what the students are going to read, see if I can understand it, see if I can write a lesson around it. I had no depth of knowledge of some of the things I was asked to teach and I felt quite fraudulent. It didn't fit with my values at all. Now with Ata it doesn't phase me because I just say to the students 'this is actually a new paper for me'. I'm straight up and honest and say 'I've never taught this before so we'll learn this together as we go along' and they seem to like that. (H1)

Some teachers did not relate their world views to any particular theory or school of thought.

... there's not just one way, there are many ways to arrive at your solution. The solution might be the same solution, but I think we've got to give students flexibility. They've got to learn to be flexible in this world, and it's not an exact science ... You've got to evaluate and weigh things and make decisions ... I don't like to think that I have a monopoly on the truth. (P2)

In contrast, some teachers explicitly stated that they were not influenced by particular philosophers or theorists. For example, C1 said, *"I don't do anything exceptional and I don't have any grand philosophy about teaching"*.

Some participants had a variety of philosophical anchors that influenced their teaching approaches. One discussed the influences in detail:

If I am from a behaviourist point of view, I would try to look at the whole subject, I would teach each bit in order and put it back to the whole subject so they don't lose the whole picture. If I start from a constructivist perspective, in particular radical constructivist, then I start knowing each student will interpret things differently ... What do students know already? How can I find out about that? (A1)

As an experienced academic with a second doctorate on self-study, A1 shared his insights into the development of individual philosophical thoughts:

Now I wouldn't claim to be constructivist ... Every learning theory is useful, and none of them are right or wrong. Each one gives a different way of looking at the situation ... These are all connected but sometimes they are contradictory ... So I end up not believing in any theory, believing that learning is a complex thing ... You pick up some pieces and melt them in a way that suits you. (A1)

The range of general predispositions presented above may only represent teachers' choices among alternatives rather than a complete account of their inner world. Clearly, teachers often do not operate within one philosophical or theoretical framework: as Trowler (1998) noted when categorising teachers' ideological positions,

“the discursive repertoire is wide and elements from a variety of ideological and political positions can be found, often in close proximity in a single text” (p. 78). While some teachers articulated one or more philosophical or theoretical positions, alternative discourses may also be found in the interview transcripts. Others, by contrast, expressed no strong allegiance to any philosophy or theory. One possible explanation would be that the course the interview took did not give them a full opportunity to organise their thoughts and talk about such allegiance within their zone of comfort. There were also teachers who expressed their positions implicitly, which are not presented here, meaning there are even more philosophical and theoretical positions in operation at the University. What are presented here are merely those which were most clearly discernible from the available data. These dispositions, which developed from teachers’ personal lives, working, teaching and learning experiences, provided possible directions teachers would follow in their teaching practice in particular context. Teachers tended to develop and use a set of strategies in alignment with these understandings of teaching if the teaching situation allowed.

Personal attributes

Teachers’ ways of thinking appeared to influence their teaching preparation and practice. For example, D2 considered herself as *“a reasonably logical thinker”*. Thus she paid more attention to the structure of lessons. R2 didn’t think in words but in images, patterns, graphs and diagrams. In his class, *“I will engage with students in doing that, or doing that for them on the board, but often I ask them to do it. If people don’t understand, I will tell them, draw me a diagram of what you mean”*. By being aware of students’ responsibility and differences in learning, he asked students *“how they understand that, what do they perceive as the best way of explaining that”*. R1 was a very audio learner: *“I am learning from hearing”*. He didn’t like doing PowerPoint and summaries because *“it makes people lazy and lot of content gets lost”*. Although he would provide them if *“people asked for PowerPoint”*, he was usually loath to do so.

Data revealed that other personality traits and related skills came into play when teachers teach. For example, C1 tended to pack a large amount of material into

lectures because of his conversational skills: *"I am not the sort of person who just sits around and tells stories"*.

Some people can take one shot off the internet and talk about it for 20 minutes because they have much better conversational skills than I do. Whereas because I can't do that, I tend to prepare a lot of material ... I won't say overwhelm them, but they definitely get a lot of course content. (C1)

P2 brought his uniqueness to the table and believed that would make him a better teacher.

I'm a highly introverted person. I love nothing better than just sitting here on my own and not interacting with other people. I'll read their books... I could randomise my thoughts [but] I like to craft it and hammer it and get it to a reasonable state of perfection before I'll go public, and that's just me ... I've always tried to think slightly left of centre, rather than just always accept the way other people have said I should do things. (P2)

In contrast, R1 was explicit about the person he was and the teaching style he had.

I am quite an outgoing person, [right from] the start of my lectures with my graduate students. I am totally upfront about the person I am and the teaching style I have. And I say to people, 'some people don't like the style, but you are going have to bear with me. You will understand by the end of the course, but if you don't like it, then you are in the wrong course' (R1).

A quarter of participants talked about their intuitive or gut feeling and how they go with that:

My gut instinct rules me as a person ... I go on my intuition [which is] my overriding motivator or thing that keeps me scanning the horizon. I'll look at a range of options and I'll intuitively know 'that's the one for me'. (L1)

R1 elaborated his 'gut feeling' in classroom teaching practice.

I always have a lesson plan, sometimes written down, sometimes in my head. But I am very much a person who will go with my gut feeling on the day, about what I think is important. And if people I think I am motivated, it might start them on something different than what I have planned. It's important for teachers to do planning, but the planning [should] not be the sole objective of what they are teaching. (R1)

A1 was willing to trust his intuition or feelings and offered insightful comments:

It's happening from the intellect first, then trialling things and then trying to get what I call a gut reaction ... [Being] more intuitive, not always a logical one. Now other people work very differently. Some people work very much on feelings first and even when they hear an idea they react to it intuitively before they think it through. That often has some value

because our intuition is right. [It] isn't just something out of the blue; it is often your unconscious thoughts that emerge quite quickly. (A1)

Interest in subject

The majority of the participants expressed love of their teaching profession while five highlighted their passion for the subject they were teaching. For example, R2 said of his subject:

I really enjoy it. It's my stuff. I can teach it with my eyes closed. I'm more enthusiastic about it than anything else and I know that if a lecturer likes the subject himself then the students will like the subject. It's very important for teaching. (R2)

Similarly, S1 expressed his passion for what he was doing:

I love what I do. I was lucky at my sophomore year, I discovered my interest in [the subject] and I knew that's what I was going to do for the rest of my life. So when I talk about it, I'm very passionate. I really believe in it. So in my intro class especially, which is my favourite class, I tell my students this class is going to change your life (S1)

P2 echoed:

What fuelled my fire to learn was passion for the subject ... Students are dipping their toe in the water ... The teacher sets the scene for learning ... not just the scene for the subject knowledge but to get students in the right frame of mind, to get them ... passionate about that subject ... I want to get students to that self awareness ... It starts a fire (P2)

Life style

Life styles both in and outside university were perceived by three teachers as influencing their views of teaching and practice. Life style is often a characteristic element in certain cohorts. For example, S1 viewed himself as a "*cool teacher*" as he could relate to students within professional boundaries.

I was also an athlete, and socially fairly successful, and when I talk to 20 year olds, I don't feel like there is this generation divide ... I listen to music that they listen to ... If you can combine cool and quality, they respect you more ... That's a big part of how they can they relate to you ... I can hang out and chat and party with them. (S1)

Life cycle

Teachers' focus on life cycle generated insights into the unique elements of their teaching. This revealed an aspect of the teacher's world which has attracted little attention to date, namely their perspective at particular stages in life affected their work of which teaching is a part. For example, one participant said:

I have to admit that I'm getting older so I've got less energy. I've probably got more work than when I was 30 but I've got that much less energy ... I have to figure out what's really important here and not make extra work for myself just with silly stuff. (A2)

Cultural Background

Associated with some of the influences above, the data revealed a range of background ingredients that were important in teachers' life and practice. For some participants, the influence of cultural background seemed to be more significant. For example, a Māori participant emphasized his origins and the place where he came from, and the feature of his teaching from a Māori perspective. A teacher coming from a Pacific Island who taught Pasifika students conceived the connection between the course she taught and her background to be a major aspect of her practice.

In the accounts of the two teachers who identified themselves as Māori and Pasifika respectively, cultural positioning was the most frequently mentioned aspect in their accounts when they talked about influences on their teaching. Given the fact that the University endeavoured to contribute to improvement in Māori and Pasifika education, in a bicultural regime nested in the broader multicultural world, attention was paid to this particular aspect of influences, with more detailed evidence reviewed from data collected.

Māori are the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. About 13% of New Zealanders identify as Māori. Kaupapa Māori philosophical, theoretical and practice paradigms are premised on a world view that is distinctly Māori, drawing on Māori knowledge, experiences, tikanga (culture) and language, which provides quite a different outlook to the dominant Pakeha (European) world view. This different world view provides another base for conceptualising education and teaching. I cannot do justice to Te Ao Māori cultural tenets which are essential to understanding the Māori world view, but some key concepts suggest their potential influence on teachers' perceptions and experiences of teaching including: interconnectedness; connection with the land; connection with ancestors; relationships (Furbish & Reid, 2003). As J2 explained:

In Māori culture, the most important thing is knowing where you come from and your family tree and your genealogy because we can trace our line back to the beginning of time and we have names right through ... even though our ancestors have passed on 2,000 years, we still believe that they're really close to us, which is very different to Western

style is because once they're dead, they are dead. But we have them around us all the time, as if they're here with us and they are because we are representatives of them, we're their face. So important in our culture and which I stick to is knowing where you come from, knowing your lineage, and knowing the struggles and the highs and lows that your ancestors did for you to be here now ... Knowing where you come from is your foundation to build off things ... to be secure and stable within yourself in order to teach others. (J2)

As Sir Apirana Ngata said, "take hold of the tools of the European, never forget where you come from, never forget your ancestors and have God as your protector". (J2)

J2 was teaching Māori leadership when the interview was conducted. He was brought up on a farm and born into Māori principles and beliefs. He was the only one in his family to go to university, with a Masters Degree in Māori customs and protocols, and was embarking on doctoral study. He gained his initial motivation from the *whānau* (family) and the primary goal of his teaching was to pass on Māori culture to the next generation in the family and people he can influence.

I'm teaching Māori, not because of me but because other people over the years have fought hard for us to enjoy this here, this conversation, and so we never forget the hard work that other people have done ... I'm not going to live forever but I know that your principles and your beliefs can continue on through the people you influence ... They will pass on the same knowledge to others and so on and so forth. So knowing that and knowing your past, knowing your present and knowing your future gives you stability. (J2)

The following quote from J2's doctoral research proposal merits its full presentation here because it gives detailed information about where J3 comes from, his "*foundation to build off things*".

Traditional Māori leadership is entrenched within the proposal of a cooperative leadership development approach. In past times many Māori leaders were exalted and praised in *waiata* (song), or *haka* (war challenges), they possessed necessary characteristics and skills that people came to respect, admire and remember. A Māori leader might be described as a '*tōtara o te wao nui a Tāne*', a '*tōtara* tree from the realm of *Tāne*', an apt exponent context to model a collaborative, accommodating a supportive leadership development framework. *Ka taka he kākano, ka whakatōngia, ka tupu ngā pihi, ka pūāwai, ka hua mai, ā, ka taka anō* (As a seed falls, it is sown, it is nurtured, it develops, it flourishes, it bears fruit and seeds fall once again). Key attributes of this '*tōtara* tree' include dedicating one's life to the good of the *iwi* (tribe), *he toka tū moana* (a sense of stability and consistency), *he whakahau tangata* (encouraging confidence through inspiration), *he raupī tangata* (being a person who cares for others). These attributes tie in with many of the leadership

and direction advice that a great deal of elders have and wish to further impart within their organisations, *iwi* (tribe), *hapū* (sub tribe) and *whānau* (close families).

The *tōtara* tree was regarded as a strong and beautiful tree that often grew to great heights...Thus a leader should portray strength and when fully costumed should present an awesome sight.

Our *kaumātua* (male elders), *kuia* (female elders) and *pakeke* (older generation) are now entering their twilight years and it is by this generation that we should be taught, mentored and inspired. With each passing year they leave this world for another along with their knowledge and libraries of oral histories. *Tohunga* (experts), *kaumātua* (male elders), and *kuia* (female elders); all of them repositories of sacred knowledge, at times wrestle with words uttered in many heartfelt *waiata tawhito* (traditional laments) often sung at numerous *hui* (gatherings) like *tangihanga* (traditional funerals) across *Aotearoa/New Zealand*.

In his research proposal, J2 intended to ask relevant questions: Who will continue to provide our people with direction should they fall to the wayside? Who will be our protector when we as a people succumb to being battered and bruised by monocultural, bureaucratic leaders?

Before the springs of knowledge dissipate, ways to obtain wisdom must be found; ways to encourage the development of rich, mutually beneficial relationships between *kaumātua* (male elders), *kuia* (female elders), *pakeke* (older generation) and *rangatahi* (younger generation); ways to facilitate a dialogue across an entire culture or part thereof, and before we lose our mentors, our guides, realising a lack of succession planning as a great risk to Māori cultural continuation. Therefore it is our duty, nay, our responsibility as *rangatahi* (younger generation) who will be tomorrow's *rangatira* (older/wiser generation) to secure our future and the future of our children's children by safeguarding our past.

Kaupapa Māori approaches to teaching are generated by the context and the people involved, and thus differ from context to context in recognition of different experiences, cultural practices and knowledge bases: "*we are hands on and activity based*". Making connections with students was seen as vital when J2 taught domestic students and "*a whole bunch of international students*".

What you have to do is to know your students and their worlds, to connect with these people, find a commonality ... I started learning more about their countries, and their cultures ... Straight away you make a connection. They think 'okay, my mind is open to this person because this person is talking to me as a person' ... Teaching is really easy if they are open, and if you can open them up quickly, you can teach them anything because they're comfortable with you. (J2)

In addition to his connection with students, J2 sought connections between the Māori leadership course he was teaching, and other views in the leadership field.

In the leadership programme, I have Māori world view thinking and Western style thinking. I've researched in the Māori world, I know that very well, and I think I also know the Western style of leadership in terms of the books and the experiences that I've researched. What I've done is found a common denominator between the two. They both can be very different, but there are some commonalities. For example, [Western] leadership looks at spiritual, physical, mental and social; in Māori world view we have the body, mind, soul and the emotion. Very similar but obviously they're in Māori language ... It's all about connecting. (J2)

L3 is another example of someone who imports strong cultural currents from beyond the university context, which influence her attitudes towards education and approaches to teaching. L3 is a migrant from a Pacific Island country, working in the Centre for Pasifika Education. She perceived her teaching as having a strong linkage to her cultural background. For example, at the start of the interview, she challenged the wording of the current research topic – influences on teaching:

...separating teaching from learning is problematic and a topic like influences on teaching, what happened to learning? Because for my language and culture which I will draw from to speak about the kinds of power on teaching, we have a term called Ako. Ako is both teaching and learning, inseparable, and Ako means to educate. Ako means to teach and learn. So teaching and learning are two faces of one experience or one approach to understanding the world. (L3, Female, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Like J2, L3 always kept in mind where she came from: *“as a teacher of a particular language and culture but being educated in another language and culture -that constitutes who I am as a teacher”*; and her uniqueness: *“I am not just a plain teacher that knowledge is put through me and out through me to the students”*. She observed that teachers like her don't just teach from a particular understanding in the predominant regime:

All of us who come here bring our knowledge, our language, our values and our beliefs, and we become critical of what we bring so that we know how might we include the new knowledge in the university.

L3 brought issues that Pacific migrants face in society into the university, one of which is the exclusion of their knowledge from the university curriculum:

Our knowledges are not here at the university and that's an issue ... Which knowledge is being included in the curriculum I'm teaching in the university and which ones are being excluded? That makes an influence on my teaching because when I realise that it's my knowledge that is excluded from the curriculum of the university and I'm a Pasifika person, I would say 'how come I'm here everyday to teach everybody else's knowledge and not mine?'

L3 related curriculum to the beliefs of society:

Our curriculum is reflective of a particular belief of society. It's also significant to ask what is not included ... What's excluded is my knowledge ... I ask how I can bring my knowledge to be included? I'm not saying leave that and learn mine. I'm saying to include what's been excluded. So I'd like to learn the curriculum of the university as well as my knowledge included

L3 said she believed that *"all of us are political teachers"*:

I come with a belief that Pasifika peoples in our society are marginalised through their languages and cultures, and so one of my aims is to put an end to that marginalisation ... My job as a teacher is to unpack the curriculum critically so they have to think about where they're at in relation to this curriculum and the papers that I teach so they can think for themselves about it.

Data indicated that not only those who have originated from a specific culture are influenced by it. It was also evident that 'outsiders' can employ the tenets of a culture to reflect upon or direct their beliefs and practices. For example, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, H1 (a non-Māori) believed in the philosophy of Ata, a concept embedded within the Māori culture, and applied it in her teaching practice.

Summary

The data presented in this chapter indicated that the perceptions and experiences of each of the participants prior to their current teaching were unique, thus personal influences varied. Family background, early childhood experiences, early teacher role models, and previous learning, teaching and working experiences played a significant role, alongside the teacher's personality, in the formation of an image of self as teacher and what it means to be a teacher. The resulting orientation to practices, career motivations, individual nature and personal priorities were inevitably brought into the university context.

The university provides a vital contextual background for the teachers in this study; I explore contextual influences in the next chapter.

Chapter 6 The Influence of Context

These recruits who face teaching as a life work are ready to learn to teach, and they are ready, though they know it not, to be formed by teaching. When teaching has formed them, what shape will it give them? Their daily work will write upon them; what will it write?

– Willard Waller, *The Sociology of Teaching*, 1967, p. 380

Introduction

In attempting to answer the research questions posed in Chapter 1, I presented data in the previous chapter on the prior experiences of participants and their perceptions of teaching and learning, and on the complexities of interactions between the influences and teachers' responses. These prior experiences, conceptions, and knowledge were inevitably brought by participants into their teaching context.

This chapter presents findings in relation to participants' perceptions and experiences of teaching in the university context. It addresses the second research question, in conjunction with the third and fourth questions:

2. What, and how do, contextual factors influence teaching?
3. What are the complexities of possible interactions between the influences?
4. How do teachers respond to different or inconsistent influences?

The steps taken in considering the contextual influences experienced and perceived by teachers participating in this study, again following the procedures employed in previous chapters, were as follows: from the comparison of D1's and J3's cases, aspects of contextual influences which showed significant similarities and differences were identified; these aspects were then considered in relation to relevant data from the other participants. Thus, in this chapter, wide ranging influences are considered in turn:

1. Global factors
2. National educational factors
3. University context
4. School context
5. Students

6. Colleagues

Data indicated that these influences varied significantly for individual teachers and for the same teacher in different situations. Ample data portrayed the complex nature of each variable and the uniqueness of each participant's responses. The following data in relation to contextual influences were selected.

Global factors

At the global level, the following influences appeared to be apparent in teachers' accounts as having influenced their thoughts about teaching and their actions: the multicultural world, the increasing amount of accessible information, changes of sources of information, changes in ways of accessing information, and changes in the control that teachers may be able to exercise over information their students could access. For example, being aware of living in a multicultural world, A2 conceived this as an important aspect of being an effective teacher, both for herself and the students she taught.

We're living in a multicultural world and those students have to go out and teach in a multicultural world so if they don't have an understanding and appreciation of it, they can't be good teachers ... They have to teach everyone and be able to work with all kinds of parents and all kinds of children. (A2, Female, 50-60 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Thus A2 valued a respectful attitude to the people she worked with, as "*knowing the content and not having respect, that's really damaging*" in a multicultural world:

Our world is so complex now if you acknowledge that's the other possibility, other ways of thinking, other ways of learning that students might feel they're respected, you acknowledge their existence. (A2)

Whereas for D2, the expansion of information access made her concerned about student learning:

There's a mass of information out there and far more so than there ever used to be ... [As students] we used to access the library. So whatever was in the library, whatever the experts had decided was worthy of putting in there in the first place, that was information that we accessed. Now ... there's no control over that information that the students are accessing ... people say now 'oh there's so much information, they could access it so easily', but they don't know what's true and what isn't... what's relevant and what isn't. (D2, Female, 40-50 years of age, 0-5 years of tertiary teaching experience)

D2 felt a need for lecturers to *“bring this down to ... what is true... and what is relevant...”* In facing a similar challenge, P2 prepared himself by having the latest information:

They say ‘well I’ve read such and such, well I haven’t read that’. Until I read it, I can’t make a valued opinion. So I’ll take it on board, but let’s put it in perspective, let’s look at it realistically ... I’m also excited by it because I think isn’t that the way it should be? We should be using the latest information at our fingertips rather than teaching from stuff from booklets. (P2, Male, 40-50 years of age, 15-20 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Such global forces and movements are both culturally and nationally mediated, as reflected in the educational policies of New Zealand.

National educational factors

At the national level, the values and beliefs underpinning the education system in New Zealand were identified as main factors influencing teachers’ thoughts about education and approaches to teaching. For example, as a result of participation in the global education market, the export education strategies brought increasing numbers of students into the New Zealand educational sector, of which tertiary education is a part. As experienced by J4:

With the introduction of so many different cultures in New Zealand, it’s changed since I was at high school, which was 11 years ago. There weren’t nearly so many cultures in New Zealand at the time. It’s probably important to not get complacent about the kind of people that you’re talking to or the kind of teaching that you deliver. I think that’s got to change along with the population really... In my classroom when I do have students from different cultures, sometimes I’m very aware of the content of my teaching. (J4, Female, 25-35 years of age, 0-5 years of tertiary teaching experience)

The values and beliefs underpinning education and curriculum were perceived as more powerful influences than strategies. As L3 described:

The education system in New Zealand is underpinned by a lot of values and beliefs about education, and if you come into that machinery, it will move you to do what you do. You don’t just independently say ‘I know this theory and I believe in this philosopher and that’s why I’m doing this teaching in this way’. That’s not quite true. (L3, Female, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

L3 elaborated on the power issues behind the realities, and believed the theory behind a particular kind of teaching is worthy of investigation:

... there must be a theory behind that, and that has to be understood as significant to also knowing there are different kinds of teaching approaches that make different impacts on students. So before we have an interest on the different kinds of teaching and the ways those influence students learning, if they learn anything, we have to look at how power is exercised by society over teachers. Teachers don't just teach from a particular understanding, teachers find themselves in a regime. (L3)

This was supported by D1 who pointed to what he perceived as the hidden curriculum or philosophy in New Zealand education and his response to it.

... for me philosophy speaks about the real messages, the hidden curriculum, the goal that we're actually aiming for. I think in New Zealand society we're having a real tension over that issue. We've been through the last three decades where we've been pushed into certain ideologies and philosophies. I don't see us sufficiently addressing that issue in teacher education. And yet I look at all the subjects we teach as reflecting a particular philosophy which in my mind is mostly very pragmatic. They've got to be attuned into real issues... Education policy does not reflect a democratic society, doesn't reflect, the culture and history of New Zealand, and I think completely foreign to it. (D1, Male, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

The Quality Public Education Coalition was referred to as an organisation that was set up to challenge these policies. People in the organisation held similar values and share D1's ideas *"the way we are being asked to think isn't right"* and *"good teachers do more than what policies suggest"*. The support made teachers like D1 feel that his ideas were shared by *"a great proportion of adult educators in New Zealand"*. Indeed, within the sample of teachers in this study, D1 was not alone. For example, J1 noticed that the culture in education seemed to restrict a broader understanding of good teaching.

There seems to be a culture in education that thinks it's all about practice and not about ideas ... Maybe some of us could be good at theory and some of us good at practice and some of us good at making the ties in the middle. Good teaching is a whole lot of different things that we need to allow. There tends to be this idea of good teaching just being about good practice. (J1, Female, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

University context

The University had policies and provisions aiming to influence teaching and learning. Data showed that participants made reference to this context with various levels of awareness and attention.

The changing status

Half of the participants started work in the institution before it acquired its university status in 2000. While three quarters of those felt extra work needed to be done to meet the requirements of being a university, rather than a polytechnic institute, teacher, the rest did not perceive there was any difference.

Along with the change, the increasing expectation to do research was a recurring theme in eight teachers' accounts.

I think it's great that we're a university, but there's an expectation, because it wants to be seen as a real university in inverted commas. There's the pressure to do research as well so we get our research outputs up so we are seen to be a more credible university. (P3, Male, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

P3 described the distinctions in research that he perceived resulting from the different status:

The school's expectation is that you do research, however the expectation has changed somewhat between the time when we were a polytech and the time when we were a university. As a polytech, the expectation was that teaching came first and the research had to be done but it was, secondary to the teaching. Those expectations seemed to have changed in the last few years so there is much higher expectation of research. The school has reduced teaching hours accordingly.

Alongside the reduction in staff teaching hours, as a consequence of the new research activity requirements, was that actual contact hours with students had been reduced and workload increased. As P3 experienced:

When I started students had 36 hours a week contact; right now they have 16. Staff have more marking than they did before. There was time when people could be doing their marking during their teaching time and now their teaching time is very full ... Staff are probably having to work harder now than they did.

D1 was an example of four participants who observed the management changes.

[Those changes] brought in a great concern about management. Of more concern is instituting systems which give evidence to suggest that the institution is a university, so we are not seen as a polytechnic. On one hand, leadership has managerially worked to get evidence to show this is a university. But in that process, we have got seduced by managerialism and lost sight of what we are here for. (D1)

However, three teachers did not perceive any significant impact on their teaching. As C1 exemplified:

That's irrelevant ... when I started teaching here I just taught like I was at a university...
The change from institute of technology to the university didn't mean anything to me at that level. (C1, Male, 45-55 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Teaching – research pathways and role expectations

The University adopted the notion of research-led teaching. As noted in Chapter 2, there were national as well as institutional policies and expectations around research (e.g., Educational Amendment Act, PBRF) which changed career pathways in universities. Participants in this study were aware of and, to some extent, influenced by these, including legislative requirements that research be part of academic work. Teachers were required to report on their research activities for the PBRF scheme. The University's commitment to research-led teaching and more recent changes to the career pathways on which the teacher was appointed seemed to be influential. Data show that academic role expectations, university policies on publication and research-informed teaching were perceived as influences on teaching. J2 is an example of teachers who 'hid' in full time teaching.

When I first started at the University, in 2000, you could have teaching or research, and so I took up all my time to teach. I had full teaching loads. Some people had half teaching, half research. I had full teaching, and that's how I got away with not doing any research or writing any publications, because I hid in the full time teaching. (J2, Male, 35-45 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

At the time of interview, J2 was considering a change from teaching full time to research to meet the expectation for all academic staff to become 'research active': *"I've started it. I'm slowly bringing that PBRF up in terms of my own research now"*. However, the current policy on academic tracks provided alternatives for teachers. J2 could, if he wanted, remain hiding in full time teaching, because until recently, the University had separate teaching and research career tracks.

Teachers' attitudes towards the university's expectation of research publications varied. They perceived or experienced policies on research as: a) *"clash of values"*; b) distraction from teaching; and c) means of attracting funding for the university.

As reported in Chapter 4, D1 commented on the non-recognition in PBRF of the complexity of teachers' engagement. He believed that the true cost of teaching work

was misunderstood and undervalued; he experienced a “*clash of values*”. He expressed his resistance to the follow the suit.

What I value in a humane and critical education is not counting of numbers... so I am disappointed and so I won't play the game. (D1)

In line with D1, P3 perceived the new system as “*a disaster*”, but he was trying to cope with it.

It's the situation, you know, this is what is here and the end result is that you have to just try to use what intelligence you can to work around it and to be able to give the Institution what it wants without selling yourself, right? (P3)

P3 believed that teaching was his principle duty though he loved doing research; he was happy to be a good researcher if doing research would benefit students. It appeared that his values in teaching would not be compromised, as evident in his observation of what the worse scenarios might be:

I choose to work in an education institution because I want to make a difference to students. That's why I'm here ... I mean for me, the most important thing is making sure that students get the best possible education ... If somebody said that this university does not believe in that and we're only interested in research and as far as we are concerned education is simply a by-product, then I would have to look very hard at whether I wanted to stay here. (P3)

In this borderline case, P3 demonstrated a willingness to follow the institutional policy to some extent, but also asserted his self-determined attitude. He modified his approaches to conform to ‘what it wants’ but adjusted the changes to his fundamental beliefs. P3 was relatively flexible and adaptable, but his core values remained unchallenged.

While three participants said that their teaching was distracted by doing research, half indicated that they were struggling to find a balance. Teachers were torn between passion of teaching and interest in research. R1's dilemma was not atypical:

Well, because I prioritise my other areas, not over teaching, I don't think I prioritise anything because at the end of the day, teaching is what I'm paid for...You want that to be a quality experience for students, but for me, I'm torn between my passion and my interest in research. (R1, Male, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

J1 was in a similar situation struggling to find a balance between being a researcher and a teacher:

At the moment I'm struggling to see myself as a researcher and as a teacher and find a balance. At the moment I feel like I'm doing neither particularly well. Can I blame that on me? Can I hold the culture of the school responsible? How can I learn to manage that? (J1)

In responding to university expectations of research output, specifically publications counted by PBRF, teachers tended to conduct research along with teaching strategically. For example, L2 had two levels of research output. One was an academic level which had *"no relevance to what I teach"*. He avoided it in the classroom as *"they would fall asleep and if someone talked to me about it, I would fall asleep too"*. The second level of research was *"more everyday"*, had *"a student base to it"*, presented *"in a language that they can understand it"*. In his teaching, he would give examples of applications of theories out of his research publications. A similar experience was related by A2

The publications, the research is necessary for me as a person and for the school because if I've been teaching the same subject for 15 years I've got to keep on doing research and writing and thinking about it. You have to have something fresh to talk about to keep your lectures interesting and you get that from the research and the reading and the publications that you've done. (A2)

J2 was trying to find ways to channel research into classes:

I think my interest is more with interaction with students ... If anything will pull me away from my teaching it is my research. That will have an effect unless I can find another connection ... I'm thinking about trying to channel my doctorate into my classes. (J2)

Institutional professional development provisions and opportunities

Four teachers highlighted the significance of professional development programmes in the improvement of their teaching practice. J4 found the tools suggested by academic developers in the induction course were more helpful than theoretical ideas.

Some of the tools that they suggested we use were really useful. I don't know if I've really absorbed and had a chance to go back and think about some of the more theoretical ideas that they gave us, but some of the really practical tools I've tried to put in place already. (J4)

L1 was helped by the Certificate in Tertiary Teaching:

I found that extremely valuable ... If students are working in groups, I put all the collectivistic thinking people together and all the individualist people together, and I've never had a group fall apart yet. Michael King taught me that little trick in one of his classes. (L1, Male, 35-45 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

D2 gained confirmation of her own teaching style and exposure to alternative ways.

... I didn't have firm ideas about the structure of lessons and so [the Certificate in Tertiary Teaching] was very helpful ... I think of myself as a reasonably logical thinker, but just to have somebody from outside say 'well yes that's probably a good way to approach it or have you thought of approaching it in this way?' (D2)

H1 saw professional development as an important aspect of teaching:

if you were just teaching, you're not going to improve, grow, or develop. You're just going to do the same thing over and over every day. You may as well go to a factory and put lids on jars. (H1, Female, 50-60 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

While the majority of participants were aware of the university cultures and provisions, and their strong or weak influences on teaching, participant J1 put more emphasis on school context:

How much do I know about this university environment and how it actually allows me to ... I don't know. All I know about really is my school. (J1, Female, 25-35 years of age, 0-5 years of tertiary teaching experience)

School context

School bureaucracy

Four teachers commented on what they perceived to be a bureaucratic approach adopted by the school to quality assurance of teaching and learning. This constrained teaching innovation aimed at improving student learning. For example, over-prescription of the curriculum, some teachers reported, had removed the freedom and joy of teaching and led to frustration, as C1 experienced:

We all have these templates in the handbook and we're forced to deal with it. We have to write the handbook, so there's section on goals of the course and purposes and how to set it up and what instruction or strategies to use ... These are treated as legal documents, so they're very fussy about it and you have to say things very formally. it's a nuisance because it's so formalised here that we may actually want to do things that are different than what we have to put in the handbook (C1)

He did not seem to find any value in doing it that way.

If we write something and it doesn't sound very good, somebody will make us rewrite it. It's not like we write them and then they get put in storage, because they take them as a legal document. So the programme leaders and the head of school read the things and so they have to be ... each one I do has to be passed and approved by the different programme leaders. (C1)

As a consequence, strategies were employed to implement personal innovative ideas in teaching. C1 had the formal handbook as a *“legal support”*, and then *“I have an informal one which really has my thoughts”*.

Political power issues add to the constraints on implementing innovations in teaching courses.

I wanted many things to happen to this paper to improve the quality of the teaching and the student experience ... Many times I had to wait a year before I would suggest something and then a year later someone would say ‘that’s a good idea, lets do that’, or they may even call that idea theirs and we end up doing it ... So there’s political issues and they’re based in power... Until people in power say it’s a good idea and believe in it, it won’t happen. That’s my experience. (L2, Male, 40-50 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

L2 had written a new type of design for the course he was teaching, working collaboratively with colleagues in this area in the professional development unit. The documents were submitted to the school committee but approval was not granted initially. The written proposal had failed to persuade the committee of the case for and value of proposed innovations in improving student learning and performance. It seemed that without the opportunity to hear the case from L2 in person, many on the committee may have been unfamiliar with the pedagogical principles underpinning it. Although the changes were eventually approved, the process left L2 frustrated with the political and power issues in the school. This perceived restriction on freedom prevented him from making radical innovations in the course he taught when he wished to.

There is freedom here to design it, but if you want to make a radical change to it, then you can run up against it if management don’t agree ... You’ve just got to keep going and if I waited, I knew it would happen. Then suddenly the time was right, re-present it, it’s accepted. It’s just like the wheel of fortune. It’s got to be at the right stage before the wheel stops on bankrupt or it stops on \$10m. (L2)

Roles and responsibilities

Across nearly two thirds of all participants, there was an ongoing message that perceived multiple roles and responsibilities were having a serious impact on the quality of teaching and the level of commitment. As H1 experienced:

We're not able to be just teachers, we have to be researchers, ...presenters, ...counsellors sometimes. We have to have pastoral care for the students. We have to be administrators ... (H1)

Multiple roles and responsibilities resulted in a number of concerns. The majority of participants indicated that they felt they could not entirely fulfil their academic roles but had to focus on certain aspects. For example, A2 only did what she perceived as necessary:

I have to figure out what's really important here and not make extra work for myself just with silly stuff like unnecessary administration ... I have a really clear idea of what micro politics do I need to be involved in and what can I just ignore because I think micro politics within the institution can take up a lot of time and energy. (A2)

Working in such a situation did not allow much time for teachers to fulfil the role(s) they themselves wished. For example, J1 was supposed to be at a meeting with colleagues at the time the interview was conducted:

I'm talking to you instead of being at a [xxx] meeting apparently. I had to let a lot of meetings and stuff go. (J1)

The large amount of time spent on teaching also made it difficult for some teachers to reflect on teaching. S1 wanted to do both teaching and research, but it was too much for him to teach eight papers a year and be a researcher. If he could have had less of course load, he would pick a subject that was *"meaningful to [the teaching] profession"* and get *"involved in communities"*. In order to meet the expectations and requirements, teachers often spent their weekends and holidays on teaching or sometimes research. For example, the main part of P3's work was administration:

I've actually this year had to cut back my teaching in order to be able to do my administration job... Any research I do is done at night or in the weekends. (P3)

School expectations/requirements

Data revealed that teachers were required or expected, a) to teach beyond expertise; b) to teach the same papers over and over again; c) to inherit papers designed/taught by others; and d) to develop new papers.

Teaching beyond expertise

Added to the pressure of general role expectations, some accounts pointed to their concerns about school management. Teachers were assigned to teach subject matters which were beyond their expertise:

I've become Jack of all trades. Last semester I had to teach on five different courses. Now to me that's five different areas of expertise. I can't actually do that and be a good teacher, that's four disciplines in six hours ..., I'm not an expert in any or some of those things. That's bad teaching to me to be honest ... I can only be a good teacher if I have expertise. (J1)

H1 felt guilty when teaching unfamiliar papers:

I had no depth of knowledge of some of the things I was asked to teach and I felt quite fraudulent really about that. It didn't fit with my values at all ... It's not something I actually want to be teaching. (H1)

It seems that systems for measuring and allocating teaching workload were viewed with suspicion by teachers. Participants saw them as a means of exercising power, controlling and monitoring rather than enabling and supporting. From the teachers' perspective, the circumstances inhibited them from developing personal academic strength; they had to compromise on the quality of their work by doing it superficially:

I can't focus on five different courses because that doesn't allow me to teach... I can sort of facilitate some kind of opening discussion but I can't teach a hell of a lot. (J1)

Teaching repetitively

Nearly half of the participants were assigned to teach the same course more than once. These participants shared similar experiences with teachers in the study by Stark (2002), who described four levels of course planning – routine maintenance, routine review, major revisions, and planning a new course. It seems that making major revisions requires a certain level of personal enthusiasm and intense effort and may generate considerable creativity along with the development of the course.

D2 and J4 were feeling more confident and relaxed through teaching courses more than once:

I was far happier with the way that it went I feel more confident than I would have initially. (D2)

I'm teaching the same course this semester as I taught last semester, I'm actually physically quite literally relaxing. (J4)

L1 was excited with the paper which he had taught for years:

...it's just follow the same methodology that's worked... That's just experience that I've built up over the years... 97% positive feedback. (L1)

P2 perceived teaching the same course as a challenge:

When you're teaching the same thing every year, it gets boring for me. I want to make it more interesting because if I'm excited and interested, then maybe that will come through to the students ... I suppose I always like a challenge. (P2)

He made changes out of his interest in the same course he taught every year:

I actually change things to make it interesting for me. I gave them a handbook but I also gave them a CD which was interactive which I designed on my computer so they could do quizzes on their CD. (P2)

Similarly, A2 constantly imported 'fresh' material into the same subject she had been teaching for 15 years, as shown in the quote earlier. In contrast, H1 lost her enthusiasm after teaching the same course ten times:

I don't want to teach that paper next year. It's not because I don't like it, I do and it's very easy because you've done it, you just do it each time, same thing, little bit different but it's all there. I've got no preparation to do, I know what I'm doing this week, I know what I'm doing next week. I know exactly how long it will take the students to do this and so it's absolute money for jam teaching. (H1)

She would invite fresh ideas from other teachers and allow herself time for new ideas about the course, but

...it's not good for me and it's not good for the students. I need to step back from it. Somebody else needs to come in and put their influence on the paper and throw in some new ideas. I need to do something else so I can get new ideas and be enthusiastic about this topic again to go back to it. It's not fair to the students to have me there just churning it out over and over. (H1)

Inheriting a paper

One third of the teachers were required to teach papers designed by others. Three types of experiences and responses were noted: following the design; making minor changes; redesigning and making innovations. When teaching the same course repetitively, the changes were made for reasons related to teacher satisfaction and

personal enthusiasm. In contrast, when teachers inherited a paper designed by others, the scope for making changes lessened. It seems that the degree of room for manoeuvre was related to teachers' employment status, career stage, and academic level.

As discussed in Chapter 4, J3 was required to teach in a fixed way with little room to make changes, whilst another participant, J1, chose not to make big changes, but expressed different concerns about teaching an inherited course.

I inherited certain courses, I carried them out the way they'd been designed to carry out. Adopting someone else's course and carrying it out and reflecting on how successful it was or it wasn't, how you make changes and how much time and energy I've got to make those changes... (J1)

Three teachers made significant changes to papers designed by others, though the changes happened in various ways. For example, L2 inherited a paper with a high student failure rate. He wanted many changes to that paper to improve the quality of teaching and student learning. He worked with academic developers to modify learning outcomes and course design to align with those outcomes. The failure rate changed dramatically. Teacher C1 found himself in a similar situation, but did not have any difficulty in redesigning his inherited paper:

once I tried teaching a paper that someone else had ahead of me and it was a disaster, so I had to redesign it anyway ... (C1)

A1 changed the course immediately:

I did exactly the opposite of what they put down because I thought their course was quite wrong... It just seemed crazy and so what they had set up had a huge effect, a different effect than they would have hoped. I just immediately changed the course. (A1)

Developing programmes/papers

Three participants talked about their experiences of developing new papers in their schools. As presented in Chapter 4, D1 arrived at a time when the school was very new. With support from the head of school, he got the space and freedom to create top quality courses which reflected his beliefs and values. A second case is C1, who joined the university when it began to establish a department in his PhD research subject. He had been there 10 years and taught 15 papers: *"There haven't been too many semesters when I wasn't designing a new paper"*. In the case of R2, he worked with his

colleagues and *“wrote the postgraduate handbook ... We wrote our rules and we wrote the programmes. We created the rules”*.

Resources

A perceived reduction in funding for teaching resulted in an inability to provide appropriate teaching and learning environments. H1 had a teaching room which was not appropriate to the teaching topic:

... when I'm working with tikanga Māori which is about Māori customs and protocols, one of the first things is that we should all be face to face, nobody should have their back to anybody else. We shouldn't have our shoes on inside, things like this, and I'm asked to teach those papers in tiered lecture theatres. It's not correct tikanga; it's not the correct protocol for teaching the correct protocols. (H1)

H1 thought the school didn't *“have the sort of budget that I would like us to have in education to work with”*.

A perceived shortage of funding also impeded innovative activities. One participant visited 40 institutions in five years with travel grants he was awarded, and came back with lots of ideas about innovations in teaching, but found it difficult to put them into practice:

Some of the things I've implemented straight away. Some of them we can't do it because we don't have the technology at the university yet, but I keep it in the back of my mind that in two years time we might have... (P2)

In addition to lack of funding, there was also a shortage of teachers:

... the Māori papers, we should have three or four people teaching the large classes on those papers. There's one lecturer to the 80 something students. (H1)

A shortage of teachers was also reflected in J1's case. She was not satisfied with the course assignment. Concerns were expressed not only about the heavy workload on teachers, but also with regard to student learning outcomes and retention.

The most awesome challenge that I've ever had was students who'd enrolled in the second year had me all day Thursday and some of them had me again on Friday morning. I was going home and saying to my 21 year old daughter 'I can't believe it ... If you enrolled at university, and you went there for one and a half days and had the same lecturer, wouldn't you ask for your money back?' ... I love me but not that much. (J1)

Class Size

Class size matters in the application of teaching strategies. Teachers have different comfort zones in which they design and teach their courses. While ample evidence of success was found in teaching small classes, effective teaching could take place in large ones as well. Class size might be one contributing factor to success, but was not necessarily the determining one.

Five participants said they were delighted to teach small classes if possible. A small class provided opportunities for teachers to implement innovative activities, have more interaction with students and make learning more personal. The ideal size of the small class differed slightly between teachers: while 25 was an ideal size for C1, D2 was more comfortable with teaching one-on-one, or the fewer the better. For P1, if students were fewer than 10, *“the harder [it is] to do it well because it becomes too fragmented”*.

Student numbers had increased in each class in recent years at all programme levels. Teaching relatively large classes was inevitable, and teachers were having to face the realities. They were also coming to see that with appropriate skills they could be successful in teaching large classes. As one teacher illustrated:

I've always been real happy ... [to] learn how to do it because I think you have to use very different skills to be effective when you have an enormous class than when you have a small one... (C1)

One participant reflected on teaching a large class for a year:

I teach under that philosophy that I was researching [in my Masters] ... A very large class of 92 students for a whole year and so you actually have time to work your way into it very slowly and the first six weeks is building that relationship with the students, getting them comfortable with me, getting them to trust me. Building up [mutual] respect, then you can start to get into some deep learning. (H1)

Inner experience and responses

In responding to the university and school culture, participants exhibited a range of views and consequential actions, as shown in the above accounts. It was challenging to separately report their inner experiences and responses in practice, as it was common in the data that participants expressed their views and actions simultaneously. I have

attempted to present the varieties of teachers' perceptions of their responses to influences in the following categories with supportive quotes:

1. Following the direction (*the only thing that you can do to make a decision will be to go with the one with the highest authority— J3*);
2. Lack of control/powerless (*we don't really have a choice – H1*);
3. Hiding (*I hid in the full time teaching – J2*);
4. Self-doubt (*Maybe that's about my sort of limited capacity...Maybe I am at fault -J1*);
5. Complaint (*I complained to the Head and associate Head of the school about workloads and expectations. I've moaned to them about the idea that it didn't allow me to be a teacher at all actually - J1*);
6. Understandable conformity (*I think the rules should be respected – A2*);
7. Selective adaption (*give the Institution what it wants without selling yourself – P3*);
8. Selective avoidance (*I have to figure out what's really important here – A2; I'm learning to pick my battles – J1*);
9. Prioritising (*I have a really clear idea of what do I need to be involved in and what can I just ignore- A2*);
10. Dissonance (*there is a divergence could occur between what I value and what institution is measuring – D1*);
11. Thinking of leaving (*I would have to look very hard at whether I wanted to stay here – PG; If progressively I don't fit, then I guess I have to move on- D1*);
12. Resistance (*I won't play the game – D1*);
13. Reaffirming personal beliefs (*I am confident enough that I couldn't care less about the school thing. I do what I think is right – A1*); and
14. Self-control and changing the culture (*We tried to influence the collegial relationships that exist in the school – D1; we've had to re-educate all the people around us; we created the rules –R2*).

It appeared that the first four categories described some form of obedience, "a passive agreement to act in accordance with prevailing standards" (Webster's Dictionary, 1995, p. 753). A sense of obligation is also inherent in the participants' reported incidents or events, faithfulness to a role expectation. The resultant lack of control or

powerlessness was relevant to some teachers, which implied that one's own behaviour cannot determine the outcome one seeks (Seeman, 1959). Without an ability to control one's desired action in context, uncertainty often follows. Therefore, compliant person, as the data showed, was one whose ability was constrained by the context and thus had to act in a way they did not want to. Conformity showed a relative alignment between personal and institutional beliefs, though it might not be a perfect alignment. Selective adaptation, selective avoidance and prioritising implied three similar approaches when teachers tried to negotiate a fit with the environment. Seeing no possibility of winning the war, they chose to pick battles in their comfort zone, for the benefit of the school, the students, or themselves. Teachers who resisted making personal changes were those holding strong beliefs which ran counter to those espoused by the organisation; they refused to compromise their core values but not necessarily their actions in practice. Reaffirming personal beliefs came from experienced teachers who had high self-esteem and belief in the rightness of what they were doing and why they were doing it in the way they did. Most likely these teachers had arrived at certain career stages. Those teachers who challenged the status quo proactively attempted to influence the culture, which would in turn influence people in the culture and themselves.

Students

Participants reported that, alongside the influence of their school and colleagues, students exerted a similarly strong influence on their teaching thoughts and practice. Teachers were influenced by the traits or characteristics of their students as well as by their actions and performance.

Students' characteristics - Who the students are

In this study, a range of students' characteristics were perceived by participants as influential on their teaching. Students were variously perceived as being obedient, cheeky, self assured (J3); critical, polite, and challenging (P2); reflective (R1); modern (S1); anonymous (C1); sacrificing (J3); being visual or tactile learners (H1, P2); having 'cultural ways of learning' (L1, A2); providing different signals of understanding (N1); having different motivations for not failing (R2) and for future professions (C1, D1); and needing more or less support than others (D2, P2).

Teachers were trying to see and understand students' situations. As P2 illustrated:

There are many paths up the mountain. Some of them are a four lane highway where everyone goes ... Then some run parallel but they're a bit rockier. And then you see some people just get a machete and go through the bush and cut their own way and they might zig and zag. But in the end they all get there as long as we keep our vision. (P2)

H1 emphasised the importance of students' *readiness to learn*:

... what I tend to do with all of the new students ... is wait until they are ready to learn because I firmly believe that unless they are ready to learn something, it won't matter how many skills you've got, you can't teach somebody something unless they're really ready to learn it. (H1)

Teachers changed and adapted their teaching in response to the way they perceived students' situations. As shown in Chapter 4, J3 taught students in three schools with different strategies: *"I have a very different strategy for the students here than I have in School A or B"*. Similarly, R2 had two groups of students with distinct characteristics.

There was a difference between A group and B group, a cultural difference. The A group people are very polite. The students sit in the lectures and they write ... even if they think you're wrong they will quietly come to you in your office. They'll be very embarrassed and they will say 'I think there's something wrong' ... It was a much different experience with students in B group... (R2, Male, 40-50 years of age, 15-20 years of tertiary teaching experience)

R2 approached the students in B group in the following way:

I had to be on my feet and I learnt that you can't just say anything in lectures. You have to think, you have to talk carefully and when you get it wrong you have to say 'I have got it wrong'. Or if they ask you a question and you can't answer it you have to say 'I cannot answer that question now, I'll get you the information' or 'I won't get you the information' or you at least have to admit that you don't know it. When you have students that come back at you, you have to be honest. (R2)

By being aware of students' experiences beyond the classroom, R1 brought their knowledge into the classroom.

Students come to me as adults ... You have to understand the different ways and watch people operate at age level, at gender level, and the level of their own education. I might have a doctorate, [but] some of these people have got lots more teaching experience, and classroom experience than me. And that's very important to be aware of. They may have the knowledge and skills, but what they may not have is some of the more useful, theoretical materials and literature to back up some of their ideas ... By this level they should be independent thinkers, critical thinkers on the area, and bring their knowledge,

their experiences, into classroom. (R1, Male, 40-50 years of age, 10-15 years of tertiary teaching experience)

J1 preferred to teach students who were in more advanced courses in their programmes, like many other participants in this study.

...at the moment I teach on second year and third year courses. I don't want to teach certificate and I don't want to teach necessarily first year though I don't mind giving them the odd lecture but I don't want to be responsible because I prefer to teach at that more complicated, complex level. I don't think that you can't teach first year students at that complicated level ... This culture says learning is hierarchical... (J1)

This view was echoed by R2:

I taught at a high level, Year 3, Year 4 and Masters and it was actually quite easy. The higher up was easier to teach because the students knew more and it was my research area... As I moved down to third year it became more difficult to teach because there the students don't know so much and it's more difficult to understand what they're thinking ... To think about what does a first year student think, it's actually much more difficult. (R2)

Student feedback – what students say about teaching and learning

Students' expression of their personal views and preferences in relation to teaching and learning appeared to influence teachers' thoughts and actions at various levels. Data revealed an array of teachers' perceptions of the nature of course evaluation and the quality of student feedback: the course evaluation was perceived as incomplete and bad, because students were not instructed in giving useful feedback. Students' views were seen as very important, but provided both reasonable and unreasonable information. Three teachers perceived course evaluation as incomplete in terms of the complex teaching process, teachers' engagement in teaching, and the long-term 'outcome' of education, as evident in D1's and J3's accounts presented in Chapter 4. D1 perceived the focus of evaluation on teaching practice with less emphasis on what behind it; the misrepresentation of J3's practice in feedback endorsed the need for instruction for students in this matter.

J1 pointed to the quality of feedback from students.

sometimes I get very angry with student feedback and with the system because it's not structured in a way that gives useful feedback ... The students aren't really instructed what the feedback is for... They just moaned about another lecturer to me ... These feedback forms [are] not productive to me or to the purposes of improving courses. (J1)

Teachers received both positive and negative comments from students, showing that the same teaching strategy might work for one student but not another.

When you look at student feedback in the same class, you can be the best and the worst lecturer. You're always going to have the extremes, the bell shaped curve. (P2)

Not surprisingly, all teachers were encouraged by positive feedback from students. Positive comments from students *"sustained you to keep going and to do all the marking in the weekend and to stay late preparing lecture"* (A2). For the negative comments from students, one third of the teachers did not feel hurt, while one fifth of them *"take it quite personally"* (P2). Teachers' commitment, values, and investment to teaching might contribute to such reactions. As D1 illustrated:

when I first read negative feedback and it happens at the end of every semester I guess I feel a bit hurt and the reason I feel hurt is that I've given this enormous amount of energy and effort and then what they want to talk about is the readings or the assessment or something ... I prefer criticism which is very carefully worded where somebody is appreciating the relationship and is working towards refining my practice for the benefit of all rather than someone who is just openly abusive. (D1)

In responding to course evaluation and student feedback, participants took actions ranging from *"adapting fully"* to *"throwing it into the dustbin"*. J4 adapted to *"whatever suggestions"*, when there were individuals with specific needs then *"I try to catch up with them after class as well and just talk about how they're going or whether they've got access to the things that they need"*. N2 was looking for trends and trying to meet the needs of the majority of students:

There will be a way that will raise the probabilities to the best possible level for a majority of students. But we know with the extreme variability of students that we will always encounter situations where what works well for one does not work well for another ... Absolutely critically necessary and beneficial for some students, inappropriate, unnecessary and possibly damaging for other students so we're never going to be able to go away from a teaching situation being able to reasonably assume that it worked for everybody because of that variability ... We do everything in our power to make the odds the probabilities as high as possible for as many as possible. (N2, Male, 50-60 years of age, 20-25 years of tertiary teaching experience)

R1 supported N2 in making adjustments:

... I am open to adjusting, but [it] has to be justified for me... I still have to assess whether the needs of students, or that student, overwhelms and overweighs the needs of majority of the students ... If people ask me to do specific things. I will go away and think about it ...

Sometimes I ask for more information. And sometimes I just say no – I won't do that, I won't provide you with those stuff, you need to find it for yourself. (R1)

C1 had never seen student evaluation results and assumed that the programme leader would have told him *"if it was bad"*.

... if it isn't bad then I just figure, well no news is good news. So I don't ask to see it ... This is a bad attitude on my part ... If I wanted to go and be an associate professor, I'm supposed to have so many years worth of these student evaluation forms ... I'm supposed to keep them and I thought 'I don't like this process ... I'm not going to do it'. So I'm not actually worried ... (C1)

R2 did not seem to take student feedback seriously:

They will give it to you and then you can choose to do two things with it. The first thing you can do is you add it to your folder for promotion. The second thing you can do is you can throw it in the dustbin. (R2)

A1 showed much more confidence than other participants in believing he was doing the right thing for students:

If students happen to say 'XXX is not a very good teacher, he didn't teach us, he didn't tell us what we have to know'. I should have replied, 'That's not my job; my job is to help you learn.' And if you are asking the question, if you are learning, and if you have been stimulated to do that, then I am doing my job. Now when they come to say how I might go comparing on best evidence of what is good teaching, the answer would be 'no, I won't'. I couldn't care less about that. It's back to confidence I believe what I am doing is the best I can do. (A1, Male, 60-70 years of age, 20-25 years of tertiary teaching experience)

Students' views on teaching and learning may impact on teachers' efforts to make things better for students. However for teachers like A1, his rich experiences in teaching contributed to his distinctive responses to feedback.

Student learning performance – how students learn in class

In addition to formal evaluative student feedback at the end of the course, teachers sought information from students for evidence to support changes for student learning: They had conversations with students outside of the classroom; they drew clues from students' assignments; they constantly looked for feedback and adjustment throughout the paper. For the majority of them, what happened in the class when they interacted with students was identified as a primary way to understand how teaching and student learning were going. Though teachers had certain plans in mind, they

showed flexibility in adjusting or revising strategies depending on the circumstances. Their perceptions of student responses in the class would influence how they went about teaching. As D1 elaborated:

For me the primary way that I learn is by what happens in the class when we're interacting. When I see students' growing interest in the bigger questions and not taking for granted at just face value certain ideas but actually starting to question more deeply, ready to debate and argue in a course, then I would say it's starting to become important to the students ... they give me the feedback and I see their enthusiasm [and] excitement. I ask them to chew on the things we've been talking about. (D1)

J4 observed the rapport she had with students in the classroom:

Not just verbal feedback, but also looking at how students are achieving, the progress that they're making, looking at the rapport that I have with them in the classroom. I feel rapport is quite an interesting and telling thing for me. I actually probably hold that quite high in terms of my daily teaching. (J4)

Students' mood was influential for R1:

If they are being responsive in class forum, if they are thinking and engaging each other ... [but] if they are not thinking, giving information back, then they are not learning as far as I am concerned. So their mood influences how I continue to teach. (R1)

Teaching content gave way to student conversation in class for S1:

Content is important but it's not for me... I have a certain amount of content I want to get across, but it's flexible with me because if there's suddenly a conversation that starts to happen with my students that seems important, I will sacrifice content to let that conversation go. (S1, Male, Pākehā, 30-40 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

H1 perceived student needs as a lesson guide:

... the individual lessons are actually guided by the needs of the student on the day, up to a point. There's still certain content that you have to cover but I use a lot of freedom in my practice. (H1, Female, Pākehā, 50-60 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

The accounts of teaching revealed that planning was considered an important aspect of teaching, and there was variation in the ways teachers planned their work. Some accounts showed teachers' concern to take account of prior knowledge, needs and expectations of students as the starting point when planning courses. According to these descriptions, the course plan was flexible in that it could be easily adjusted to teachers' interaction with students and students' responses. Teachers did not want to

plan every course similarly, but to take student and course characteristics into consideration when planning. What was to be covered and how, could be changed according to what was most suitable for a certain group of students in the teaching context.

The change is based on student feedback. If they say they are ready to go onto the next bit, we go onto the next bit. If there are questions, queries and problems, we stop until they're solved. (L2)

This kind of flexibility and willingness to adjust to students' classroom responses were common in participants' descriptions. It appeared that not merely teachers' beliefs about appropriate pedagogical methods determined 'what was going on' in the classroom. Students' own perceptions of what counted as teaching and learning influenced to a large extent what happened there.

Colleagues

Every participant reported influence by colleagues, and made constant references to colleagues in their accounts. A range of colleagues was identified, including teachers, guest lecturers, and workgroup members, teachers/administrators/leaders in the programme, school, university and wider disciplinary community. The data showed a wide arena of interaction between colleagues. This section reports on the following aspects of teachers' perceptions and experiences in this area: modes of interaction with colleagues; features of influences; inner experience and response to colleagues' influences.

Interaction with colleagues

The data revealed that influences arising from interactions with colleagues played different roles in teachers' professional lives; it suggested that a range of collegial relations existed among university teachers. In the course of data analysis, I noted four contrasting ways in which teachers perceived their interactions with colleagues, which had implications for their experience of colleagues' influence and subsequent responses: a) working in a supportive team of colleagues; b) interacting with selected colleagues; c) interacting with selected colleagues to a limited extent; and d) no interaction with colleagues. However, the boundary between each mode was not clear

cut. Participants might operate in more than one models, or many dimensions of one model simultaneously.

There is no doubt that working in a supportive team of colleagues afforded unique benefits for a majority of teachers involved in the study. J2, P2 and N1 worked well with their supportive colleagues in dynamic teams. They were encouraged to take initiatives and teach differently and they drew on the strengths of people around them. A1 and D1 stated that they learned to look at the same phenomena differently through interacting with colleagues in the field of their mutual interest.

Leading on from this was their belief that in knowing one another better, there was more chance that stronger collaborative working relationships between individuals could be developed. However, while J2, P2 and N1 emphasized the beneficial influence of all the members of the team and school they identified with, A1 and D1 recalled their experiences with particular colleagues in certain subject fields. H1 made it clear that she did not benefit from talking to *all* colleagues. Conversations with special people inspired and challenged her to think for herself about better ways of creating and maintaining relationships with students. Thus, teachers valued their interaction with colleagues, but not all of them. They selected particular colleagues in particular fields as people they could talk to and learn from.

For these teachers, collegiality was obviously more than the work they did together; it extended beyond the strict boundaries of work and into the realm of social and personal preference. Further, data shows that participants not only selected colleagues for interactions, the depth of the interaction varied, according to feelings about personal and mutual interests. H1 appreciated inspiration from "*special people*"; J3 talked about being influenced in relation to "*technical stuff*" but not sharing philosophy with his colleagues too much.

In addition to the above ways of interaction with all or selected colleagues, some teachers deliberately limited their interactions to avoid experiences that they anticipated some interactions might evoke. Like participants C1 and L2, they did not talk much to their colleagues about teaching. L2 was almost unique among participants in the degree of his negative comments on collegiality within his working environment.

He did not have much conversation with colleagues, and it appeared his teaching was negatively influenced by it: *“it stifles me”*.

Data revealed strong or weak ties that teachers may experience or seek among colleagues, which in turn may have implications for the extent and nature of influences that colleagues have. Measuring the strength of collegial ties does not imply a judgement about teachers' competence or performance, but rather allows investigation of the degree to which fellow teachers constitute a relatively strong or weak individual source of influence on teaching practice or commitment.

Influences on thoughts and practical skills

The data showed interaction with colleagues influenced participants primarily in their practical teaching skills and thoughts about teaching.

R2 learned from his colleagues about teaching techniques:

I had some colleagues who had been lecturing for a while and we used to discuss teaching technique... We would talk about what is effective, what isn't effective, what is bad practice, what isn't. It was very informal. But I enjoyed it ... I learnt a huge amount about teaching students. (R2)

H1 tended to think more deeply than teaching strategies:

They give me inspiration probably and they challenge me to go away and think for myself about a better way of doing this. The ones that influence me the most are ones that have moved away from having to have strategies. (H1)

Contexts in which colleagues were perceived to be influential

The influences of colleagues exhibited a range of features, which were evident in teachers' accounts. In the following contexts participants were likely to be influenced by their colleagues: when seeking advice or feedback from colleagues; when observing colleague's teaching; and when interacting and conversing with colleagues. These contexts were intertwined and some quotes may refer to more than one.

Influences being proactively sought

It was evident in the data that teachers were proactively seeking advice, support, or points of view from colleagues. For example, H1 commented:

...there's somebody who's very special. Very special people who you go and sit with and talk with and they give you ideas and thoughts or advice but I can go to anybody for advice. (H1)

H1 also invited colleagues to observe her teaching:

I don't think it [teaching] should be a private thing and I've had on many occasions colleagues come and sit in on sessions. It's very good to video yourself, get somebody to come and video one of your sessions. It's a lovely way to improve your teaching practice. (H1)

R2 communicated with other teachers about students' performance and learning:

I'll go into someone else's office and say 'this person is driving me crazy'. I've actually got two students right now that I think I'm losing all this hair because of that. I'm supervising their project and I'm having great difficulty. I've gone to speak to colleagues who have had them in their classes, about some ways of dealing, of getting their students to move. They'll talk about they've tried this, they've tried that, what do I suggest and I'll do the same thing. It's good. (R2)

Influences through observation

Participants' observations of colleagues influenced their thoughts about teaching. Colleagues modelled particular attributes and capabilities or they embodied characteristics participants admired. As R1 observed:

There are some exceptionally good teachers in our school that are well known for their teaching abilities and abilities to [simplify] quite complex issues and make them easy to understand. (R1)

R1 talked about his co-teacher:

I don't like teaching on my own because I'm a social person and I like the buzz of being able to bounce ideas off somebody else ... The power of having another teacher who you value, trust and can work with, is a really powerful dimension in terms of sharing knowledge and responsibility, particularly if that person is someone that you admire as a teacher and you see them able to get the best out of students. (R1)

Similarly, N1 worked in teams:

Sometimes we have team teaching, so we observe each other ... we 'test' each other. (N1)

P2 absorbed ideas from observing colleagues' classroom teaching:

I love watching other people teach. I always ask, 'is it okay if I come in and watch your class?' ...when you think oh my God, I'd never do that, or hey that's a good idea I might try that. (P2)

Four participants observed their colleagues exhibiting characteristics that they would actively avoid in their practice. As one said:

There are some teachers that I think probably need more professional development and learning about other styles and ways of operating. There are a whole lot of teachers that use their personal power too much to control students and situations. For me, I put the responsibility and the power often with the class. (R1)

Influences from interaction

Data indicated that sometimes participants prepared examination questions or curriculum together, and discussed teaching related matters. Interaction with colleagues opened up new perspectives on the same phenomena and understanding of teaching. For example:

D1 had conversations with his colleagues on similar research topics:

I have a colleague, we are looking at relationship using very different language but in a sense describing the same phenomena. Now as I carried on with my stories and as she carried on with her own data analysis the interaction we had down the corridor, the sharing of conference papers, the talking about our studies and what do they mean, it just deepened the way we talked about teacher-student relationship. (D1)

A2 seemed to gain a fresh view on spirituality from her colleagues:

... my view of spirituality was a non religious view, it fitted with notions from Buddhism ... which is much more a philosophy rather than a religion and so I found it difficult. Now when I came here I found XXX and YYY were two devoted Christians who held spiritual views but they were pushing what seemed to me to be the non-religious part of that. I was influenced by them and I can talk about that much more easily now with more confidence than I would have a few years ago. (A2)

J3 discussed a wide range of topics with her colleagues:

We talk about experiences we've had as learners and teachers that have been good or bad and we have a big laugh sometimes about the terrible things that have happened to us ... they have some very good insights into what's going on... What do you think happened? What do you think I did or how come you were successful? What is different? And they can talk about what made it more successful or less successful. (J3)

J2 was working in a supportive team:

...we work well together as a team. We're a dynamic team. So we draw on strengths of others... (J2)

Influence may occur serendipitously. For example, L1 learned from casual talking with both good and not so good teachers:

...you can learn from the practices of the good teachers, and [from] the not so good teachers you can learn which practices to avoid... Just casual talking ... I've never been and observed anybody teaching, but people talk about what they do, just casually, and you can kind of pick up. (L1)

Inner experiences and responses

The data associated with the influence of colleagues showed participants' different perceptions and experiences. Examples of inner experiences and responses were exhibited in the following accounts:

Collegiality was perceived to be important to teaching and student learning:

I think collegiality is very important for the quality delivery of a programme. I think if there isn't collegiality it will impact on the students because you're going to have people doing all sorts of different things. When you have staff that are actually working together, the programme works... (R2)

R1 built up his repertoire of teaching skills from other teachers' experiences:

... not to emulate them, because I don't want to be Xxxx No. 2. There is only one Xxxx. He's a unique individual, but some of the things that I've learnt from teaching with him, I think 'well that's really great'. I'm not going to use it in the same way he does, but I'm going to add that to my repertoire of teaching in a way that doesn't detract from him, but that will enhance some of my own understandings and awareness. (R1)

J4 was analytical about colleagues' advice:

I feel that the advice was very much skewed according to their own perspective on teaching, and it probably wasn't as neutral as I would have liked. They put a lot of their own hang ups or baggage in what they told me. So I had to be a bit careful about what I really took on board and learn from my own experience alongside learning from their advice. (J4)

R1 viewed teaching with his colleagues as a process of transformative learning:

I think that's one of the most important transformative things, is somebody being able to challenge you and convince you that there are other ways of looking at the situation, of operating and of understanding ... I see it as a privilege for others who want to come to a classroom to hear. (R1)

D2 saw trust in the context of a potentially influential relationship – a relationship with someone who knows more, but not everything.

you have more of a trust in the relationships that you're building up where you're working... Maybe it's a trust thing that somebody's not going to put you down if you don't know it... (D2)

The data also clearly showed that participants tried to limit or avoid some negative influence from their colleagues. For example, L2 learned from his colleagues what he would never do.

My colleagues often influence me in, I think to myself 'God I'm never going to do that', when I hear what some other lecturers do. (L2)

J4 did not like to reveal her own 'naivety' or ignorance when seeking ideas or advice from colleagues. She learned from her own experience alongside learning from colleagues:

...the colleagues who taught the same paper as I did, they had all been teaching a very long time whereas I was brand new. So while they seemed generous in the advice they gave me, I feel that the advice was very much skewed according to their own perspective on teaching, and it probably wasn't as neutral as I would have liked. I think they put a lot of their own hang ups or baggage in what they told me. So I had to be a bit careful about what I really took on board and learn from my own experience alongside learning from their advice. (J4)

J4 learned from colleagues at an early stage of teaching. She said she would not ask so many 'naïve' questions when she had had enough experience:

Probably my relative naivety about teaching has enabled me to ask the silly questions and have the chats about 'what do you do that for?', 'hey I tried this and it worked really well' ... If I had been teaching 20 years then perhaps I'd be a lot more set in my ways and quite confident with myself and perhaps not ask those questions or have those chats. (J4)

In general, teachers' accounts support the literature in suggesting that collegial experiences create shared understanding in a group, develop a sense of community and build relationships based on appreciation of peers as individuals (Viskovic, 2006; Warhurst, 2006; Wenger, 1998).

However, in contrast to the majority of participants, three teachers did not seem to learn much from their colleagues. C1 was an example:

I co-taught a couple of times but I've done it my way, they've done it their way. I was happy with what they did. They were happy with what I did... I haven't had any experience where I was influenced by it. I didn't feel I needed to change and pick up some

of the things they did... I can't really think of any way that my colleagues have influenced me about my teaching... (C1)

S1 was another participant who did not want to be 'judged':

Fine, I didn't mind when they did classroom observation. Okay, I resented it a little bit ... it changed the dynamic of the classroom because I was a little uptight ... it took away from the productivity of that classroom ... It just feels like you're being judged. It changes the dynamic. I work so hard on creating this very comfortable dynamic that when you have someone in there doing that, it just modifies that little bit. Maybe it's just ego. (S1, Male, 30-40 years of age, 5-10 years of tertiary teaching experience)

It appeared that C1 and S1 appreciated what their colleagues did though they did not feel the need to change their teaching. The following observation from Little (1990) might provide a reasonable explanation:

The texture of collegial relations is woven principally of social and interpersonal interests. Teacher autonomy rests on freedom from scrutiny and the largely unexamined right to exercise personal preference; teachers acknowledge and tolerate the individual preferences or styles of others. Independent trial and error serves as the principal route to competence. (p. 511)

Summary

As stated in the opening quote, the data presented in this chapter indicated that clearly a range of contextual factors had written upon teachers in this study. Influenced by personal factors as exhibited in Chapter 5, teachers perceived their teaching context, approached their teaching as a function of their previous experiences and expression of their personal beliefs and values. These factors interacted with each other and had an impact on teachers' thoughts and practices in various ways.

Discussion of the overall findings is presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 7 Data Interpretation and Discussion

Introduction

The preceding chapters have provided evidence of a diversity of perceptions and experiences. Certain commonalities were also apparent in teachers' accounts, including awareness of the significance of their prior and current personal life experiences; their interactions with people and structures in the teaching context; the dilemmas and uncertainties they experienced at times when influences were multiple and conflicting. There were also other patterns evident in their responses to influences as shown in the previous chapters.

There is no doubt from the evidence provided that the nature of teachers' work in contemporary New Zealand is complex, demanding and is influenced by a wide range of factors. As has been made clear in Chapter 2, voluminous research highlighted different aspects of personal influences and the impact of the context in which teaching takes place. These studies attempted to develop a summary categorization and model of influence (e.g., Fanghanel, 2004, 2007), and to provide a comprehensive understanding of teachers' ideas and practice in context. However, while addressing each of the dimensions or specific aspects is necessary, this is insufficient in itself to realise the whole picture. What I set out to do in this study, was to adopt an even more holistic approach, which now included attention to the nature of the interactions between various categories of influence, as well as the specific forms of influence, as they played out in the lives of teachers over time as well as currently. Though I was not tracking these influences longitudinally, I invited teachers to reflect on influences in the past. I also sought insights into teachers' inner experience and processing of these influences, and their subsequent responses to them.

This more holistic focus, however, does lead to challenges for the presentation and discussion of key findings. As previously noted the phenomena investigated are very complex and consideration of one aspect in isolation from others will present an incomplete account. However, the presentation of two in-depth case studies in Chapter 5 was intended to acknowledge and illustrate that inherent complexity and to

prompt the reader to subsequently retain that perspective as portions of the data set were reported, interpreted and discussed. The analysis of single case studies reinforced the view that there is a great deal of complexity to deal with from a researcher's perspective. While the study has confirmed that influences on the lived experiences of teachers' lives cannot be neatly packaged into such broad domains as personal and contextual as reported in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, as the interactions between influences are complex both within and between these domains, it remains helpful to identify such influences as evident in the lives of a cross-section of teachers in one New Zealand university.

Despite the challenge of complexity, I present some aspects in this chapter without denying those complexities. Thus, in the first section, I discuss personal influences as revealed by data in Chapter 5 in relation to those contextual influences presented in Chapter 6. The second part examines how contextual factors impacted on teachers' thoughts about teaching and their teaching practice in relation to teachers' personal influences, and how teachers responded to those factors in the actual context. I discuss teachers' responses and mediating factors in the third section. Lastly, I introduce my analytical-interpretative lens based on critical realism and apply Archer's (2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2007) theory of human identity, agency and structure in understanding the complex nature of the influences in a more holistic way and in theorising the relationships between teachers' selves and influences.

Teachers' life experiences

Participants' life experiences prior to their becoming teachers at the University, and their current personal life experiences beyond teaching were ongoing alongside their teaching, and spilled over into their practice. The consistency among teachers talking about their own lives in the process of explaining their beliefs and practice has been striking. When talking about issues of curriculum development, subject teaching, student learning, and university policies and school priorities, they constantly imported life stories and autobiographical comments into their explanations. It appeared that their prior life experiences were of substantial concern when teachers talked of their teaching in the current context. My literature review echoed this finding (e.g. Goodson, 1991, 2003, 2007; Goodson & Sikes, 2001; Lynn, 2002; Malm, 2009; O'Brien & Schillaci,

2002). Participants in this study talked about their upbringings, learning and working experiences, and significant others in their lives, and related those to the development of their intellectual thoughts, understanding of relationships, and motivations for choosing teaching as a profession, beliefs about education and conceptions of teaching. Participants from different cultural backgrounds provided valuable insights into cultural sensitivities and experience of success along with their affinity to who they are and where they are from. The data was firmly aligned with that part of literature which stressed the influence of teachers' religious, social, ethnic and family background on their educational thoughts, attitudes and actions (Carr, 2006; Churchman & King, 2009; Jones, 2003; Pajak & Blase, 1989). Background and life experiences were a major aspect of teachers' practice, which motivated them in their profession and sponsored their meaning-making.

Teachers' background and life experience appeared to influence potentially everything they did in their current teaching context. For example, a common feature in participants' accounts of their prior life experiences was the appearance of significant others who substantially influenced them: as a family member, as a young learner, as a community member, as a teacher or a practitioner. For example, they often reported that *"it was this person who impressed me with his passion for teaching"*; *"it was from this experience I learned that respect in teaching is essential"*; *"it was this person who triggered my thoughts"*. In short, as the data revealed, such people provided a role model for participants' future career choices and understanding of the teaching profession. These role models influenced participants' formation of personal beliefs and attitudes towards teaching as well as their subsequent vision of desirable teaching approaches. In contrast with these encouraging role models were some recalls of negative experiences. Participants reported being treated with no respect, being humiliated in front of others, being discouraged, being taught within a rigid format, and being superficially supervised. These experiences ran counter to what they expected or deserved. Participants felt *"it was not appropriate, not adequate at all"*; *"I don't like to be treated like that"*. The lesson they learned from those experiences was *"I will never do it in that way"*. These findings support O'Brien and Schilaci's (2002) contentions that early childhood experiences, early teacher role models, and previous teaching experiences are most important in the formation of an image of self as

teacher and what it means to be a teacher. It was evident in the data that these embedded elements went with teachers into the teaching context, playing an important ongoing role in their developing ideas about education, teaching and learning, and determining subsequent actions.

Teachers' beliefs about educational goals and conceptions of teaching were found to play a crucial role in how they perceived and experienced their professional role. Beliefs about the world, humanness, and reality, and conceptions of teaching and learning were accumulated over years of life experiences. Alongside teachers' dispositions were a number of philosophical foundations for participants' views about the world and teaching: constructivism, critical theory, postmodernism, poststructuralism, and *Ata*. Clearly, these philosophical orientations impacted on participants' interpretation of phenomena and their decision-making.

Linked to teachers' philosophical orientations were their conceptions of teaching. Participants viewed teaching from different angles; they highlighted certain aspects that were significant to them as well as to students, based on their experiences and practices. As revealed by the data, some teachers emphasised their understanding of the purpose of education; others focused on the moral aspect of teaching. Some were concerned about expert knowledge of the subject they were teaching, one participant thought classroom management was more important. In line with these distinct conceptions, individual teachers prioritised different aspect of teaching; they had different intentions concerning student learning and their relationship with students, and they taught accordingly to achieve their respective goals. Different teachers may teach quite differently, even when teaching the same subject and aiming towards the same examination (Gutek, 2004; Martin et al., 2002). Their teaching practice is "an expression of teachers' ideas of the educational good and their ideas of how to move towards that good in the present circumstances" (Oberg, 2005, p. 77), and their own teaching choices were influenced by their view of the purpose of education (Haigh, 2005).

Data suggested that teachers' beliefs about education and conceptions of teaching are relatively stable and enduring. The attitude, conceptions, theories, understandings, and values shaped along their life histories were accepted true by the participants in this study. Belief systems, once established, are highly resistant to change (Hativa &

Goodyear, 2002; Norton, et al., 2005; Pajares, 1992). The influences of such conceptions on teachers' choices of teaching approaches were evident in the participants' accounts in this study, as demonstrated in literature (Carnell, 2007; Entwistle et al., 2000; Kane, Sandretto & Heath, 2002; Kember 1997). Teachers' teaching behaviour, as distinct from their core ideas about education and teaching, seemed to be more subject to change however in response to contextual influences. Although strategic elements of the approach were modified in line with contextual factors such university policies, school expectations, workload, students, colleagues, tensions and dissonances arose when teachers encountered these contextual influences. Strategies involved adaptations to the preferred approach when one or more contextual factors played a part. But these influences are expected to be temporary and transitory rather than significant long-term shifts. Such factors would be unlikely to impinge upon the core conception of teaching (Kember & Kwan, 2002). Changes to teaching approaches or strategies were made more or less willingly, if at all. Teachers often experienced dissonance arising from a conflict between the views they held (often based on personal life history influences), and views expressed in university policy or by other teachers or managers. How teachers experienced such situations and responded to them has been detailed in previous chapters. Changes may be made without any accompanying change in core beliefs. The motivational element of the approach which was largely formed by the conception of teaching was relatively stable, and fundamental beliefs were unlikely to be challenged. The beliefs of teachers are so strong that they may be impervious to change within certain intervention programmes (Richardson & Placier, 2001). How teachers inwardly experience and respond to such situations is in turn influenced by varying/mediating factors.

Teachers' personality traits appeared to play a significant mediating role. Many personality traits, for example introversion or extroversion, imply certain characteristic behaviour toward other people including colleagues (Heider, 1958; Kelly, 1963). This study has identified differences in teachers' disposition to interact with their colleagues which may reflect difference in this dimension. Waller (1967) argues that over time teachers' occupational role "ties to the inner frame of personality" such character traits as inflexibility and reserve (p. 381). It is acknowledged that 'compatibility of teachers with courses is determined in part by personality

characteristics (Hativa, 2002, p. 290). Barsky and Wood (2005) suggest conflict avoidance by university teachers can be beneficial in some circumstances, depending upon their personality issues. Carr (2007) argues that qualities of teachers' characters should include some kinds of professional expertise. A connection has been identified between teachers' personal traits and their beliefs, and their teaching orientation and the strategies they use (Decker & Rimm-Kaufman, 2008; Vermetten, Lodewijks & Vermunt, 2001). It was evident in the present study, for example, that some teachers liked to think alone, while others admitted that they were sociable people and liked to work in collaboration with colleagues.

There was also evidence of a relationship between teachers' life styles and teaching approaches. For example, S1 identified strongly with 'modern' students' life style fashion and activities and felt that was important in his teaching. Engagement in teaching, or being a cool teacher, for S1 at least, was not simply a question of technical involvement but related to his interaction with students and connection with student life styles, which reflected a significant facet of his personal identity. He considered his modern life style as a major aspect of his success as a teacher. In addition, qualities such as teachers' passion for teaching, interest in their subject, empathy with students, were influential on their teaching thoughts and practice, in the long run, as their pedagogical know-how. Some of these qualities were seen as fixed genetically though, almost born in people (Anyan, 2007).

Participants' prior experiences were idiosyncratic and unique. They were embedded in teachers' sense of self as foundations on which teachers' thoughts were developed and views shaped. They exist as they are and no one can remove them. Thus, no one can control or change a teacher in a very fundamental way. Who teachers are as individuals is partly determined by their genetic makeup, but life experiences and background appeared to be ongoing and unchangeable aspects of the individual and continued to have influence. Teachers may have been pre-wired to process ideas and information in a particular way based on their upbringing, cultural background, learning, working and teaching experiences. To the extent that people invest their 'self' in the decision-making of their daily lives to some degree, experience and background therefore shape teachers' current practice.

Contextual influences

University policies and faculty/school expectations regarding the roles of teachers were perceived by all participants to be influential. Multiple roles undertaken by participants in this study included developing programmes, teaching, doing research, offering community service, doing administrative work, being advisors and offering pastoral care to students, and providing research consultancy, to name a few. Teachers were expected to understand and commit to the multiple facets of academic work; they were expected to be "*Jacks of all trades*" as one participant said. Notwithstanding the existing tensions, teaching was perceived by participants to be of primary value. A similar value was shared by teachers in the study of Leslie (2002), who discussed the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty and showed that the participating teachers valued teaching over research, although the reward structure favoured research and publication explicitly. The overlapping roles of teacher and researcher can create tensions because of the "living contradiction" (Whitehead, 1994, p. 8) realized by researchers when their teaching practice does not match values they claim to embrace (Louie, et al., 2003). These diverse views emerged from data meant multiple interpretations and compromises occurred in regard to contextualised teaching practices (Churchman, 2006; Doherty & McMahon, 2007; Norton, et al., 2005). Teachers do not assign the same value to all roles they are expected to take. There is no single way of being a university teacher (Dall'Alba, 2005). They rely on their beliefs and prior experiences, construct meanings for academic tasks which may or may not be in line with the terms and definitions proposed by university or school. This inconsistency between personal beliefs and institution-espoused values is evident in literature (e.g., Fanghanel, 2004; Palmer, 2007; Postareff et al., 2008; Wright, 2005)

Data in the present study revealed the influence of teachers' perceptions of 'mixed messages', 'micro-politics', intensive procedure for course development and approval, superficial evaluation of teaching, inappropriate allocation of work. In addition to the pressure teachers experienced, some emphasized bureaucracy as an impediment to teachers doing quality work. The overall findings in this area shared features reported in the literature (e.g., Cranton & Carusetta, 2002; Fanghanel, 2007; Lea & Callaghan, 2008; Pickering, 2006). For example, one participant encountered resistance when he planned to implement innovations for a course in collaboration with academic

developers, which supports the idea of “recurrent practices” vs. “limited penetration of new practices” found in the study of Trowler and Cooper (2002, p. 231).

School leaders and managers and their leadership and management in relation to such matters as school culture, work allocations and resources emerged as key factors influencing teachers’ thoughts and actions. Some teachers voiced concerns about where the school would be led to and others perceived the culture within the school as not sufficiently appealing. The experiences of D1 (*“disagreement with school leadership priorities”*), J1 (*“when I talked to the head of school recently about workloads and expectations, he blamed it on the university”*), J3 (*“follow the highest authority”*) and L2 (*“micro-politics”*) indicated some participants’ need of resourcing to support their teaching effectively. This affirms the findings of Staniforth and Harland (2006), who investigated the role of the head of department in the new academic induction process and discovered a more complex situation in which “numerous examples of practice situations seemed to disadvantage the new staff member” (p. 194). There is also consistency with perceptions of teachers in Hocking’s (2005) research indicating that “in this aspect academic leaders were often perceived (by teachers) to create rather than remove barriers to effective academic work” (p. 313). The teachers in the present study identified such barriers as being asked to teach in areas where they did not have expertise, inappropriate allocation of teaching schedules, failure to provide adequate teaching resources, expectations beyond the reach of teachers. They perceived that these directions led to them being less effective in supporting learning and student achievement.

Colleagues appeared to be influential for most teachers. Data revealed the existence of multiple accounts and understandings about the colleagues they worked with and with collegial culture in context. The data largely confirms evidence from other studies showing teachers seeking or creating opportunities for conversations with colleagues to discuss or share their beliefs and practice about teaching and learning (Haigh, 2005c; Palmer, 1998; Orland-Barak, 2006; Windschitl, 2002) in a collegial environment (Carnell, 2007; Trigwell, 2005; Vogel, 2009), where diverse meaning-making is both “catered for and appreciated” (Parker, 2007, p. 790). Data supported the conception of “communities of practice” (Wenger, 1998) where a group of people make and share meaning with mutual obligations, and demonstrated some features of the scholarship

of teaching and learning (Boyer, 1990; Kreber, 2003, 2007) which calls for making teaching public. Teachers' accounts, however, also revealed the meaning of what Palmer (2004) called "community of solitudes", where people practice the paradox of "being alone together" within a "circle of trust" (p. 55). Influences from colleagues operated in combination with a range of other experiences and perceived sources of influences. Each of the teachers had his/her own characteristics and a self-perceived identity which directed individual choices (De Simone, 2001). Some teachers preferred to work in a more cooperative or collaborative way, whereas others chose to work in relative isolation. Teachers joined discussions that linked them to like-minded colleagues, like D1, H1, and N1 who came together informally to advance their teaching (Haigh, 2005c; Windschitl, 2002). Teachers who maintained weak ties with colleagues were primarily reliant on their individualistic perspectives and senses in dealing with influences on teaching (McAninch, 1993). There was a range of factors mediating teachers' intentions, attitudes, and responses in interaction with their colleagues, and their influence by colleagues, as discussed in the next section.

Perceptions of students' traits, student feedback on teaching, and observations of students' learning performance, all played an important part in influencing teachers' perspectives on their role and their approaches to teaching. According to their perceptions of the traits and learning performances of a group of students, teachers adjusted their approaches and chose methods which they perceived appropriate, and sometimes they were challenged by their students. Although they experienced and responded to students and to student feedback differently (Harvey & Kamvounias, 2008; Hayes, 2006; McAlpine & Weston, 2002; Moore & Kuol, 2005; Richardson, 2005), teachers adopted a wide range of strategies to cater for students from diverse backgrounds, which affirms the study of Zepke and Leach (2007), which investigated how teachers accommodate diversity in their teaching in seven tertiary institutions in New Zealand. Notwithstanding the different focuses of the studies, there were some trends and consistencies in the findings of the national research projects that affirmed the perceptions and experiences of teachers in my study (Haigh & Naidoo, 2007; Haigh, et al., 2009), where teachers in the course of the project constantly negotiated the influences from academic developers who support with enhancement agenda, student characteristics, and the context within which they work.

Responses and mediating factors

Teachers live in a world of choice (Gutek, 2004); teachers in this study had a degree of choice in thinking about their situation and making decisions. Participants responded differently to contextual influences that prescribe, recommend or suggest different views about teaching or ways of teaching: some of them were concerned to protect their identity and refused to change; some of them ignore directions or suggestions; some used strategies that involved 'playing the game', giving the appearance of change but making no change; some followed authority; and some moaned.

Teachers' accounts also portrayed a variety of teachers' responses to the multiple roles assigned to them, particularly those of teacher and researcher. Teachers who had no research-based qualifications and limited research experience took time to adjust to the changing climate of expectations. Some were torn between being a good teacher and researcher, as they perceived the latter role to be at the expense of their engagement with teaching. Some teachers changed their role/direction from being a researcher to becoming a programme developer.

The data suggest that there was a trend towards less change in teachers' thoughts about teaching and their teaching practices during teachers' career as years of experience increased and advancement in academic position occurred. From another perspective, teachers' certainty about their beliefs and level of confidence in their practice also help to explain this process of negotiation between multiple and conflicting influences. Some teachers in this study took a robust approach to this process in their working context, acting as movers and shakers. The action they took was much more proactive than the passive responses of others. For example, P2 developed programmes in the school, supported colleagues in doing research and transformed the views of colleagues on the work of research; D1 actively participated in the school research committee with like-minded people attempting to change the school culture. Their action was more creative than the strategies of resistance (De Welde & Seymour, 2008; McKenzie & Scheurich, 2008; Varsos, 2008; Zembylas, 2003). These teachers shared similar features to academics in the study of Trowler (1998), who noted that contextual factors "are amenable to change by actors and are themselves influenced by other structures" (p. 139). In this sense, in these teachers'

working context, culture was an ongoing process rather than a static entity; teachers were influenced by working within the culture and simultaneously influential in shaping it (Archer, 2003a; Fay, 1996).

Teachers' career stages and the status of their academic position mediated their responses to influences. Teachers tended to hold different teaching thoughts and adopted certain strategies at different stages of their career. The experience of teachers in this study captured the progression, from the novice teacher (J2, J3), the mid career (D1, P2, R1), to the experienced (A1, R2), as suggested by Haigh (2005c) and Gossman (2008). The characteristics of teachers at various stages imply aspects of their teaching which may be open to influence. Teachers at the novice stage need to isolate the factors affecting teaching activities and to formulate a set of rules that apply and guide her or his work in the situation. As experience is gained, they reflect upon their practice and refine their rules and develop new ones. As proficiency and experience increase, an individual may engage in research into teaching. When teachers arrive at a certain stage, their intrinsic control becomes more decisive (Bandura, 2001, 2003), the likelihood for change is much less, though they do not close to change. Similarly, Lynn (2002) characterised teacher career pathways as a cyclic progression combining personal and professional experiences, with varying kinds of commitment evident at different points of the career. The career cycle model consists of eight stages: preservice, induction, competency building, enthusiasm and growth, frustration, stability, wind-down and exit. Teachers move in and out of these stages in response to personal and contextual conditions. The movement is dynamic and flexible rather than static and linear. For example, the stability stage of the career cycle can take place at any time for various reasons. The motivations for moving into this stage vary significantly. Teachers at different phases of the career cycle hold different concerns and perceive the relevance of one or more facets of influences in relation to realising their personal and professional goals. The career stage of teachers appeared to influence teachers' interaction with their colleagues due to the disparities in their perceptions of teaching and their feelings about teaching experiences (Norman, Ambrose & Huston, 2006). It also influenced the attitudes of teachers toward interaction with their colleagues. For example, J4 anticipated that she would not ask many "naive" questions after 20 years. Her courage to ask "silly questions" and

investment of time with colleagues would be worthwhile if she found this to be rewarded in her teaching. To the extent that their satisfaction in teaching could be achieved independently, teachers' motivation to interact with colleagues was weakened. Confidence in dealing with teaching related issues grows and individual discretion starts to take precedence. The repertoire is formulated and tested with equal status colleagues. Colleagues start to exert reciprocal influence on one another. A1 and C1 showed in this research, teachers arrived at a position and stage when they sought new ideas from sources other than colleagues, and offered advice to colleagues if invited to. They were confident with what they were doing and did not want interference. Furthermore, these factors tended to influence teacher's autonomy in taking initiatives around importing their ideas into teaching, as shown in J3, C1, and A1's contrasting reactions to teaching materials designed by others which they were not satisfied with. I shared my findings in this area at national and international conferences (Jiao, 2008a; Jiao & Haigh, 2009).

Teachers' employment status was identified as a mediator of their attitudes and strategies in relation to the influence of colleagues. For example, as a contractor, J3 perceived the competitive aspect of university teaching as one of the impediments to in-depth collaboration with colleagues. She felt constrained in expressing her puzzles and uncertainties. When she had good ideas about course design and innovation, it was almost in her interests to not share them with colleagues because of the potential implications for her future contract. Contract teachers like J3 may be reluctant to share fresh insights or to take initiatives in teaching. The characteristics of this cohort of teachers in relation to the drivers for personal and professional development, internal changes and changes in practice, and obstacles they face have been explored in the literature (Pill, 2005; Walker, Gleaves & Grey, 2006).

Teachers' impression management (Goffman, 1971) appears to be another mediator in their interaction with colleagues. The data revealed that individual teachers often felt constrained when discussing their own professional experiences with colleagues. Some were reluctant to reveal their true feelings because they did not want to appear incompetent, unprofessional or show signs of weakness.

Teachers' position in the career life cycle was perceived to be influential on their engagement in teaching, and also appeared to mediate some contextual influences.

Research has found that teachers follow common career engagement phases (e.g. stabilization, stock-taking, disengagement) and they have changing concerns in relation to decision-making and identity formation (Baldwin, Lunceford & Vanderlinden, 2005; Erikson, 1980). Data showed such influences may impact on teachers' thoughts and/or actions, and be more lasting within a certain period of time but subject to changes from one phase to another.

In addition, events in teachers' everyday lives, and their associated emotional lives were identified as having a crucial immediate influence on teaching practice and on teachers' reactions to other influences. Teachers' daily concerns and priorities, unpredictable happenings and emergent issues directly influenced teachers' engagement in teaching and their classroom performance (Hargreaves, 1998; Kossek & Lambert, 2005; Suzanne & Milles, 1992; Zembylas, 2005). Data showed such influences appeared to be more significant on teaching practice rather than on teachers' thoughts and beliefs, and were likely to be fleeting but immediate and of temporal importance. If teachers were distracted or disturbed by events in non-teaching life, they might be less inclined to be collegial or sociable, to challenge or contest their teaching ideas, or to reflect on their practice.

Variations in the timing and impact of influences were also evident in teachers' accounts of their participation in workshops or training courses. These included: immediate change in teaching behaviour (J4's application of the 'one-minute' technique after participation in an induction course; D2's improvement in course design resulting from her tertiary teaching course); immediate impact on thoughts but delayed application in practice (L2's contemplation of advice, and adoption after a period of time); and no immediate impact on thoughts and practice but recognition that there may be impact in future (experienced teachers like C1 and R2). Though teachers' teaching strategies and techniques seemed to be more open to influence by contextual factors than their fundamental beliefs were, there was some evidence that teachers' thoughts and views might be extended or transformed by contextual influences which participants saw as more challenging. For example, Dall'Alba (2005) theorized her teaching in a course for experienced university teachers, which focused on transforming and enhancing ways of being university teachers, through integrating knowing, acting and being in relation to ontological and epistemological issues. The

influence of the course on teachers was significant and would probably have an impact on teachers' immediate or future practice. The study revealed that some factors did not seem to have an immediate effect until later; teachers may revisit the incident or idea and decide to activate it in the context in which similar thoughts were triggered. There is other scenario, that behavioural change may precede conceptual change, and that the accumulation of behavioural change thus leads to change in teaching conceptions (Eley, 2003).

Influences are ongoing, transferring from contextual factor into teachers' prior experiences, as teachers are involved in the process of continuous construction and reconstruction of knowledge. For example, teachers' subject knowledge changed through teaching the subject. (Green, 2006; Hoekstra, et al., 2007; Prosser, et al., 2005; Trigwell, et al., 2005). That was demonstrated by in some participants in this study, like J3 who said *"one great way to learn about almost any subject is to teach it"*. Participants sought or were exposed to information from various sources in relation to teaching. They learned from/with colleagues and students; they gained thoughts from readings, media, observations and reflections. When teachers gained insights from, for example, colleagues, they conceptualized and integrated the relevant knowledge into their teaching repertoire and some aspects of knowledge were then reconstructed. This kind of knowledge may be transferred into a subsequent context where teachers believed there was a connection. It then became part of their prior experience.

These factors were very much interwoven, and there was no single isolated factor that 'caused' a decision to be made about teaching ideas and actions. Each individual factor was unlikely to influence a teacher's thoughts and action on its own; they interact with each other to exercise influences through teachers' negotiation within the context. Teachers' ideas about teaching and teaching practices seemed to "evolve out of a process of weighting factors" in a "gradual process involving prior consideration, prior decisions, and the various factors underlying the prior decision" (Stoffels, 2004, p. 22).

Furthermore, influences also emerged with new forces or reoccurred with previous ones. For example, an initiative of to implement Scholarship of Teaching and Learning was underway in the course of this study. The milestone report (Gossman, Haigh & Jiao, 2009) foreshadowed initiatives that could encourage teachers towards SoTL and enable their movement along the 'excellent teacher' to 'scholarly teacher' to 'scholar

of teaching' continuum. The report suggested that initiatives would need to be aligned with the distinctive features of teachers' contexts. The authors observed that teachers' development is not always uni-directional and constant, which adds to the complex nature of influence when the emerging factor is confounded by teachers' old 'habits' that continue to function.

In summary, teachers' long-standing beliefs appeared to be deeply rooted in their personal life experiences. Those experiences had an enduring influence on teachers' thoughts, which informed their practice. Contextual factors in the teaching environment were always present as potential influences, but how they were experienced and responded to depended on whether influences were perceived as consistent or inconsistent 'messages' regarding teaching and the function of a range of mediating factors. The perceived relevance of individual factors (some factors act as both influences and mediators) decided the degree of impact on teachers' practice, practice-thoughts, or thoughts-practice. When clashes occurred in teachers' encounter with external values and contextual influences, some teachers experienced uncertainties in teaching (Hansen, 2007), the living contradiction of self (Whitehead, 1994), dissonance (Fanghanel, 2004), and incongruence between beliefs and practice (Trowler & Cooper, 2002; Wright, 2005). Various influences interacted along with emerging factors that contributed to final decisions, influencing the likelihood of students, colleagues, or even the school culture and policy impacting upon teaching. Over time, teachers either reshaped or abandoned many of their temporary strategies in response to the demands of their teaching practice in particular contexts and their concurrent personal lives, but permanent beliefs were the very essence of who they were as people and were likely to be immutable to change. The significant role played by teachers' identities in dealing with the complexities of influences brought my attention to Archer's (2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2007) theory of human agency and structure in theorising the phenomena.

From the lens of Archer's theory

In the course of data interpretation, I endeavoured to evaluate the strength of evidence of influences, and in turn, the significance of their impact on teachers' practices. The power of individual teachers' agency and that of contextual influences

was then identified; the weighting and timing of influences were obvious, and there was evidence of dissonance between some influential factors and subsequent impact. For example, it was not uncommon that one particular factor had significant influence on one participant but not on others. Attempts were made to categorise influences in relation to their impact on teachers' thinking and actions in order to weigh evidence, however this tended to be ideal given the complexity of data gathered. I was challenged in representing the phenomena and incorporating the complexities of influences and responses into a generic model that I hoped would reflect a more holistic representation. While I present the idea of categorising identified influences as important, it is also evident that the interplay between those influences is complex, particularly where there was limited control over the weighting and timing of influences across individuals. While detailed consideration of the data offered initial synthesis of the findings, I felt that more sophisticated analysis and quality explanation would benefit from a broader theoretical perspective.

In the light of the data, I returned to the literature review, revisited my theoretical stance (interpretive-analytical lens), and took stock of my emergent concepts and how they have been understood by researchers who occupy alternative paradigms and positioning. The fundamental issue of teachers' prior experiences, personal lives, and complexities of their inner experiences in relation to contextual influences led me to the literature on human agency and structure and the relationships between them. I found, among other key figures, the views of Margaret Archer (2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2007) particularly influential in understanding and theorizing the phenomena. Archer's perspective is situated within the paradigm of critical realism which posits both the existence of social realities (ontological realism) and our knowledge about those realities (epistemological relativism). She argues that the powers and properties of human beings, and of social and cultural structures, influence but do not determine each other. The approach of analytical dualism (Archer, 2003a) recognizes the interdependence of structure and agency as causal powers at the level of both person and society: antecedently existing structure constrains and enables agents; intended and unintended consequences produced by interactions lead to structural elaboration, reproduction, or transformation; the existing structure was itself the structural elaboration resulting from the action of prior agents. Through this sequence, argues

Archer, it is possible to investigate the internal causal dynamics and offer explanations of how structure and agential phenomena interlink over time. The connections between such views and the nature of my data are obvious.

At the outset of my research, as illustrated in Chapter 3, I positioned myself in epistemological constructivism. I view reality as socially/individually constructed and individually/socially mediated. This shared set of views represented a perspective of epistemological relativism. My constructivist epistemology position was not abandoned in response to my awareness of the ontology of critical realism. According to Crotty (1998), ontology sits alongside epistemology informing the theoretical perspective, and each theoretical perspective “embodies a certain way of understanding of what is (ontology) and as well as a certain way of understanding what it means to know (epistemology)” (p. 10). In researching the ‘meaningful reality’, Crotty concurred with Guba and Lincoln (1998) that “the existence of a world without a mind is conceivable. Meaning without a mind is not. Realism in ontology and constructionism in epistemology turn out to be quite compatible (Crotty, 1998, pp. 10-11). From this point of view, there exists no paradigm conflict between Archer’s ontological critical realism and my epistemological constructivism, particularly when I position myself at the intersection of radical constructivism and social constructivism (Kanuka & Anderson, 1999). But each upholds its own views on different facets of reality. Contemplation of analytic-interpretive lenses led me to a substantial body of literature on critical realism. As I became familiar with its fundamental concepts and propositions, I came to realise that it resonated strongly with my world views and largely addressed the challenges that I had associated with complexities evident in data.

Drawing on critical realism, Archer’s attention to analytical dualism, reflexivity and internal conversation has provided valuable resources for those who attempt to theorise phenomena under investigation. She has adequately conceptualized how structural emergent properties impinge upon people and condition their doings as well as how these properties are received and responded to by agents in turn. The active agent has his or her own distinctive properties and powers; they acquire a sense of self, a personal identity and social identity. Archer (2000) distinguishes between the concepts of the natural self and the social self:

The properties and powers of the human being are neither seen as pre-given, nor as socially appropriated, but rather these are emergent from our relations with our environment. As such they have relative autonomy from biology and society alike, and causal powers to modify both of them. (p. 87)

Structural properties may have the capacity to operate as constraints and enablements. However, their powers as constraints and enablements require activation by agents. Archer argues that the process through which the effects of structural properties are mediated by the individual agency entails three main stages:

- i. Structural and cultural properties objectively shape the situations which agents confront involuntarily, and possess generative powers of constraint and enablement in relation to.
- ii. Agents' own configuration of concerns, as subjectively defined in relation to the three orders of natural reality – nature, practice and society.
- iii. Courses of action are produced through the reflexive deliberations of agents who subjectively determine their practical projects in relation to their objective circumstances. (Archer, 2003a, p. 135)

The agent is active and reflexive, has the properties and powers to “monitor their own lives, to mediate structural and cultural properties of society, and thus to contribute to societal reproduction or transformation” (Archer, 2003b, p. 25). The human capacity for reflexivity, argues Archer, mediates between structure and agency, which is embodied in internal conversation:

The ‘inner conversation’ is how our personal emergent powers are exercised on and in the world – natural, practical and social – which is our triune environment. This ‘interior dialogue’ is not just a window upon the world, rather it is what determines our being-in-the-world, though not in the times and circumstances of our choosing. (Archer, 2000, p. 319)

Through internal conversation, the agent takes stock of the situation they confront, as well as their own desires and concerns, before determining their course of action. Reflexivity is a process in which individuals react to situation where they involuntarily find themselves. They continually assess whether the concerns they were once devoted to are worthy of ongoing devotion, how they make their way through the world, and how they make a place in the world - a place where they hope they can exercise some governance in their own lives and become the person they wish to

become, within the social world available to them. These elements were perceived to be relevant and useful in exploring more holistically how teachers in my study sought to exercise agency in relation to the multiple influences they encountered.

The concepts of structure and agency have started to emerge in tertiary education research, though not as much as in social theory (Ashwin, 2008). I have not located literature in which human agency is considered with specific reference to both personal prior and contextual experiences. However, there is a body of literature in which human agency and structure are discussed. Among them, Fanghanel (2007) identified a range of structural constraints on agency, though ways in which such agency is exercised in response to social and cultural influences were not explored. Varsos (2008) saw the university teacher of literature as an agent who possesses knowledge and transmits it orally, and discussed how teaching practices can be affected by the epistemological ramification of the cultural authority. De Welde and Seymour (2008) highlighted extrinsic and intrinsic sources of university teachers' resistance, the inherent risks of classroom innovation, and strategies for coping with these for pedagogical innovations. Louise Archer (2008) drew attention to the ways in which younger academics negotiate their identities within the pressures of contemporary academia, and their strategies of resistance and practices of protection. Similarly, Fanghanel and Trowler (2008) argued that the teaching dimension of the academic role cannot be usefully studied without paying attention to the degree of agency available to teachers in their professional lives.

However, it is clear that such studies reflect a dominant social-cultural or cultural-individual approach which contends that individual agency is affected by social and cultural factors, or even determined by structural influences. The interplay between the individual teacher's agency and structural power has rarely been considered. Based on her critical realist analysis of the significance of agency as developed by Margaret Archer, Clegg (2005) called for a clear focus on agency in theorising about teaching, learning, and change in higher education, arguing that the impact of micro-level changes are mediated through the understandings, creativity and resistance of specific factors. She points out that

While there are tendencies emergent at the structural level which are re-shaping the university, these are being modified by actors on the round. Moreover, there are new

possibilities and some of the progressive impulse around widening participation has created new sorts of collective agents in the academy. (p. 157)

The emergence and presence of critical realism and related concepts developed by Margret Archer in the area of higher education research are evident in the literature. For example, Kahn (2009) conducted analysis in light of Archer's realist social theory and argued that the interplay between structure and agency was manifest in the practice of the participating academics, that the influence of contextual factors was mediated by teachers' concerns and reflexive deliberations. In agreement with Archer, the author suggests that realist social theory offers a promising way forward to reconcile agency and structure without personal power being withdrawn from academics. Plumb (2008) explored the role personal reflexivity plays in mediating the relationship between individual and society, and argued that four modes of reflexivity clarify the different ways people think about and balance concerns from their engagement in various contexts. Hopwood and Sutherland (2009) theorised doctoral students' and early career academics' experience in terms of relational agency and argued that this perspective helps understand the complexity of experience and "how the experience and expression of agency may vary across individuals and across time" (p. 217). Fanghanal (2009) examined the role of ideology in university teachers' conceptions of their discipline, with a focus on how individual ideologies affect the way teachers conceptualise and enact the discipline in practice. She reframed the more deterministic ways in which disciplines have been presented by "emphasizing the role of agency and reintroducing complexity" (p. 576).

In parallel with my current research, a number of scholars who share my research interest have turned to an emphasis on the significance of human agency in framing their research. These studies demonstrate that Archer's realist social theory models, situated within the broader paradigm of critical realism perform a major service for educational theory (Clegg, 2005). Research from this particular standpoint provided more sophisticated approaches, generated more complete and quality explanations for the phenomena under investigation, and offered points of departure for further study and the development of practice. In the following section, I draw on Margaret Archer's stance on human agency in higher education research. I attempt to make connections between accounts by teachers in my study and aspects of the theories

and models developed by Archer (2003a, 2007), and seek ways of ruling out alternative ways in which a connection might be made.

Theorising influences -teacher's identity, agency, and structure

As evident from previous chapters on the influences in teachers' personal and work environments, different levels of structure were always the focus of attention, ranging from personal upbringing, learning, working environments, to teachers' current university teaching context. Realism's stratified ontology has proved to be useful in "delineating the properties and powers that emerge at different levels of social structure, [which] is just as pertinent to agency" (Archer, 2003b, p. 17). In attempting to theorise influences on teachers and teaching, these strata pertain to every teacher's 'selfhood', 'personal identity' and 'social identity'.

Selfhood

Archer (2003b) maintained that "the most basic of our human powers, beyond our biology, is our 'selfhood' – *a continuous sense of self* or reflexive self-consciousness" (italics original, p. 19). From birth, participants emerged into particular ways in the world. A sense of selfhood grew from their existence in the world. For example, participant J2 reflected on his origins:

I was brought up on the farm and those principles and beliefs that I was born into, and so when I went into college, I still had those foundations set in me. I knew who I was, I knew where I was, I knew my family, I knew the genealogy of where I come from. So I was safe and secure within myself to go anywhere and do anything. (J2)

P2 knew what kind of person he was:

I'm a highly introverted person. I love nothing better than just sitting here on my own and not interacting with other people. (P2)

This sense of selfhood is continuous and is necessarily reflexive. If teacher D1 were not born in a family with a strong Christian faith, then he probably would have no dilemma about whether to follow his belief about education or to comply with institutional expectations. If teacher L3 were not from a Pacific island, she probably would not challenge the established curriculum from that particular cultural stance. Their dilemmas arose from a clash of two sets of social norms. The decisions they made

were not scripted by society, but resulted from their continuous reflexive consciousness of who they were.

The emergence of personal identity

Personal identity is the capacity to express what we care about in the world. As conscious beings in the world, teachers inevitably interact with three different orders of reality with different type of concerns: “physical well-being in the natural order; performative skill in the practical order; and self-worth in the social order” (Archer, 2003b, pp. 20-21). They have to sustain work and social relationships in order to survive, live and thrive in these three orders simultaneously. However, the dilemma confronting all teachers arises from their concerns originating in each order of reality, which are not necessarily harmonious. Each teacher has to work out a liveable balance within a range of concerns in relation to these three orders by prioritizing one or several of them. For example, teacher A2 admitted that she would probably invest more time and energy in teaching if she were in her 30s; teacher P2 would concentrate more on teaching if he were not experiencing a mid-career crisis; D1’s and R1’s emotion of the day affected their performance in the classroom. These teachers dealt seriously with their concerns about their physical well-being in the natural order of reality of their particular life cycles. In the practical order of reality, teachers’ performative skills were evident in data through exposure to a range of activities such as travelling (C1), childcare (A2), hunting and riding (H1, J2), painting (J1), fishing (D1), cooking (L2), computing (L1), medical practice (D2), swimming (A1) and the religious, learning, teaching and coaching practices of the majority of participants. These skills represented teachers’ concerns in the practical order of reality. As to teachers’ concerns about self-worth in the social order of reality, data provided examples of teachers’ interactions with significant others and shown their reflection on critical incidents that had happened to them. However, “we have no alternative but to inhabit these three orders simultaneously, and none of their concerns can be bracketed away for long” (Archer, 2003b, p. 21). Teachers can prioritise one of these three orders of reality but cannot neglect orders entirely. Nevertheless, data did not allow me to locate every participating teacher’s concerns in relation to each of the three orders of reality. While I acknowledge this incompleteness, the notion of the cognitive unconscious (Ashwin, 2008) might offer a partial explanation for this matter.

Being in a world of various constraints and enablements, teachers deliberate the relative balance between their varied concerns. At the same time, they must also confront and negotiate the different ways the world of realities impinge upon them. Archer (2003a) characterizes the final results of this engagement as the human's unique *modus vivendi* (p. 149). This balance among teacher's concerns gives his or her identity as a particular person. The emergent identities, argues Archer, "are a matter of how we prioritise one concern as our 'ultimate concern', and how we subordinate but yet accommodate others to it" (2003b, p. 21). Thus, teachers' identities formulated prior to their teaching in the University, are neither the gift of the situations in which they find themselves nor the result of influential factors teachers encountered, because the *modus vivendi* is worked out by an active and reflective agent attempting to seek balance in all three orders of reality. It is constructed through "inner conversation" to make sense of what teachers care about most and commit themselves to in the world, and, how they shape their lives around those concerns.

As a result of ongoing interaction with the environment, new sources of information and knowledge come into being. Teachers interpret and articulate these imports in the light of their commitments that define who they are; and this may bring with it internal contradictions, transformation of commitments, and re-valuation of the past. For example, teachers in this study varied in their sense of agency as their careers progressed. Young and early career teachers, like J3, J4 and D2 were still learning about themselves, the school, the university, the world and the relations between them. They may have had an overwhelming sense of structures impinging on them and how they were to learn about, respond to, and wonder about their degree of autonomy and agency. Their inner conversations were unlikely to lead them to the establishment of a stable commitment. They had to engage or suspend aspects of their identity and take on new aspects as their relationships with the environment changed. Uncertainties and inconsistencies were more likely to happen at this career stage. While for teachers like A2, R2, C1, at a senior career stage, the ultimate concerns around which their lives were organized were more stable. They exercised their autonomy more fluently than their early career colleagues. This possibly explains various reactions of teachers at different career stages in response to contextual influences. Internal conversation is a continuous reflexive monitoring of concerns, and

the resulting *modus vivendi* never reaches a mature certainty. Teachers' concerns may change from job to job, position to position, and relationship to relationship. When the accumulation of circumstances made it difficult to formulate a desired personal identity or new aspects of that identity, some part of the sense of self was absent, causing dissonance and incongruence. This was evident from teachers in this study who were experiencing a change in life cycle, who engaged in university teaching as a second career, who moved into the University from other institutions, or who experienced the change in the University's status. Their commitments, to some extent, always subject to renewal or revision.

The emergence of social(situational) identity

Social identity is a matter of "what we care about in the context of appropriate social roles" (Archer, 2003b, p. 23). As demonstrated in the previous chapters, teachers interacted with a multiplicity of influences in the University. Their choice to work in this particular university meant neither that they were willing to comply with all its embedded structural properties, nor that they were ready to accept its emergent properties, let alone unpredictable emergences. They had to deal with their placement as situated social agents and deliberate how structural powers affected who they could voluntarily become. Given the experiences of teachers prior to their work in the University, as shown in Chapter 5, there is no doubt that they had already forged personal and social identities as the 'being-with-this-constellation-of-concerns' (Archer, 2003b, p. 22). For the purpose of this research, I view the University as a particular stratum of structure, thus social identity refers to what teachers care about in the university context with multiple roles and expectations, and resembles the meaning of situated identity or contextual identity (Hogg & Terry, 2001; Jenkins, 1996). The emergence of teachers' social selves in this particular context occurred at the interface of contextual influences and personal agency. The relational nature of this interaction required independent powers granted to teachers' existing and emergent properties, and the reality of structural and cultural properties. In this research, these structural and cultural properties refer to university culture, school culture, policies and expectations, colleagues and students.

In the interplay between personal agency and structure power, personal identity and social identity are continuously and simultaneously forged; both contribute to one another's emergence and distinctiveness dialectically. Teachers evaluate their contextual concerns against other kinds of concerns when ordering their ultimate concerns. Archer (2003b, pp. 23-24) speculated three 'moments' of the interplay between personal identity and social identity: 1) the nascent personal identity holds sway over nascent social identity; 2) the nascent social identity impacts upon the nascent personal identity; and 3) synthesis between personal and social identity. I now connect data to these three moments.

In the first moment (personal identity holds sway over social identity), when teachers are confronted with contextual influences, they draw on resources of their existing identities to make decisions. They have internal conversations about their experiences of the natural, practical, and social orders of reality. Firstly, teachers' concerns about their physical well-being in the natural realm including life cycle, life style, career stage, contribute to their decision-making. Secondly, teachers' constant interaction in the practical order provides various skills, teaching, learning and research strategies in particular, for them to implement in the University context. Thirdly, as reflexive beings, teachers deliberate the multiple roles and expectations the university assigns to them; they determine to what extent their beliefs could become the locus of their self-worth. Teachers entered the university or particular teaching context with rich resources. Their emergent personal identities acted as a reference for them to select roles they would like to play and to what extent they might fulfil these. Teacher A1 was a typical example who drew strongly on his personal identities. Along with the accumulation of experiences and continual testing of his personal and social identities, he held firm beliefs about who he was and how he went about addressing concerns in the teaching context. Although the full maturation of his identity development was yet to be reached, it seemed that he had no intention of incorporating possible emergent situational identity into existing ones.

In the second moment (social identity impacts upon personal identify), teachers undergo change in the process of formulating their situational identities because they experience emergent structural properties. Teachers moved into the University for various reasons and motivations. Their choices were necessarily experiments, guided

by their personal identities. Voluntary participation in the university and involuntary role-taking in specific contexts might bring about a confrontation of concerns. Concerns were manifested such as to what extent teachers identified with the university policies and school expectations, to what extent they invested themselves, whether they had opportunities to work in alignment with their concerns, or whether they wanted to stay in the position for the future. In this process of experimentation, argues Archer (2003b), individuals will have undergone certain subjective and objective changes:

Subjectively, they have acquired some new self knowledge, which will impact upon their personal identity: they are now people who *know* that they are bored by x, disillusioned by y and made uneasy by z. Yet they have also changed objectively, because the opportunity costs have altered for their revised 'second choice' and corrected positions may be harder to come by. (p. 24)

The data showed close connections with the 'second moment' of interplay between personal identity and social (situational) identity. For example, 14 teachers talked about their struggles to perform multiple roles as teacher, researcher, and administrator at the same time. Negotiations and compromises were not uncommon in their accounts. Eight teachers described perceived enablement and constraints in light of effective teaching and the benefits they gained and frustration suffered. Teachers D1 and PG were considering leaving the university if they continuously could not find a fit. The majority of teachers reported that they had learned from interaction with colleagues and students. According to Archer, all these pleasant and not so pleasant experiences contribute to teachers' subjective and objective changes, having an impact on their personal identity.

In the third moment of synthesis between personal and social identity, teachers willingly prepare themselves to invest in the work they are undertaking. They know they are doing activities that are worthwhile and see their self-worth as constituted by occupying that particular role. Four teachers in this study expressed a reasonable alignment between personal beliefs, university priorities and school expectations: they respected the rules; they understood the policies and expectations; they immersed themselves in the contextual culture and made contributions to its development. However, this did not mean that personal identity was replaced by social identity because of this alignment. As Archer (2003b) argues, personal identities arise from our

citizenship of the whole world; our social identities are made under social conditions that are not of our choosing:

Our social identity becomes defined, but necessarily as a subset of personal identity. The result is a personal identity within which the social identity has been assigned its place in the life of an individual. (italics original, p. 25)

As demonstrated in Chapter 4 by two contrasting cases, there are individual differences in agential capacity and structural power. As Archer (2003b) observed:

Unless we acknowledge this, we will go far astray by making assumptions that the same constraints and enablements have a standardised impact upon all agents who are similarly placed. Instead, in every social situation, objective factors, such as vested interests and opportunity costs for different courses of action, are filtered through agents' subjective and reflexive determinations. Actions are not mechanically determined, nor are they the subject of a uniform cost-benefit analysis that works in terms of a single currency of 'utiles'. Rather, it is the agent who brings her own 'weights and measures' to bear, which are defined by the nature of her 'ultimate concerns'. (p. 25)

Reflexive deliberation and response in action

Archer argues that it is through reflexive deliberation that the agency of the individual emerges, their concerns are prioritized, and a particular course of action is determined. The reflexive deliberation undertaken by the participating teachers was linked directly to their teaching thoughts and practice. Archer (2007) offers an account of reflexivity as "the regular exercise of the mental ability, shared by all normal people, to consider themselves in relation to their (social contexts) and vice versa" (p. 4). She further identifies four distinctive forms of internal conversation or modes of reflexivity: a) communicative reflexivity; b) autonomous reflexivity; c) meta-reflexivity; and d) fractured reflexivity.

Guided by Archer's four modes of reflexivity, I now attempt to draw out ways in which the teachers in this study were able to conduct internal conversations about individual agency and structural power and the interplay between them. The reflexive thoughts of participants exemplified some characteristics of the four modes of reflexivity. It might be fair to keep in mind that *the agency* emerged from my interpretation of the data is *the agency* exercised by the teacher at that particular moment on that particular matter, so generalization is not applicable. Further investigation would

clearly be required before each teacher as an autonomous reflexive agent could be better understood.

Communicative reflexivity is a mode often utilized by people whose internal conversations need to be completed and confirmed by others before they lead to actions. Such conversations are seen as dependent on the presence of stable relationships in a context of strong continuity, depending primarily upon sustaining “thought and talk” (Archer, 2003a, p. 209). The demonstration of this mode of reflexivity in this study is the evidence that teachers proactively sought advice from their colleagues. Teachers turned to the colleagues who they thought were more knowledgeable and trustworthy and who could be or had been in a similar situation. Colleagues may complete teachers’ thought or act in a complementary fashion to teachers’ reflexive processes. This tended to happen in a collaborative rather than competitive environment. It involved interpersonal relationships; teachers often shared thoughts with close others or like-minded colleagues. The better the relationships involved, the broader the discussion topics, the deeper the self-disclosure. Archer also found the ‘communicative reflexives’ accommodated work by voluntarily reducing their occupational aspirations whenever clashes occurred with the perceived needs of family, which were evident in teachers’ accounts in this study. Teachers in this mode of reflexivity tended to “foster reproductive continuity, even to the point of contextual reproduction” (p. 209). They were active agents, but agents for stability.

Autonomous reflexivity is an internal dialogue within people who do not need or want to exchange with other people. Their inner deliberations are thought to be self-sufficient and they do not need to be supplemented (without being arrogant, as they acknowledge their personal limitations). They sustain complete internal conversations with themselves, leading directly to action. Where there is discontinuity, such people tend to rely upon their own internal resources to make their way in the world, embark on independent courses of action in pursuit of their own concerns. In my study, for example, one teacher demonstrated aspects of autonomous reflexivity:

I am confident enough that couldn’t care less about the school thing. I do what I think is right. And if my colleagues say ‘you’ve been crazy’, I got enough confidence in myself to say ‘this is the best thing for students’; if students happen to say ‘XXX is not a very good

teacher, he didn't teach us, he didn't tell us what we have to know'. I should have replied, 'That's not my job, my job is to help you learn.' And if you are asking the question, if you are learning, and if you have been stimulated to do that, then I am doing my job. (A1)

Another teacher exhibited other features:

What we're trying to do is influence the collegial relationships that exist in the School and that to me is the essence of education so the research committee actually does less about research and more about influencing the culture of the place, the collegiality that existed amongst people... it brought back a human face to what research should be about... we're not going to wait for the infrastructure. We're going to put in place certain elements of a culture that's proactive. (D1)

We see here that teachers engaging in reflexive deliberation knew about and understood their working context. They knew exactly what they valued, anticipated constraints, designed their course of action and adopted strategies pursuing worthwhile practice. They tended to promote what they cared most about. Archer's (2003a) work shows people in this mode of reflexivity "mediate structure and cultural properties in a distinctive manner" (p. 252). They are active agents for change.

Meta-reflexivity constitutes people who are critically reflexive about their own internal conversations and critical about effective action in society. They share the same objective contextual discontinuity with the 'autonomous reflexives', but they stand in a very different relationship to society. They are social critics and idealists ever "seeking a better fit between who they seek to be and a social environment which permits their expression of it" (Archer, 2003a, p. 259). One teacher in the study exemplified this mode of reflexivity:

Power is exercised by human beings in different ways. Teaching is a form of exercising power - how we teach and learn better with our students. As a teacher of a particular language and culture but being educated in another language and culture, that constitutes who I am as a teacher. University is a place where knowledge is created. I ask whose knowledge is created at the university, and I know that the knowledge of the migrants from XXX is not created here. So I'm asking, if we don't get the marginalised knowledge to be researched in the university, it will never be looked upon as knowledge worthy of drawing from to inform policies or to inform changes about the very situations of the people that we want to make better. That's my job, to try and create spaces at the university through my teaching so that the XXX knowledge is brought into the university. (L2)

The teacher came from a Pacific Island country. She challenged the taken-for-granted cultural and social structure, and attempted to translate her values into the university environment. She was committed to her endeavour and wanted her students and others to share her ultimate concern. When people in this mode of reflexivity aggregate, they can generate great impetus for social and cultural change (Plumb, 2008).

In the case of fractured reflexivity, people cannot conduct a purposeful internal conversation that is efficacious for addressing personal concerns. Deliberation in this mode tends to intensify personal distress rather than resulting in purposeful courses of action. The effect is to intensify affect. The self-talk of this mode of reflexivity is primarily expressive and leads a person to “feel an ever more poignant emotional distress about her condition” (Archer, 2003a, p. 303). Little evidence emerged in the data of teachers adopting practice on the basis of fractured reflexivity. The following might be the only data with possible relevance:

I find it debilitating, it stifles me. So I don't engage in it because I don't want to give people the opportunity to say you see things differently. Because when they do that, I don't feel like I'm in the group, I feel like I'm over there, and I'm already aware of the difference. I don't need to be reminded. So I tend not to discuss what I do with my colleagues because invariably it gets back to that discussion: 'Oh well, you see things differently'. (L2)

Fractured reflexivity provides few options and little impetus for personal transformation or social change.

We can see that reflexivity is the process that mediates the effects of structure upon agency, exercised through internal conversation. Archer's empirical investigation, as she admits, may not fully capture the full range of possible ways people engage in their internal conversation as distinguished by the four modes. Different people under different circumstances may talk to themselves about their concerns in various ways, which might support other modes of reflexivity.

Chapter summary

While many of these factors have been identified in other investigations, for each participant in the current study, they clearly played out in both complex and idiosyncratic ways to determine the extent and nature of influences experienced or

perceived as well as responses. Whilst I am cognisant of the fact that the influences identified in this study are far from exhaustive, and the features of specific influences are not static or fixed but are subject to change, data suggested that teachers' prior experiences, interacting with contextual factors and a range of mediators, were significant influences on teachers' thoughts and practice. Archer's theory of structure, agency and internal conversation offered a critical theoretical lens, allowing fresh insights into the complexities of the phenomena and to theorise the relationships between self, influences and context, anticipating models in the next chapter.

Chapter 8 Conclusion

I observed in Chapter 1 that existing literature provides a solid foundation for this study, on which I developed my initial understandings of various potential influences. However, previous investigations of influences on university teachers' teaching ideas and actions have been rather partial in representing the complexities of the phenomena. They do not capture, for example, the relationships between influences and teachers' inward experiences. This study addressed such limitations by offering a more holistic understanding of multiple sources of influences, the thoughts and feelings that teachers have about particular influences and combinations of influences, the complexity of interplay between influences, emergent properties of influences, and, teachers' internal conversations and decisions about influences as well as teachers' consequential actions. I adopted an orientation advocated by Clegg (2007a), as presented in the opening chapter, who proposes that education researchers should be "willing to draw on knowledge and disciplinary insights that are not confined to the higher education literature... [and] to extend our theoretical vocabularies in order to pose new questions" (p. 3). I remained open to different theoretical positions throughout the research process, while avoiding a grab-all theoretical eclecticism. In the qualitative interpretative analysis of data, I tried to avoid a *priori* theorizing by employing grounded theory; I anticipated some theories that could provide helpful interpretive lenses. Given the nature of data, complexity theory, and human agency and structure in social theory (Archer, 2000, 2003a, 2003b, 2007), became important lenses for making sense of and theorising the phenomena.

The findings illuminate the possible range and features of personal and contextual influences, and teachers' experience of and response to them. While I do not claim that the conclusions reached are generalizable in detail to other teachers, or to other institutions of higher education, they may help shed some critical light on the fragmentation of research in higher education and so move to an even more holistic understanding. Readers may be able to generalize findings to their own contexts or similar situations.

In this chapter, I start by reviewing the preceding seven chapters. I then summarize the findings and present tentative conclusions using models that integrate findings from the literature and this study. I outline the educational implications of these findings, and make some recommendations for teacher development and the environment in which development takes place. I point out some limitations and strengths of the study. I present a reflective account of my own development path as a researcher in this study and the ways in which my own growth has provided an additional lens for considering its results. I conclude with some thoughts about how the study findings illuminate what might be anticipated for future studies that address similar research questions.

Review of chapters

As stated in chapter 1, the objective of the study was to explore teachers' perceptions of influences on their thoughts and actions, and how they respond to those influences. The main research question that has guided this research is:

What do the perceptions and experiences of tertiary teachers reveal about the influences on their ideas about teaching and their teaching practice and their response to those influences?

Some of the key sub-questions that have been asked include:

1. What, and how do, individual/personal factors influence teaching?
2. What, and how do, contextual factors influence teaching?
3. What are the complexities of possible interactions between the influences?
4. How do teachers respond to different or inconsistent influences?

In the course of addressing these questions, a number of new questions emerged:

1. How do teachers experience and perceive influences differently over time?
2. How do teachers experience ongoing and emergent influences? What thoughts and feelings do influences evoke?
3. What role does teachers' agency play in determining their perceptions of and responses to influences?

As demonstrated in Chapter 2, the literature indicated that teachers' observable teaching actions are influenced by many factors, including: global forces, national

policies, institutional and school culture, disciplinary characteristics, colleagues and students, and teachers' world views, educational beliefs and teaching conceptions. However, some of the factors remain, to some extent, unspecified; it is still unclear what teachers perceive as significant features of these factors, including teachers' prior experiences, their beliefs about education, conceptions of teaching, personal traits, the consistency and inconsistency that might occur in the interactions between personal and contextual factors that are associated with teachers' perceptions about them. Research is limited concerning how teachers' inwardly experience, and decide about how they will respond to, those influences. I situated my study within the existing literature attempting to investigate influences in different context – a New Zealand university - to give more attention to the likely complexity of interactions between influences, to explore further teachers' responses to multiple influences when these give inconsistent or conflicting 'messages' about education, learning and teaching, to investigate further teachers' inward experience of influences and implications for how they responded to them, and to endeavour to provide a more holistic account in presenting findings on these aspects.

As explained in Chapter 3, the study reported here is a qualitative interpretative study of 22 teachers in a New Zealand university. Interview was the primary method of data collection. I positioned myself within epistemological constructivism, viewing reality as socially/individually constructed and individually/socially mediated. Within the theoretical framework of interpretivism, grounded theory was adopted to guide the different levels of data analysis aiming to construct theory 'grounded' in the collected data from the participants' perspective. However, it was neither regarded as a rigid structure nor the only way to follow, but a guide to serve the research purpose, and open to different perspectives of interpretation. I adopted grounded theory in initial data analysis to avoid a *priori* theorizing. In an attempt to come to terms with the complexity of the data, I found complexity theory was relevant and could assist in the understanding of the non-linear, dynamic and emergent nature of the phenomena. Participants' reviews of transcripts, my presentation of data and preliminary findings at conferences, my reflection in and on the analysis, coupled with the involvement of colleagues and researchers in wider communities, made the ongoing analysis process open for public scrutiny, ensuring the trustworthy nature and rigour of this study.

The data presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 revealed the existence of a range of narratives and understandings of teachers concerning influences on their teaching thoughts and actions. In an attempt to highlight the idiosyncratic nature of participants, as well as the nature of the data and my analytic-interpretative processes, I presented two contrastive cases in Chapter 4 with in-depth interpretation and detailed personal profiles. Then I organised the findings under key headings prescribed by the initial research questions. Thus in Chapter 5, a range of past and present personal life influences were explored including teachers' upbringing, prior learning, working and teaching experiences, significant others in their lives, personal characteristics, their beliefs about education and conceptions of teaching developed/shaped from their lives prior to university teaching. Emphasis was placed on one source of influence - cultural background - to further reveal both its significance and complexities within it, and to shed further light on the characteristics of other influences. In Chapter 6, in addition to presenting macro, meso, and micro level contextual influences that teachers reported, I highlighted their perceptions of, and feelings about, influences, which varied significantly across individuals. I provided evidence that how teachers inwardly experience and respond to particular influences depends on various 'mediating' factors as well as the influences themselves. Such factors included career stage, employment status, academic position, life cycle and life style. I also identified features of the way influences affect teachers over time such as their immediate or delayed, temporary or enduring impact on teachers' thoughts or/and actions. Data indicated shifts in influences over time and changes in the weighting of their impact at various stages of teachers' personal and academic lives.

In chapter 7, I first discussed the factors which were identified as affecting teaching thoughts and practice. Where relevant, I related these to the literature with specific attention to the findings of studies on personal and contextual influences (e.g., Fanghanel, 2004, 2007, 2009; Fanghanel & Trowler, 2007, 2008; Trowler & Bamber, 2005; Trowler & Cooper, 2002; Trowler, Fanghanel & Wareham, 2005). Teachers' responses to the interplay of various sources of influences and mediating factors were emphasised. In an attempt to understand the complex nature of the influences in a more holistic way and theorise the relationships between teachers' self and influences, I then interpreted data from the perspective of ontological realism and epistemological

relativism, adopting theories of identities, human agency and structure in line with Archer's critical realism. This perspective has been demonstrated in recent research to be relevant to understanding the agency of teachers, structure powers and relationships between them (e.g., Clegg, 2005; Hopwood & Sutherland, 2009; Kahn, 2009; Plumb, 2008). I highlighted the connections between interview data and Archer's notions of three orders of reality (natural, practical and social), interaction between the sense of self, personal identity and social identity, as well as four modes of internal conversations (communicative, autonomous, meta-reflexive, and fractured reflexive). This perspective allowed me to integrate historical as well as current personal factors, contextual factors, mediating factors, teachers' inward experiences and responses into a whole for better explanation and a more holistic understanding, anticipating models presented in this concluding chapter.

Traditionally, studies of teaching in higher education have focused on teaching strategies. More recent studies have concentrated on teacher thinking, beliefs and teaching conceptions proposing a link between how/what teachers think and teaching practice. Emerging studies have explored different factors exercising at various levels which are perceived as influential on teaching practices. As a result of the present study, I take the argument a step further. I suggest that teaching is a complex activity consisting of multiple dimensions, including teachers' life experiences, personal traits, life style preference, world views, conceptions of education, approaches to teaching, institutional environment and school climate, curriculum structure and content, interaction with colleagues, and students' skills, knowledge, attitudes and practices. Moreover, the boundaries between these dimensions are not clear-cut. Teachers are unique individuals, and the teaching environments are varied and dynamic. Thus, identifying the effects of various factors and how they interact with each other has been, and continues to be, a major focus of educational research (OECD, 2005). Furthermore, teachers' responses and their inward experiences, as an extension to this focus, allow opportunities for a snapshot of the complex phenomena. In the following section, models are presented in an attempt to represent the complexity of the data.

The development of models and theory construction

There are models I turned to assisting my interpretation of data and understanding of the phenomena. In chapter 2 I reviewed the literature investigating factors influencing teachers' teaching thoughts and practices. In doing so my main purpose was to illustrate the insufficient coverage of any individual studies when the complex nature of influences is considered. I do not consider this to be a limitation of those studies, because I am aware that researchers may knowingly neglect other domains of influences by focusing on one particular dimension, as acknowledged by Oberg (2005) for example: "I knowingly neglected the social and organisational context of schooling, the politics of teaching, and the autobiographical and historical influences on teachers' perspectives" (p. 88) when he was seeking to understand both teachers' explicit and implicit theories in practice. Influences identified in previous studies provided a solid foundation for this research; the models constructed (e.g., Åkerlind, 2007; Carnell, 2007; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Day, et al., 2006; Donnelly, 2006; Fanghanel, 2004, 2007; Pickering, 2006; Trowler & Cooper, 2002) assisted my interpretation of the current data. However, the account set out in Chapter 2 requires further elaboration to capture the entirety of the phenomena. The models need amending and model(s) for providing a more holistic representation of the phenomena is required.

Furthermore, previous investigations are underpinned by a range of ideas within the philosophical, sociological, psychological and scientific perspectives, which dispose researchers to see and account for reality in particular ways. Differences in interpretations of data lead to different ways of ways of understanding influences and teachers' responses. In this research, I have been self-conscious and reflexive in relation to my paradigm and theoretical positions, as I believe the exploration of theories could help me understand the phenomena under investigation and to speculate on the paradigms and theories that may influence participants' interpretations of their reality. I also believe that the theoretical framework should not be taken as a rigid structure, but a guide to serve the research purpose (Dobson, 1999). Given the infinite complexity of the phenomena in the real world, there is no one best theory but only different ways of seeing the world, and there may be better theories for different situations.

I experienced a shift of focus from epistemological constructivism (grounded theory) at the outset of study to complexity theory at the data collection and analysis phase, then to ontological realism (identity, human agency and structure) at the stage of data interpretation and reporting, though they are quite compatible. While the original thoughts about theory were anticipated by the research questions, the nature of data invited the theory of complexity into my analysis process. In the process of reporting the findings and theorising the phenomena, in terms of embedding those findings inside a powerful theoretical framework, I came to Archers' theory of human agency and structure.

While a range of theoretical perspectives reviewed in the literature were helpful (e.g., Fanghanel, 2004, 2007, 2009; Fanghanel & Trowler, 2007, 2008; Trowler & Bamber, 2005; Trowler & Cooper, 2002; Trowler, Fanghanel & Wareham, 2005), Archer's theory of human agency and structure, and more recent studies from this theoretical lens (e.g., Hopwood & Sutherland; 2009 Kahn, 2009; Plumb 2008) opened new territory and further analysis and interpretation possibilities. A more sophisticated interpretation of data becomes possible from this broader theoretical perspective which considers the interplay between human agency and structure. It offers better understanding of the phenomena, including its complexity. Archer's concept of three orders of reality (natural, practical and social), interaction between the sense of self, personal identity and social identity, and four modes of internal conversations, as discussed in the previous chapter, were also particularly helpful.

My emergent appreciation of the relevance of complexity theory proved to be beneficial in explaining the non-linear dynamic interactions, adaptive orientations, and new properties and behaviours that emerged in the interactions (Morrison, 2008). In educational research, the insights of complexity theory allow for continuity and change in dynamic systems (Davis & Sumara, 1997, 2005; Kuhn, 2008), which were apparent as teachers experienced and responded to influences. From the perspective of complexity theory, the focus shifts "from a concern with decontextualised and universalised essence to contextualised and contingent complex wholes" (Mason, 2008, p. 7), which supports my research endeavour to gain a more holistic understanding of the phenomena. Thus it is appropriate to my concerns in understanding participants' perceptions and experiences of influences and their responses, from the view that the

interaction is non-linear and the emergence of elements is ongoing, uncertainties and confusions are inevitable. Each participant drives complex adaptive systems, thus their inner conversations are idiosyncratic, self-contradictions are possible, and responses to influences are different. Every participant is linked within personal systems, within teaching and learning places, school, institutional and other larger systems. The direction of participants as well as the situation in which they find themselves can be altered by any change in the systems and the interaction patterns within participants themselves, between them and others in the systems.

While complexity theory supports more holistic analyses and better understanding, the distributed and non-linear features of complex systems make presenting them in models challenging (Cilliers, 2005). Indeed, from the perspective of complexity theory, capturing the wholeness is impossible as interaction is dynamic *and* ongoing. In this respect, I concur with Husserl (1980) that understanding a thing in its entirety is never achievable. Only partial aspects at a time could be revealed while other aspects may be concealed. Thus the models presented below are an attempt to represent a **more** holistic understanding of the phenomena from my interpretation of the data.

Models

While it is not yet possible to fully develop a model of influences on university teaching, the following model shows the sources and categories of influence identified in this study (Figure 8.1). Two broad domains of influence have been identified: contextual and personal. Contextual influences are present in teaching environments and can be categorized as operating at macro, meso and micro levels. Personal influences are present in teachers' personal (non-teaching) lives; these influences may be historical/biographical or current.

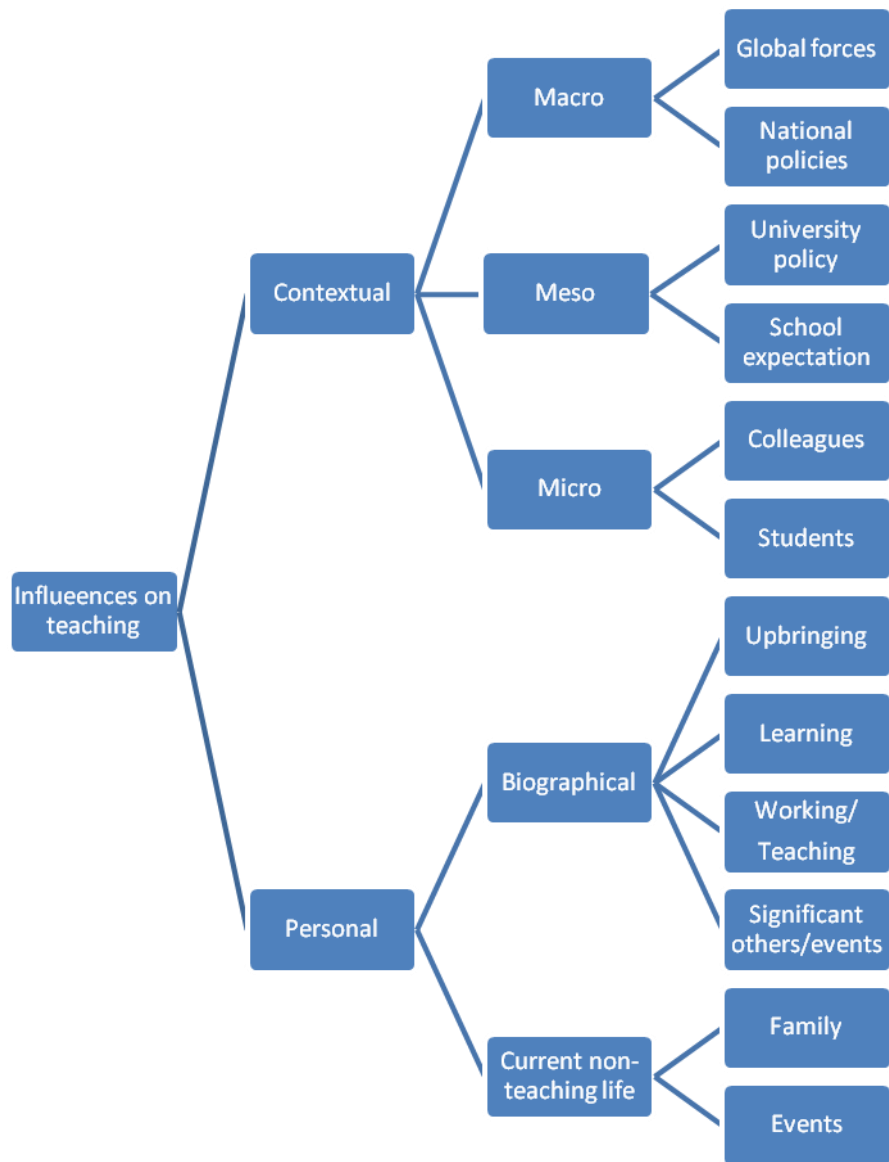


Figure 8.1: Domains of influences

The identification of these influences reinforces the findings of existing literature (e.g. Archer, L. 2008; Day, et al., 2006; Fanghanel, 2007). However, the interplay of influences within and between each dimension has previously received little attention. Influences on the lived experiences of teachers cannot be neatly packaged within the domains of personal, interpersonal and contextual. Rather, teachers' day-to-day experiences and actions are products of the interplay of influences within and between these domains. This study demonstrates this aspect of influences as shown in Figure 8.2:

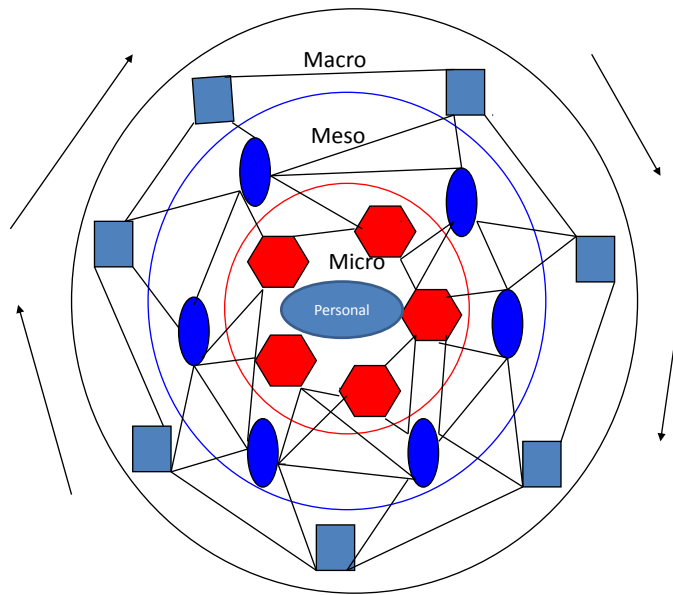


Figure 8.2: Interaction between influences at Macro, Meso, Micro and Personal levels

This figure shows the complexity of interactions that may be possible between and within categories or domains of influences as identified in Figure 8.1.

Teachers encounter influences in various ways: some are imposed, such as mandated university policy and school expectation; influences may be triggered by critical or casual incidents and significant others serendipitously, such as everyday conversations with colleagues; some are actively sought, such as advice, support, or point of view from colleagues and literature; some are observed from colleagues' teaching practice, co-teaching practice, and student performance. As shown in the following figure:

Being imposed	Serendipitously happening	Being actively sought	Being observed
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Figure 8.3: Ways in which teachers encounter influences

Teachers' initial thoughts and feelings about influences are multiple. Teachers may experience a sense of fluidity of being that can be triggered by the way they perceive their present situation as it interacts with their world views, educational beliefs, teaching conceptions, personal attributes and traits. Encountering influences can be an experience of encouragement when existing views and actions are affirmed; an experience of seeking balance when influences are numerous, inconsistent or

conflicting; a feeling of attachment or holding to one's beliefs and actions when influences conflict with them. Teachers may also experience powerlessness or fear in situations of uncertainty and complexity. This study has showed the pervasiveness of the ambiguities, uncertainties, dissonances, incongruence, contradictions and compromises that are part of decision-making in teaching practice. Some features of teachers' initial thoughts and feelings about influences are shown in the following figure:

Relevant/ Irrelevant	High-low significance/ priority	Consonant or dissonant with existing thoughts or practices	Novel or familiar	Consistent/ inconsistent or conflicting
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Figure 8.4: Teachers' thoughts and feelings about influences

The impact of influences on teachers' thoughts and actions varies. Influences may challenge teachers' thoughts but have no impact on teaching practice ever; influences may challenge teachers' thoughts and have impact on teaching practice; influences may have impact on teaching practice without being a challenge to teachers' thoughts; influences may impact neither teacher's thoughts nor practice. As shown in the following figure:

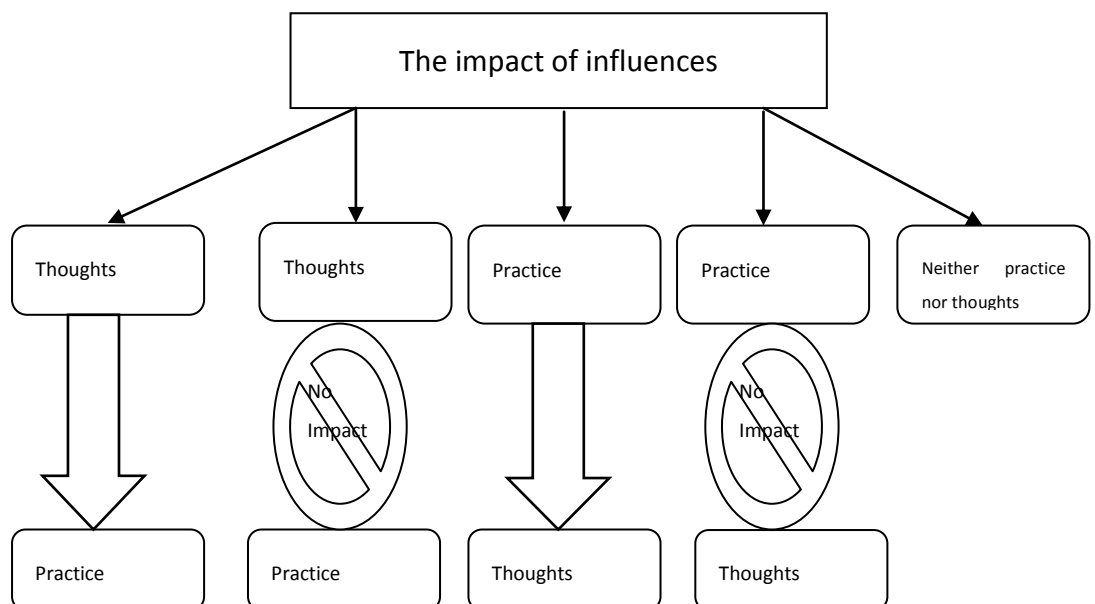


Figure 8.5: The impact of influences on teachers' thoughts and action

The timing of impact on thoughts and actions may be enduring, transitory, temporal, immediate, or delayed. Influences may challenge teachers' thoughts and have immediate impact on teaching practice; influences may challenge teachers' thoughts and have delayed impact on teaching practice; influences may have immediate impact on teaching practice without challenge to teachers' thoughts; influences may be cumulative in nature, and have immediate and lasting impact on teaching practice which may disturb teachers' thoughts. For example, influences at the personal level appeared to have a greater weighting than was shown in literature. Teachers' personal lives and prior experiences are ongoing alongside the development of teaching thoughts and actions. These influences spilled over and had an enduring impact on teachers and their teaching. However, teachers' predispositions, formulated before and alongside their university teaching, were affected by factors in their teaching context. Some features of the timing of impact of influences on teachers' thoughts and actions are illustrated in the following figure:

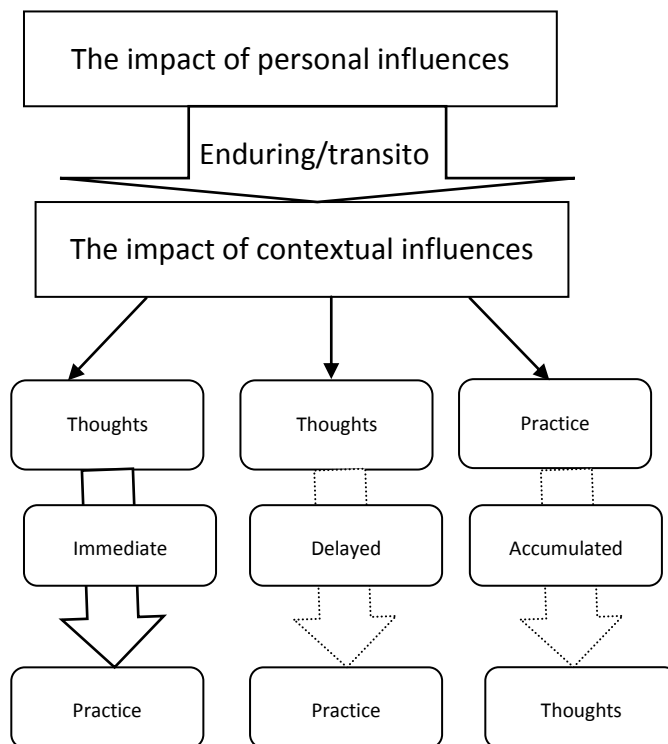


Figure 8.6: The timing of impact of influences on teachers' thoughts and action

Teachers' responses to influences may be varied individually and contextually. They make judgements about the quality of their work based on their own extensive perceptions and experiences of the context. Teachers may have no direct control, or

perceive that they may not be capable of controlling factors that affect their immediate context. They may feel that they have to practise in ways that are inconsistent with their core beliefs and values. They may hide themselves by taking a defensive or protective stance. They may maintain their integrity with personal fundamental beliefs unchanged. They may act proactively to influence the structure. Some teachers may passively accept the influences imposed on them; some try to avoid the influences. Some teachers make compromises when they try to negotiate a balance between personal beliefs and external influences; some actively reject the influences which they perceived unacceptable. Some teachers seek opportunities for taking actions; some actively adjust personal thoughts and practice to meet the challenge of influences. Some teachers exercise personal agency attempting to influence people around them; some proactively take action to influence/change the structure. As shown in the following figure:

1	Passive acceptance
2	Avoidance
3	Rejection
4	Compromise beliefs or/and practice
5	Seeking/waiting opportunities for action
6	Changing self
7	Influencing colleagues
8	Influencing culture/policies
9	Changing the structure

Figure 8.7: Teachers' responses to influences

Teachers' experiences of and responses to influences might be mediated by inherent factors such as personal traits, personal status such as life cycle, career stage, employment status, academic position, and their own perspectives on agency and structure. These mediators as well as various factors impacted independently or concurrently on teachers' experience of, inner conversations about, and responses to

influences. These influences play out with one another generating new forms of influences.

The above features of influences experienced, perceived, and responded to by teachers are illustrated in the following figures:

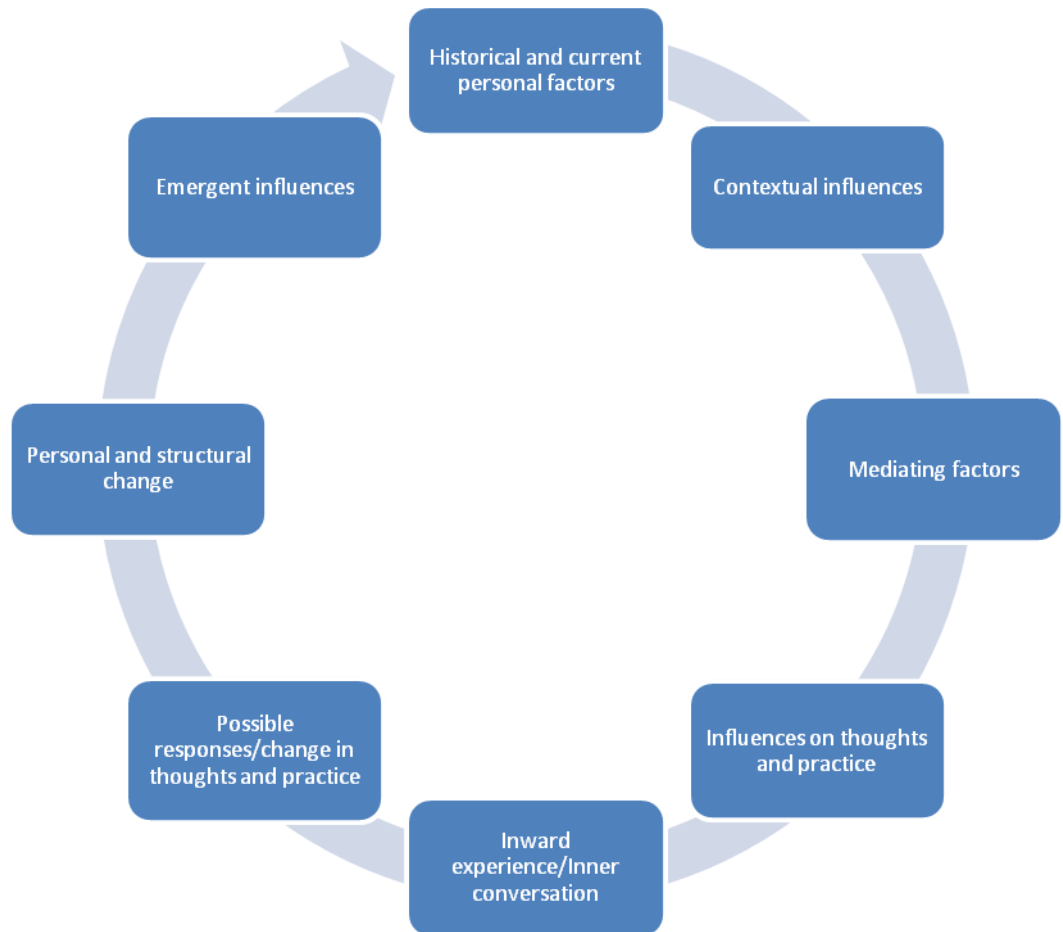


Figure 8.8: A continuous cycle of influences

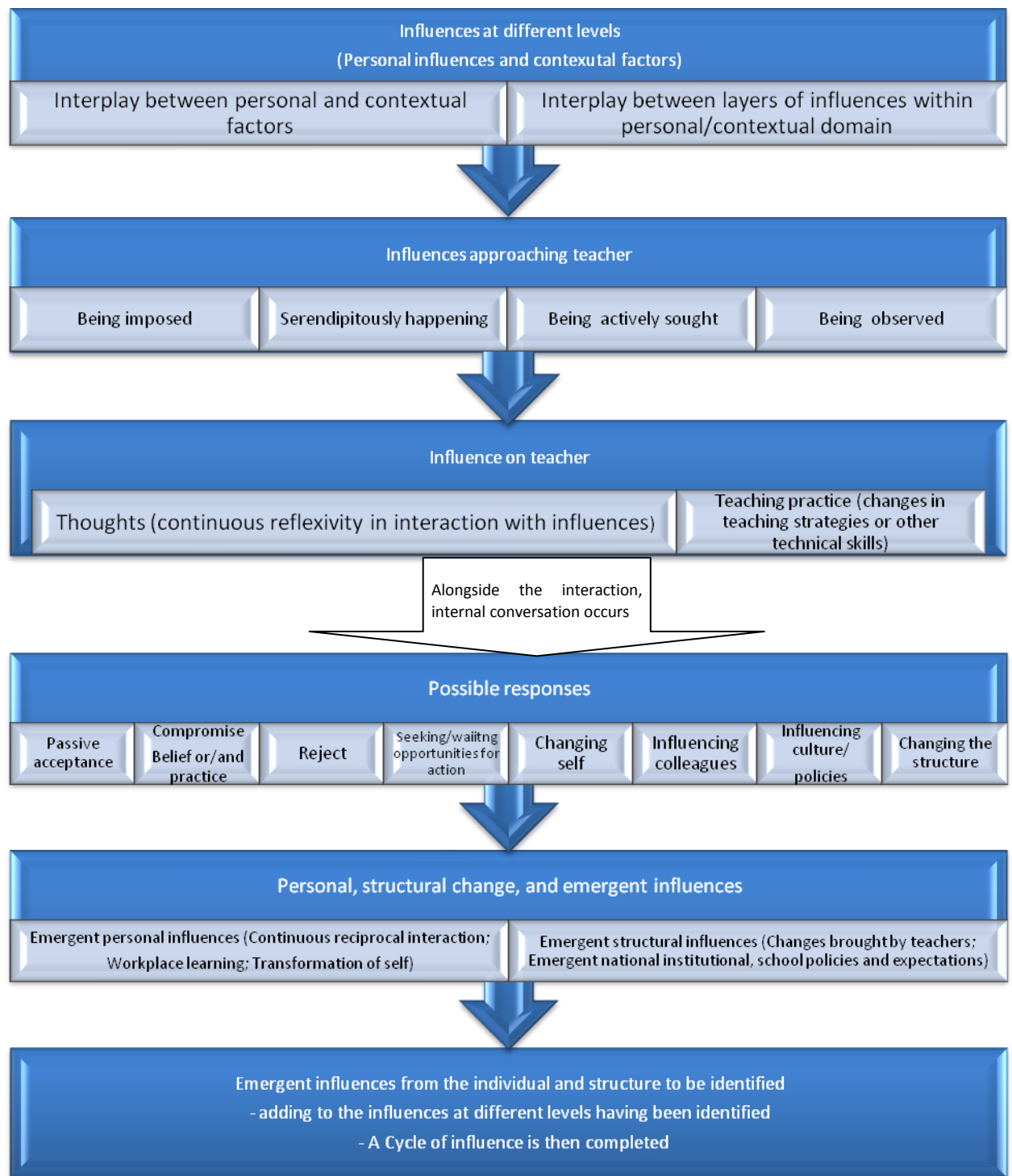


Figure 8.9: Inner conversation and response in a cycle of influences

From the perspective of critical realism and theory of human agency and structure, the following figure represents the interaction of influences - self, context and broader environment - as well as teachers' inner conversations and possible actions in a cycle of emergent influences.

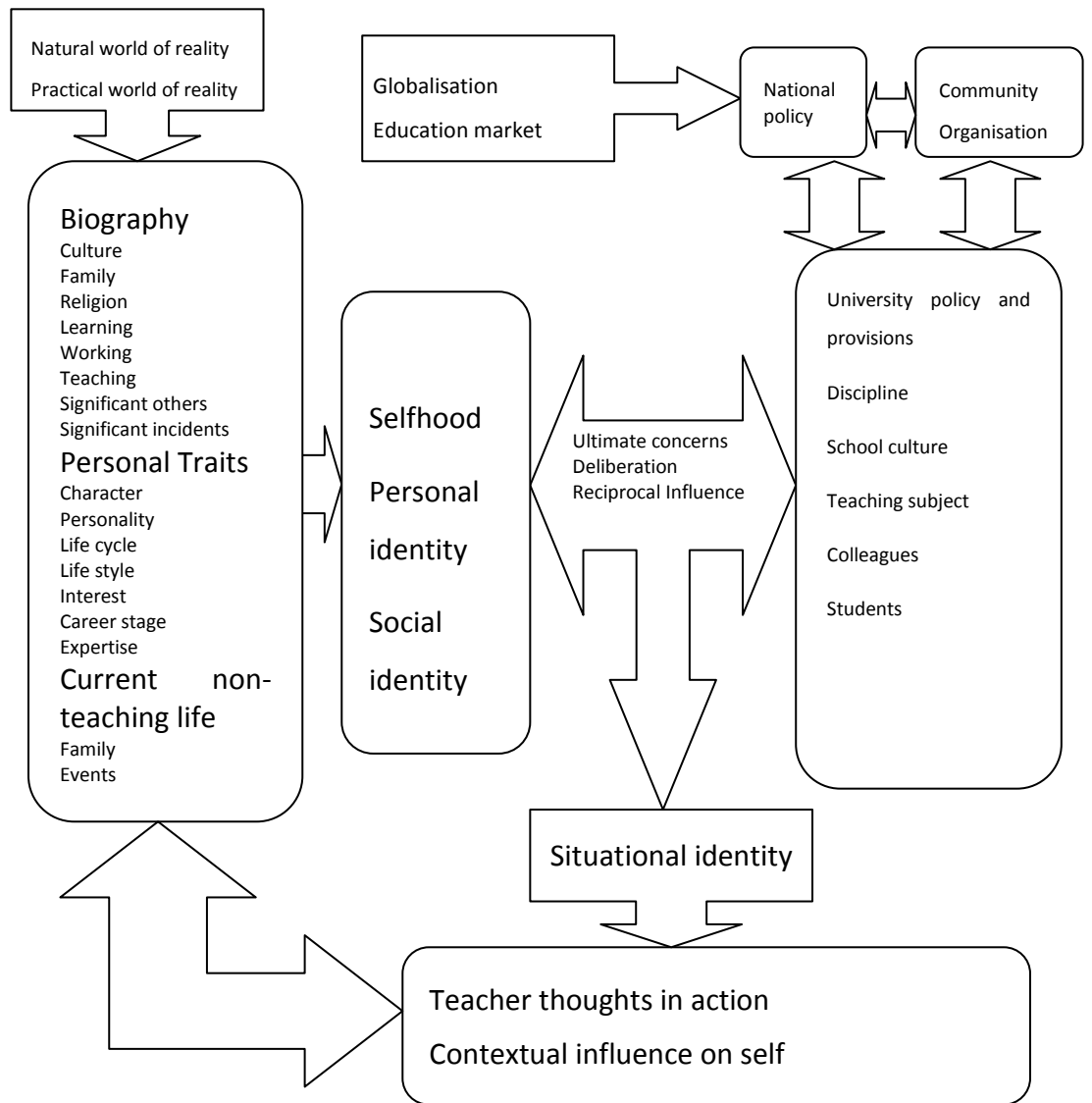


Figure 8.10: Interaction of Self, Context, and Environment

Challenges

I came to theorise influences on teachers as multidimensional, multifaceted phenomena that individual teachers can experience in an array of contexts. The data highlighted the multiple sources of influences and the complexity of interactions within and between each dimension of influence. It also highlighted the complexity of teachers' experience of, and response to, influences. Given such features, I am challenged to present the complexities of the phenomena in a single model. It is acknowledged that there are significant methodological challenges associated with such investigations. An emergent appreciation of the relevance of complexity theory

has assisted my understanding of the reasons for the challenges. Furthermore, I believe that understanding a thing in its entirety is never achievable. Only partial aspects at a time could be revealed while other aspects may be concealed (Husserl, 1980).

Attention must also be paid to the fact that the answers to the research questions presented in the preceding section are derived from an in-depth study of a limited number of teachers who teach in one particular university in New Zealand. It follows, therefore, that it is not appropriate to generalise findings uncritically outside of these parameters. At the same time, however, it can reasonably be inferred that particular findings and their associated implications may well have a more general applicability.

Implications

Although the relatively small sample means that I cannot claim to provide the breadth of data to represent the experiences of tertiary teachers in New Zealand, the study can nevertheless provide valuable insights into how they perceive, experience and respond to influences on their teaching, and negotiate the professional and personal challenges confronting them in their practice. These insights have implications for other teachers, for teacher/academic developers and for leaders and managers of institutions, faculties/schools and departments.

Implication for teachers

This research provides an opportunity for teachers to reflect on their individual experiences in their environment, and to realise their vision by unearthing influences on their teaching thoughts and actions. As one participant in the study observed: “When you wanted to interview me about teaching, it makes me self-conscious because I think ‘am I conscious about my teaching?’” (J1). Reading other teachers’ autobiographies can be useful as a vehicle of change, but only if we help teachers reflect on how their values are, or might be, realized in practice. Constructing autobiographies also seems to be a productive professional development activity (Alterio, 2006; Kirk, 2005; McDruy & Alterio, 2003; O’Brien, 2002; Pio & Haigh, 2007; Pountney, 2000). As Bull (2009) noted:

If real change is to happen then it is important for teachers to take the time to consider why they do what they do now, whether or not this is still important and what really

drives their practice. In order for this to achieve its transformational potential, teachers also need to be exposed to ideas and experiences that problematise their current practice in some way. (p. 12)

Individual teachers' accounts can show their perceptions of their personal capacity to exercise agency and to form and actualise what they believed, or have come to believe, were important influences on their teaching. Such awareness is referred to in the learning organisation literature as 'personal mastery': "the ability to take account of the environment and work out what you as an individual can do to make things better – for yourself and for others" (Martin, 1999, p. 52). Personal mastery can support teachers to articulate implicit assumptions, and look for ways to work towards their personal and professional vision. This research may encourage other teachers to assess and increase their sense of personal mastery and self-efficacy and to enhance their agential power.

Implications for teacher/academic developer

The findings may help academic developers appreciate the multiplicity of influences on their colleagues, and how they might experience and respond to them. Academic developers might consider overall influences on teachers and their teaching, become mindful of the realities of teachers' everyday perceptions/experiences, develop realistic academic development agenda, design thoughtful approaches for working with them, help teachers develop an awareness and understanding of teaching 'realities' without being overwhelmed or paralysed by them (Harland, 2009). The case studies may help academic developers convey an accurate and authentic representation of teaching. As Lee and McWilliam(2008) argue,

Academic developers [need] to be players in games of the contemporary academy, to imagine productive and knowing futures that create direction and leadership ... given the complexity of the games, players need a more critical scholarship ... towards mapping the field in multiple ways that allow its diversity to be deployed knowing in the ongoing re-invention of the academy. (pp. 75-76)

These implications are also supported by a recent New Zealand study of Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TRLI) project (Haigh et al., 2009). The study shows that, in the course of the project, teacher constantly negotiated the influence of academic developers who support with enhancement agenda, student characteristics, and the

teaching context. Academic developers have been reminded that the outcomes of their collaborative work with the teacher are contingent on a range of factors that are beyond their control. The overall culture in the teacher's environment may account for individual responses and determine how much elbow room teachers and academic developers actually have when contemplating change. Trowler and Bamber (2005) identified such constraints in the teaching environments:

... the main problem is that individual teachers have limited "elbow room" to make changes in their teaching. The departmental, disciplinary and institutional context constrains practices, creating inertia and acting as a refractive prism which bends the light of policy and so shapes the effects of such courses, and how they are understood, implemented and practised. (p. 87)

With better understanding of teachers' work environments and appreciation of their sense of agency, academic developers may gain insights into the contexts in which their colleagues teach, find out about the real issues that teachers are grappling with, be aware of circumstances in teachers' everyday work and life, experiment with different solutions that might assist teachers to overcome obstacles, and to engender positive ripple effects at different levels: across individual teachers' courses, within the teaching group, the school, the university and beyond (Haigh et al., 2009).

Implications for academic leaders and managers

The implications for academic developers are relevant to academic leaders and managers. Thus, for university leaders and others attempting to improve the quality of teaching, the key implications of this study revolve around the need for greater understanding of the lives of individual teachers in the university. For example, the findings indicate that teachers' pre-existing values and attitudes are often deeply rooted in early and later learning, working, teaching and socialising, and are reinforced by daily recurrent practice. Their accounts also provide evidence of the ways in which teachers perceive the university structure and people, experience their teaching in context and how they respond. Contextual and structural influences may have less impact than anticipated. Any attempt to impose a dominant discourse is likely to result in failure in the multiple discourses individual teachers have in and outside the university context.

For effective teaching to take place, dialogue between teachers, managers and decision-makers needs to be maintained to create an environment that enables teachers to establish practices based on mutually agreed principles, and to act freely within the scope of those principles with a focus on teaching. Though university or school policies and systems may not easily be influenced by teachers, the level of awareness of teachers' concerns needs to be raised. It would be ideal if all the contextual obstacles and inhibitive procedures identified in this study could be addressed alongside the structural changes at school or institutional level. Without such effort for reaching alignment, some teachers will always struggle. A more harmonious environment needs to be created so that teachers find they can evolve a coherent identity within their domains of competence (Fanghanel & Trowler, 2008).

The findings indicate that there is no one definitive conception of 'best teaching practice', which implies that there is a single best way in which practice should be performed and that teachers should be modifying their existing practice accordingly. "Best practice" fails to recognise that there are multiple ways of understanding and achieving an objective; as one participant said, "*there are many routes up a mountain*". It also fails to consider the complex web in which teaching is situated, not only in relation to factors such as institutional context, subject specialism, level of study, students' profile, but also in relation to the personal characteristics of the teacher as an individual agent. Teaching is a "socially situated interpretive act" that resists generalization (D'Andrea & Gosling, 2007; Shay, 2004).

Any successful change management process aimed at improving teaching and learning depends ultimately on the willingness of the people involved to change. We need to consider not just the contextual factors, but also the background, motivations and interests of individuals. Any attempt to appreciate the processes involved in change must have "a developed understanding of the underlife of higher education" that takes account of "ways in which action is implicit in structure, how structures are perceived, socially constructed and responded to in variegated ways" (Trowler, 1998, p. 152). Teachers may use a "range of micro political strategies to protect and promote their own interests, life histories and career trajectories" (Morley, 2003, p. 114).

Any intervention programme that is imposed without taking account of the multiplicity of ways in which that change will be understood and interpreted is doomed to being

undermined. Transformation depends on “how well managerial and faculty values become intertwined and then expressed in daily operating procedures” (Clarke, 1998, p. 137). It is also suggested that involving academic staff in the process of researching their teaching practice increases ownership of improvements, encourages a scholarly approach to teaching and helps inform decision-making at all levels of the institution (D’Andrea & Gosling, 2007, p. 7). The findings in this study provide further evidence of teachers’ beliefs and values, a lack of opportunities for them to be involved in decision-making, and their joy when they themselves play a part in the process of making improvements.

Limitations and strengths of the study

It is important to note that I make no claim to have captured all aspects of the practice of each participant. I knowingly avoided, in some interviews, asking leading questions about influences which have been found in literature or talked about by other participants, such as the social and organisational context of education, the politics of teaching, and other autobiographical and historical influences on teachers’ perspectives. I assumed that what they brought to the foreground was considered to be relevant, reflecting their interest and importance, at least at that particular moment. What I portrayed, however, matched remarkably well with teachers’ awareness/mindfulness and understandings of influences on their teaching at the moment of interview, and their recalled experiences and responses. Though I gave participants opportunities to review the transcripts, amend and add to them, there might/must exist other influences, perceptions, experiences and responses worth further exploration. However, they are beyond the reach of this study.

In this study, time limitations resulted in my not being able to explore changes over a period of time. While every effort was made to nurture appropriate researcher-participant relationships, engage participants to reveal insights, and overcome trust issues, more interviews and observations may have yielded richer data. These might have provided me with understandings about other facets of university teachers’ perspectives. However, while the study highlights a range of influences on teaching, the duration of the study did not allow me to identify or define perceptual change experienced by the participants. However, as the research progressed, the

improvement in my interview skills, and my enhanced comprehension of university teaching, to some extent compensated for this limitation.

It must also be acknowledged that the specific data collection and analysis procedures used in the study have limitations as well as strengths. In terms of the latter, they enabled me to gather relatively comprehensive and accurate accounts from the participants and to check whether the meaning derived from their accounts accorded with the meaning the teachers themselves had in mind. The study also made it apparent, however, that these procedures can never be entirely free of problems or limitations. This follows from the fact that the researcher can never take into account and directly control all of the conditions that may potentially influence the completeness and accuracy of the teachers' accounts, and the researcher's own assignment of meaning to the teachers' statements.

A further limitation regarding participants in this study is the size and composition of the sample. While the sample size meant that handling the associated data gathering and analysis presented a realistic and reasonable workload, and the sample size did conform to requirements for saturation based on data collected, there are inevitably other aspects that remain unrevealed; further insights might have been gained from a more substantial sample. The requirement for voluntary participation may also have impacted on the sample composition. It is more likely that those who accepted my invitation and were willing to share their perceptions and experiences brought some predispositions toward teaching, which may not be held by other teachers in similar situations. Participants may, or may not, have revealed perceptions and experiences in accordance with their understanding of what a good teacher is. There may have been a tendency toward 'conventionalised answers' (Zetterberg, 1965, p. 122).

When I attempted to understand university teachers, their perceptions and experiences were not presented to me "as they are", but rather "as they are to me". All understanding is biased according to my perspectives. My pre-understanding shapes the research process, and therefore it cannot be thought of as absolute. There are as many unique perceptions and experiences as there are participants and researchers involved (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, 2003). The unknown aspects of myself as a researcher and those being researched limit the process of "fully understanding" the phenomena. In this research, I was not seeking an "objective" reality, which may exist

or have existed; reality could only be “recreated” rather than being “accurately represented”. I was interested in the individual perceptions and experiences, and in the subjective realities they created which could provide material for my interpretation and analysis. It was always in my mind that my interpretations in the study were not the only interpretations of the data collected. They were based on my existing knowledge, educational and working experience, and my social-cultural lenses (Stronach et al., 2007). The resonances the study has with other teachers and researchers, and its ability to create an understanding of tertiary teachers’ perceptions and experiences, are set to be important indicators of the success of the research.

Another limitation is tied to my identity. I have been studying in this university for more than five years. English is not my first language. I have strong connections to the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, and Centre for Educational and Professional Development. I have been actively participating in academic and research activities. All of these elements may have contributed to participants in my study regarding me, not as an unbiased inquirer in their lives, but as a friend, student, less experienced teacher, or novice researcher. In this regard, they may have been more or less forthcoming about their teaching perceptions and experiences of influences, or provided information which they assumed I needed. In addressing this limitation, I kept a reflective journal throughout the research process and tried to be aware and sensitive to the self I bring to the study.

Having said that, I view myself as the “best source of information about the confirmability” of what I have reported (Wolcott, 2001, p. 93). To fulfil my obligation of careful reporting, I have endeavoured to provide adequate detail about how I proceeded with my analysis. My role in this research and the particular research context will never be replicated, but the elaboration of the research process might provide references to other researchers with comparable interest and data sets of their own.

While acknowledging these limitations, I do not view them as weaknesses. As Cilliers (2005) argues:

The fact that our knowledge is limited is not a disaster; it is a condition for knowledge. Limits enable knowledge. Without limits we would have to incorporate life, the universe and everything into every knowledge claim we make and that is not possible. Limiting

frameworks makes it possible to have knowledge (infinite time and space). At the same time, having limits means something is excluded, and we cannot predict the effects of that exclusion. (p. 264).

My growth as a researcher

I became much more reflective about my journey as a researcher and how the nature of the journey influenced my growth as a researcher. During the study, I spent significant time reflecting on my own development towards becoming an academic/researcher, and my responsibilities to my participants, advisors, colleagues, and myself. This doctoral experience served to encourage an interest in ‘theoretical considerations’, which helped me to develop a capacity for critical analysis and reflection in relation to my own values and beliefs and their bearing on my learning practice, and hence the capacity to perceive and interpret the world from a range of perspectives, thus gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomena influencing teachers’ lives and my own.

When I listened to the interview audio records and read the transcripts, I sometimes felt embarrassed with the questions I asked, and the interruptions I made. I believed that I would have done it better with my current understanding of the topic and the interview skills fine-tuned throughout the research and other collaborative projects. In another sense, while acknowledging naïveté, I am proud of my courage at that stage of my life. In my later life, I will say the experience of doing my doctoral research influenced me as an interviewer, researcher, a writer and as a person.

A significant influence at the outset of this research was the wider educational research community. Being new to the research area, I valued hearing the experiences of other researchers which revealed the dynamics of inquires and processes. My attendance at three national and international conferences for educational research in higher education was inspirational. At the institution level, my presentation at meetings on postgraduate research was beneficial: university postgraduate symposium, faculty postgraduate mini-conference, school research seminar, and postgraduate information sharing and writing support group.

Interaction with other doctoral/postgraduate students opened up new ideas, shared experiences, and helped to address the relationships between “knowledge production

and language and learning”, as observed by Aitchison and Lee (2006, p. 276). Discussion with members of the student community challenged my assumptions and concerns with the theoretical application and analysing approaches. Through those discussions, I came to understand the multiple realities constructed by each researcher and different ways of perceiving the same phenomena and conducting the same research. On many occasions, the role of philosophical literature in the research was a focus of discussion between me and other students. As a consequence, my understanding of the philosophical literature has developed alongside the debate, as was manifest in the collection and interpretation of data throughout the research process.

Working with experienced researchers allowed me to improve my skills and understandings through research practice. As a research assistant, I became involved with a team of researchers who were undertaking a national project on the scholarship of teaching and learning in New Zealand universities, another group of experienced researchers conducting collaborative research investigating research cultures in two applied institutions, as well as many other areas such as economics and education, and tertiary teaching programme development. The literature I searched, the interviews I conducted and transcribed, the process from designing to completing a research project, provided me with opportunities to gain apprentice knowledge on my journey towards becoming a researcher.

I found that it was in the process of writing that meanings emerged. During the writing period, crafting profiles and vignettes for selected participants occurred in experiences which were complex, fluid, and interwoven. Writing brought reflection on my reading, action and thinking in relation to my research. In some circumstances, language fails to express what I am thinking. There is a ‘limitation of language’, as van Manen (1997) explains:

When we experience the unspeakable or ineffable in life, it may be that what remains beyond one person’s linguistic competence may nevertheless be put into words by another person – perhaps by someone who has special skill in writing. Indeed we sometimes are surprised when someone is able to say what we wanted to say while we could not find the words. It is for this reason also that the research-writing process requires of us that we sometimes “borrow” the words of another since this other person is

able, or has been able, to describe an experience in a manner (with a directness, a sensitivity, or an authenticity) that is beyond our ability. (p. 113)

So it was not uncommon for me to go back to the literature and my notes when I needed to find the right structure, sentence, or words compatible with my thoughts.

The awareness of my own experience in higher education had always been raised in the research. Such awareness can provide “clues for orienting oneself to the phenomenon and thus to all the other stages” in the research (van Manen, 1997, p. 57). The tension between my lived experiences and my increasing awareness of influential factors are integrated in this research. I have sustained the continuity of my doctoral study while negotiating my roles as father, husband, son, brother, friend, research assistant, and full-time student, relocating my home several times, experiencing the death of my brother-in-law and father-in-law, and experiencing the highs and lows of people around me. Rather than distracting me from the research, I felt that I understood my participants better by looking through these experiences which resonated with my participants. When one participant talked about relocation of home, I understand how it felt. When one talked about the death of a family member, I knew how it felt. When one talked about his/her children’s study, I could also feel those feelings.

I experienced fluctuations of emotion throughout the research process. Supervision was an invaluable source of support and affirmation. There were times when I felt excited about the resonance between my thoughts and my readings; there were occasions when I felt overwhelmed by the vast and deep sea of knowledge, struggling to see what was the most relevant to my research question; there were times my thoughts were with my elderly parents, my father in particular, who was sick and immobile. However, despite the challenges I encountered along the research journey, I am pleased with the end result. In addition to this doctoral report, I gained confidence in my ability to conduct and report research; the challenges I encountered broadened my repertoire of research theories and practices. I am also aware that this PhD is a stepping stone into a research career. My capacity for independent, critical thinking has been raised and developed throughout the journey and has been demonstrated in the presentation of this thesis. More sophisticated work is yet to come and the skills required to handle higher level research are yet to be obtained through practical

investigation and reflection. Reflecting on some of the challenges will support me in planning and conducting further research.

Future research

This research appears to be very timely. At the institutional level, initiatives for promoting Scholarship of Teaching and Learning are taking place in the University and other institutions nationwide. At national level, in Bull's (2009) most recent report to the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, the first of the four possible areas for further exploration that the author suggests is, the role of teachers' life experiences in influencing how they respond to change, which has been a focus of my study. Internationally, Donnelly (2006) is proposing further study that focuses on "the development of personal strategies by individuals to respond to, and seek to influence the impact of continued structural and cultural change in the HE sector in the Republic of Ireland" (p. 216). It is foreseen that this current research will provide opportunities to "continue the conversation" (Rorty, 1980, p. 373) in a "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998).

This research opens up a rich field of ethnographic and other forms of inquiry into teaching in higher education. I am therefore left with a set of possible areas to explore further, rather than a set of conclusions. As discussed, I acknowledge that my suggested implications for advancing theory or practice should be subject to further study. While I offer suggestions for better understanding of teachers, effective support for teacher development and mutual engagement in improving the quality of teaching, I see a need to research them further. This study has motivated me to pose several additional questions for further research, as outlined below.

1. How do teachers' predispositions influence their teaching approaches and practices? How stable and unstable are these dispositions?
2. How can a programme be designed to take into account of the diversity of teachers? Is it possible to categorise university teachers into groups with similar interests or concerns?
3. What are the relationships between teachers' identity, agential power, and professional vulnerability?

4. What role does self-efficacy play in university teachers' perception of and response to influences?
5. How do teachers' responses to influences change over time? Taking this research as a snapshot, comparison can be made with future studies in similar areas to reveal possible changes over time. A longitudinal study with a diverse group of university teachers might bring into focus the different and changing ways individuals experience and perceive their teaching.
6. How do teachers respond to influences at different stages of their careers? It would be worthwhile interviewing teachers at various career stages to determine whether perceptions shift over career span and to identify different professional development needs at different career stages, which may impact on teachers' responses, particularly to contextual influences. At various career stages, teachers may attempt to reach a balance between personal and social expectations. There may well be a sociocultural dynamic to the identity teachers construct. Future work is needed on how these sociocultural dynamics contribute to the teachers' responses to influences.
7. What influences teachers who had no interest in participating in this study? As previously noted, a limitation of the study was that the volunteer participants were likely those with an interest not only in teaching, but also in talking about teaching. An ongoing challenge would be to access those who might hold alternative views about teaching.
8. What is the relationship between personal traits, attributes and attitudes towards collegial activities?
9. How different are the perceptions and experiences of teachers in other universities in New Zealand, Australia, and in Europe, Asia, America, Africa, etc.? It is said that "empirical studies must succeed in comparing the states of a system at different points in time, and inferring the critical conditions of constancy and variability" (Huber, 2005, p. 68).
10. It became apparent when reading the data that gender and culture issues might account for some of the variability of the influences identified, the interactions between those influences, and how people actually experienced and responded to them. It would be worthwhile to consider these elements in

subsequent analyses when considering positionality and micro-politics in the context of participants' worlds. This would allow the data to be dealt with at a more complex level.

I began my study on teachers' perceptions and experiences of influences on their teaching thoughts and actions, by situating myself within the existing literature exploring various influential factors. While still embracing this orientation, my knowledge of this area and understanding of the phenomena has developed and refined. As I have come to understand the importance of personal characteristics, the role of teachers' non-teaching experiences, their interactions with colleagues and students in context, as well as policies at different levels, I have shifted my orientation to a more holistic developmental model attempting to represent the complexities of the phenomena, and to consider the impact of such influences. This repositioning in my conception of influences on teaching leads me to attempt what I perceive as an extremely difficult task, seeking evidence of a link between influences on teachers' thoughts and practice, and student learning. I am not alone in my interest in this link; the participants in my study were clearly aware of the impact their decisions about teaching had on student learning, and a project is underway in New Zealand that explores the influence of academic developers on teachers and the link with student learning. I hope my current research will contribute to an understanding of the nature of this vital relationship.

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Appendix 1 Participant Information Sheet



Date Information Sheet Produced: dd/mm/yyyy

Project Title

Influences on Teaching: Perceptions and Experiences of University Teachers

An Invitation

My name is Xiaomin Jiao and I am currently enrolled in a doctoral programme at AUT University. My doctoral project focuses on influences on university teachers' teaching. You are invited to take part in the project by contributing to a series of interviews about your perceptions and experiences of the influences on your teaching.

Your participation in the research is entirely voluntary, and you may withdraw from the process anytime before the data collection process is complete in November 2008. In addition, you are free to ask that any of the information that you have given not be used.

What is the purpose of this research?

This study seeks to consider and present how selected staff at a New Zealand University perceive and experience being a university teacher. In particular, I am setting out to investigate university teachers' perceptions of the influences on their ideas about teaching and their actual actions as teachers, and how they experience and respond to those influences.

How was I chosen for this invitation?

In this study, I am seeking to enlist participants who have widely varying backgrounds with respect to their disciplines, their experience as a university teacher, and their conditions of appointment. Overall, I will be talking to ten to twelve teachers who are willing to take part in the project and I am making initial contact with prospective

participants through my existing networks as well as those of my friends and colleagues.

What will happen in this research?

Your participation will include being interviewed up to three time(s) over a course of ten months from February to November 2008. Each interview will last 60 to 90 minutes and each interview will be audio recorded. The time and duration of the interviews will be arranged to your convenience.

After the interview(s), I may also ask if some of you are willing to engage in a stimulated recall process. If you agree, I will collect data by observing your teaching practices during a class and then invite you to interpret what is happening by explaining how your plans and teaching philosophy have been manifest in your teaching practices and by identifying factors that have influenced your plans and actions.

What are the discomforts and risks?

There are no intended discomforts or risks in this research. However, although every effort will be made to avoid such circumstances, I acknowledge that discussion of some teaching experiences and classroom observations could still potentially be an issue of professional discomfort for some people being interviewed.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

I will seek to avoid possible discomforts by wording the questions in an appropriate way and participants will be advised that they may terminate the interview at any stage or choose not to answer some questions. Your identity will be protected at all stages of the research. The only individuals who will actually listen to the audio tape will be myself, and potentially someone who is asked to transcribe data. Your identity will remain confidential with me at all times and any people involved in the project such as transcribers will have to sign confidentiality agreements and will not be made aware of your personal identity. My supervisors will only see the transcripts and not listen to the tapes.

What are the benefits?

This project intends to provide insights into the factors that influence the everyday lives of university teachers and their continuing development. These factors include

the culture, policy and processes of an institution, faculty, school, department and workgroup, as well as internal factors such as personal beliefs about teaching. By participating in the project, you are likely to benefit from opportunities to reflect upon your own underlying beliefs, assumptions, and experiences that shape your own teaching and growth as a teacher. You will also have opportunities to learn about and from the experience of other teachers who will be participating in the study and how they experience the influences on their teaching lives.

How will my privacy be protected?

Your anonymity, privacy and confidentiality will be protected. No names of participants will be used in reports on the research: pseudonyms will be utilised instead. Furthermore, any identifiable personal information will be deleted to ensure privacy and confidentiality. The interviews will be tape-recorded. Tapes will be transcribed using numbers only to indicate speakers.

I will give you a copy of transcript of each of your interviews to review. You will have the opportunity to delete, clarify, or amend any statements that, on reflection, you would prefer not be included as data of the study.

Original data and consent forms will be stored separately in locked cabinets in my supervisors' office at the CEPD and School of Education. All original data will be destroyed by shredding after six years.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

There are no financial costs in this research project. However, I do understand that each participant will be giving up some precious time in order to contribute to this project. There are up to six interviews. Each one will take approximately up to ninety minutes. Time variations may be necessary as some topics may take more or less time than anticipated. It is important to know that the interview will not extend beyond this time unless with your consent. Additional time will be needed if you are willing to engage in a stimulated recall process. There are no other anticipated costs or inconveniences related to this project.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

Your participation is voluntary though I hope you will agree to take part in this research as you are likely to find your involvement interesting and rewarding. Please take one week or so to consider your potential involvement as an interviewee

participant. If you are interested in participating in this project please reply to me by email jjaxia04@aut.ac.nz or call 021 0793581 by dd/mm/yyyy.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree to participate in this research, please complete a Consent Form, which will be sent to you by email. I will ask you to sign it and give it to me when undertaking our first interview.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You will be informed where to get a final report of the project and each participant will be sent an electronic version of the final report as requested. You will also be informed of any future publications concerning the findings of this project.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr. Neil Haigh, neil.haigh@aut.ac.nz, 9219999 ext 6833

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary, AUTEK, Madeline Banda, madeline.banda@aut.ac.nz, 921 9999 ext 8044.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Researcher Contact Details:

Xiaomin Jiao

Email: jjaxia04@aut.ac.nz

Mobile: 021 079 3581

Research Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr. Neil Haigh

Email: neil.haigh@aut.ac.nz

Phone: 9219999 ext 6833

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on
29 November 2007, AUTEK Reference number 07/204.**



Appendix 2 Consent Form

Project title:

Influences on Teaching: Perceptions and Experiences of University Teachers

Project Supervisor: Neil Haigh

Researcher: Xiaomin Jiao

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated xx xxxx,xxxx.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- I understand that my teaching might be observed and notes will be taken during the classroom observations.
- I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- I agree to take part in this research.
- I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one):
Yes No

Participant's signature:

.....

Participant's name:

.....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

.....

.....

.....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 29
November 2007. AUTEK Reference number 07/204.

Appendix 3 Becoming a tertiary educator (A1)

The incidents that tie my story together are not ‘significant’. They are signifying or signalling incidents—they are evidence of changes occurring in my knowing.

Teaching swimming

I began teaching as a teenager. I was a keen swimmer and helped with the local swimming club’s ‘learn to swim’ classes for young children. No one taught me how to teach swimming, I had been taught to swim, had watched others teaching, and was confident to begin teaching others. Three years later while at university, I taught swimming professionally as a vacation job. I prepared for this by reading two books about teaching swimming. At that stage most of my pupils were children, but one or two were adults. Looking back this seemed like my first venture into adult education.

Teaching high school students

My formal career in education began with teaching mathematics to high school students. I did not see myself as an adult or tertiary educator. I was in my early twenties and thought of myself as an adult; but I was teaching some very mature 17 and 18 year-old students and wondered, ‘when does a learner become an adult?’

Reflecting further I continue to wonder: - is the separation between the primary, secondary and tertiary a false partitioning,

- does this separation serve any useful purpose,

- does the division mean we emphasize differences instead of commonalities?

Changing schools

My second teaching position was as a head of department with the particular task of introducing ‘new’ mathematics into the school. The staff were well qualified teachers with a wealth of experience teaching the ‘old’ maths. They seemed a little fearful of the change although they recognized its inevitability. Being head of department and having to introduce this change in the curriculum was obviously adult or tertiary teaching, although it was more usually called professional development.

I realized that I would not ‘transmit’ knowledge to these older colleagues and the old adage, ‘*start where the learner is*’ seemed what I would have to do. So, rather than choose a radical version of the ‘new’ maths (e.g., Papy 1963 & 1967, from Belgium) which I was happy to do, I opted for a traditional version from the United Kingdom (by

the Scottish Mathematics Group). This merged the new content knowledge with what the teachers were familiar with and this made the transition acceptable.

In hindsight the 'new' maths was not only about what was taught, but also how it was taught, so I had only achieved part of what I should have been aiming for.

Writing textbooks

While teaching between 1966 and 1978 I co-authored 18 textbooks. Looking back I wonder, were the textbooks for students, or were they an attempt to teach teachers? I believe we were trying to change what teachers did, therefore we were adult educators. As authors we believed our resources would facilitate better teaching and learning, although our texts were often used as vehicles for transmission teaching.

My more recent co-authoring textbooks have been different. We have been more concerned about rich learning activities or tasks for our adult readers. Thus, while still attempting to educate adults, we have changed the focus by providing open-ended learning tasks.

Attending teacher refresher and in-service courses

During my years of teaching there were numerous workshop/development courses at the Department of Education's residential in-service teacher centres, and a number of residential teacher refresher courses during school holidays. I attended many of these as either a participant or as a resource person.

Most of these courses focussed on professional development and as a resource person I was expected to be an adult/tertiary educator. We were usually given a topic and a time period for each session and were expected to either lecture or provide a workshop.

Looking back, my overall impressions of these teacher courses were that the ones where teachers had more control of the activities were more successful. This fitted with the empowerment notion that I read about later, and with my view that the learner rather than the teacher has the responsibility for learning.

Learning about learning

My third teaching position was as head of department at a new school, Green Bay High. The principal, Des Mann, was a progressive educator. Six weeks before our first staff meeting which was a week before the school opened he told us that our 'homework'

was to read *“Teaching as a subversive activity”*. This book was quite radical in the early 70s and helped me shift my thinking from mathematics to education more generally. Des encouraged me to re-read Neill 1962) and introduced me to the writing of Carl Rogers. My overall impression from this might be summed up by:

“You can’t change other people, but you can provide opportunities and encouragement for them to change themselves.”

This lesson remains with me, and I believe it applies to learners of all ages.

During my third year at this school I spent a week of vacation at an encounter group run on the lines suggested by Carl Rogers. Again the notion of one’s self taking responsibility for personal change was reinforced and it clearly related to adults including myself.

Managing a school

My last school-teaching position was as director of Auckland Metropolitan College—a state alternative high school. The school’s five aims as stated in the initial prospectus were:

- to promote interaction between the college and the community
- to involve students more directly in determining their own education
- to develop critical acumen
- to develop communication skills
- to develop responsibility.

For me these aims implied experiential learning in the community, students’ control of their own learning and choice of courses, critical debate and self-assessment and self-reporting, relationship courses and group work, and students taking responsibility for all aspects of school life. These approaches were successful with school-aged students and I believe that similar approaches are also successful for adults.

School meetings were held so that students could participate in decision-making and administration. The meetings involved considerable debate but it quickly became evident that when a staff member had said something then students were reluctant to voice a different opinion. Consequently, I developed the habit of playing a devil’s advocate role and arguing for the opposite. This usually legitimated the alternative viewpoint and opened up the debate. Later, when working with adult students from

other cultures, I found a similar acceptance and respect of authority, and to get some students to take a more critical stance I again found myself having to present with passion both sides of some arguments.

Developing curriculum

My next career step was into the Curriculum Development Division as an Education Officer. While I saw my role as facilitating development activities it quickly became obvious to me that my main task was that of a tertiary educator. Engaging teacher colleagues in professional development, curriculum development, and resource development activities was similar to attempting to get school students to change their behaviour, to engage with something different, to do something in a different way, or to take responsibility for an individual or group project.

I quickly realized that the ways of working that teachers used were much more diverse than I had seen in schools while teaching. Some teachers were very innovative, others were quite conservative, yet nearly all of them were very committed to education. Many seemed more resistant to change than school students were and this continued to bother me for some time—it seemed to me that they were in the business of change, yet were not willing to change themselves. Over time I came to see that this reluctance was more a needing of time to consider change rather than an unwillingness to change.

One important incident during this time was when I was facilitating a series of working parties to prepare a teachers guide (Department of Education, 1986) for teachers of forms 3 and 4 (years 9 and 10) mathematics. The first two meetings had gone well and half of the draft guide seemed ready. At the third meeting more material was being prepared until one participant said, *“We all know how to teach this, we don’t need this guide, we need something different.”* We stopped and discussed what ‘something different’ might be. We decided on a very different resource and when I wrote to the participants from the two earlier meetings explaining the change of direction, they were most encouraging. The final result from that series of meetings was the most valuable guidebooks that I had been involved in. The lesson for me was that as the teacher I did not have all the answers and as a teacher I needed to be flexible, take a risk, and go with the decision of the group.

Teaching graduates

In 1989 the NZ Department of Education changed to a Ministry and the department's curriculum development division was dis-established. I moved to a teaching position in a University. This was my first official post as a tertiary educator and the process of 'becoming a tertiary educator' continued at an even faster rate. I was in a privileged position in that I was teaching and supervising adult students who were undertaking masters and doctoral studies. It was also a challenging position—although my prior learning was recognized as qualifying me for the position I did not have a masters or doctoral degree so I had to quickly upgrade my qualifications. My students came from a number of different cultures and were nearly all experienced teachers with considerable practical experience to draw upon. I saw my role as being to broaden their insights on practice from a theoretical perspective. As a result I became particularly interested in the nature of knowledge and theories of learning.

My view of mathematical knowledge since form 3 (year 9) had been that it was not absolute truth but axiomatic or relative truth; as such it was entirely a human construction. This fitted with ideas of constructivism (social and radical) that were gaining acceptance in the eighties. However, my ideas had moved while I was a curriculum officer as I started to differentiate between content knowledge (what one knows) and the processes associated with this (what one does). And this was just a start. I realized that such different aspects of knowledge related to all areas of knowing, not only mathematics. I was beginning to think about what one knows in terms of pedagogical knowledge, what one thinks, what one knows intuitively, what one knows bodily (but unconsciously), and what is now sometimes called 'habits of mind', that is the 'habits' one develops in thinking, knowing, and doing that remain after one has 'forgotten' what was learnt at school.

At university I remember asking an international doctoral student about the theory underpinning her thesis. She replied, 'Radical constructivism'. I asked, 'Why that?' and she replied, 'Because that's what you believe.' I was somewhat shocked. I told her that that was not a good enough reason, and added that I was becoming dissatisfied with the theory and thought that enactivism and systems theory provided a better explanation of learning. This incident reminded me of the way some students show respect to 'elders' and the need to be more tentative when discussing theories in class.

Theorising about pedagogy and andragogy

While working at the tertiary level I remember a feminist colleague getting upset by the word andragogy. She saw it as relating to men rather than to men and women. I get upset with the word too, but for different reasons. I do not know when one becomes an adult, and the basic principles of teaching (pedagogy) seem the same for people of all ages—hence the word andragogy is not required. That is not to say that adults and children do not learn slightly differently.

I see learning in the Piagetian/constructivist sense of having one's knowledge schema perturbed, and responding to the perturbation by accommodating, assimilating, or rejecting the notion that perturbed one's schema (though this processes may occur without conscious thought). The difference between children and adults is that if one is older then one's knowledge schema is likely to be more robust, having stood the test of time. As a result a perturbation contradicting an adult's prior knowing may be more likely to be rejected or may require more time for consideration which implies that the accommodation or assimilation takes longer.

Teaching and supervising research

As a tertiary educator I found supervising research to be very stimulating. I had learnt with teaching that one cannot change people, and soon realized that research does not change the educational system, though it may have a minor influence on some small aspect of the complex juggernaut. For me the main benefit of doing research is the growth of the researcher. As a supervisor I hope to stimulate this growth, but I often wonder if the main benefit of being a supervisor is actually the growth of the supervisor.

I think of research as 'enquiry' and I wonder if academia does not sometimes make it appear more than it is. I did research at primary and secondary school when doing 'projects' and supervised research when my fourth-form class investigated topics in the history of mathematics. As a teacher I researched what others had found when I searched for innovative learning activities and encouraged others to do the same as we prepared teachers guides and textbooks. My formal research began at University, though oddly it seems to me, not during my undergraduate years. As a tertiary educator I believe that individual and group enquiry should be encouraged much more, and I would call this research and think of it as just another way of learning.

If I was a tertiary educator teaching prospective chefs then I would not teach them to read recipes from a cookbook; I would be concerned that they learnt the basic principles of cooking and could use ingredients in a creative way. Teaching academic research raises similar issues. I believe that too often in research methods courses we teach numerous 'recipes' for research rather than basic principles that students can use creatively. However, I am pleased to report that learners learn in spite of the teaching.

I recall how a Fijian researcher reported her approach to research. Having decided to use interviews as her main data-gathering tool she designed an interview schedule with a number of open-ended questions. She said that her cultural approach with elders would be to first present them with some significant token of respect (koha), then sit with them ensuring she was at a lower level, explain her project, and tell the interviewee what her questions were. She would then listen to the interviewee without interrupting and felt sure that they would answer all her questions though not necessarily in order (and in fact this did occur when she did her 'interviews').

Learning from art

After completing a doctorate I decided to relax and attend an evening art class. An incident occurred at our first session which has left a deep impression on me.

The tutor gave us three small pieces of paper and asked us to draw pictures of a boat, a house, and the person sitting opposite us. He then walked around and gave us each a mark. I scored 8 and felt good, 8/10, not bad; but then I heard him give a 12 and a 14.

He then drew three series of pictures of boats, houses and of one of our classmates across the board, drew vertical lines between the pictures in each series, and labelled them 6, 8, 10, ..., 18 and told us these were typical drawings of children of that age. He suggested that we would have been about that age when we had been told that we could not draw.

Two participants reacted, one sobbed and one screamed. Both had had memories triggered and could recall exactly when they had been told they could not draw.

I had never realized how easy it was to teach people that they cannot do things; and I wondered how often I had taught my students that they could not do mathematics. My belief is that we do all learners a serious disservice when we underestimate their power and potential. This experience with art showed me how teachers can

underestimate their students' power to learn and unwittingly teach them that they lack this power.

Thinking about thinking

A few years later while working in England, I was involved in a project concerned with developing mathematical thinking. I believed that this project should have parallel projects for other subjects, and when, in the context of mathematics, my colleague said,

A lesson without the opportunity to generalize is not a lesson in mathematics,

I wondered about the specific thinking skills in other subjects and how each subject might contribute to the range of general and specific thinking skills. On returning to NZ I was heartened to see the draft of the school curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2006) with thinking as a key competency; though a little disappointed on discovering that thinking was not embedded with the content of each subject.

I wonder, as adult educators, are we doing any better than teachers in schools? What do we teach? Are we busy stuffing our students' heads with so-called 'facts' or are we teaching them to think? Are we teaching creative thinking as well as critical and logical thinking? I know it is easy to stay with the status quo, and often I find myself being guilty of taking the easy path—but there are alternatives and perhaps we need to support each other with these.

Reflecting on my journey

In the ongoing process of 'becoming' a tertiary educator I still wrestle with a number of dilemmas. These include:

- Do children learn differently from adults?
- Is how I teach as important as what I teach?
- Is there a body of knowledge that my students need to learn?
- Can I use rich learning activities more often with my classes?
- Do I acknowledge that my students control their learning?
- Is my role to teach or to encourage/facilitate learning?
- Is the status given to research too high, or should every learner be a researcher?
- Do I acknowledge the power to learn that everyone has?

- Is my listening hermeneutic rather than the evaluative or interpretive?
- Are participants in my classes given adequate opportunities to 'cognize'? (Cognize is more than thinking, it is knowing, it involves awareness, mindfulness, intuition, and other ways of knowing that tertiary institutions often seem to ignore)

Specifically, having recently taken up my present position, I have a further concern. While I have been impressed by the culture of caring and support of students that has been developed, I see one role of education as encouraging critical thinking, independence and autonomy, and life-long learning. I am concerned that too much caring and supporting (even mollycoddling) of students might teach them dependence rather than independence.

Finally, looking back on my journey, the only person I can truly say I have educated is myself—and even then I wonder whether I have done a good job so far! And my conclusion—there is no conclusion, 'becoming' continues.

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Appendix 4 Profile of D1

I started my vocational calling as a teacher 30 years ago. Over this time, I have taught in primary and secondary schools, and lectured at the Palmerston North College of Education, Bethlehem Institute of Education, AUT University and now, Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato. What follows is a glimpse of my story for nearly five decades as a student/person and nearly three in the role of teacher and some particular ‘influences’ from my teaching journey.

I grew up in a big family where there were six children and where relationships and dialogues were pretty important in the house. I learned about interactions in the family and some of the ways I interact as a person. I believe that we are created with the ability to be creative, and therefore, are people worthy of respect.

Prior to university teaching

Prior to my first day of teaching, an elderly gentleman late in life took me aside to share a thought that lives on for me today. He provoked me with the thought that “the children I teach wouldn’t remember anything I taught them, but they would remember what sort of person I was”. Recent interactions with past primary and secondary school students have confirmed this.

As a parent, I sought to be proactive with my children’s teachers and enrolled my children, for the most part, in integrated schools that had a special character. My intention was that there should be a degree of synergy between the values and beliefs within our home and those outworked in my children’s schools. I held the view that parents are a child’s first teachers and that the role of the school was to support the parents with their educational endeavours with their child. This being the case, identifying schools that had a special character, which would support the nature of our home, was important to me as a parent. I was less concerned about my children’s academic endeavours than the effort they gave to the learning experiences provided by their teachers. I confess to siding with Mark Twain’s position: he declared that he never let his schooling interfere with his education.

My first teaching position was teaching 9-10 year old children in a decile 2 primary school, quite a poor area. I chose to live in the area where my school was. That’s the decision I made. So I bought a house and lived there among staff and children I was

teaching. These kids, I mean, on one hand they were poor; on the other hand, they were just lovely people. I looked at what I had to teach, I looked at them, and it was just a mismatch at times. What became important for me was students. Students become more important than the content. Students become more important than the product, partly because I was sensitised to who they are as people. I was being sensitised to their families. I can see arguments that were happening and see the relationships between parents and child that weren't good. I could see it. And because of that, I really felt for the students I was teaching. And that really influenced me. I lived in the community. I guess, right from my very first teaching position, I realised that in my role as a teacher, I influenced those students more than I teach them stuff. That was my first teaching position which was back in 1982 – now 26 years ago, I noticed that.

Then my next teaching position, I stayed in the same neighbourhood, but I went to the high school. I followed the students into high school. I had taught them as 9-10 year olds, now I am teaching them maths in high school, when they were 13, 14, 15, up to 17. I feel privileged that I saw a big part of the students' lives. I watched these kids from my neighbourhood go through primary, then through secondary school. I guess I realised, I influenced them as a teacher.

My second teaching position was in a single-sex secondary school which took pride in its academic and sporting achievements. I became increasingly concerned with the rigidity of this school in relation to the curriculum and the school's willingness to consider students as a means of acquiring academic and sporting success at the expense of the particular student's best educational interests. There were students who only attended to represent the school in inter-school athletics; other students who attended school to play rugby, leaving after the rugby season. These students had no interest in classroom activities. I experienced a similar frustration with a head of department whose views on the organisation of the curriculum was simply to work through a text book without variation. His position was that the author of the text book knew why the curriculum was organised as it was in the book. The effect was that teachers in this subject area constrained the content of their teaching to the textbook. My concern for the students' experience of learning grew, as I felt the school

legitimated content at the expense of the students-as-learners, as boys I needed to relate with, and engage them in an interest and willingness to learn.

My next teaching position was as the Head of Department Mathematics at a coeducational high school. In this position I was involved in a collaborative research project with IBM (NZ) and Massey University that sought to integrate the mathematics, science, English and social studies curriculums for students in years nine and ten. In contrast to my previous teaching experience where the textbook was seen as authoritative on the nature of the students' learning experiences, in this school I was involved in rewriting the intended learning experiences for students with a view to making them more meaningful, relevant, and problem-based, and utilised the computer as an educational support tool. I became increasingly aware of the opportunities teachers had to construct influential teaching-learning experiences for their students and began to see how this influenced the way teachers and students related.

In 1990, I was employed as a lecturer in education, teaching in early childhood, primary and secondary pre-service teacher education programmes in a college of education. During this time, the importance of teacher education programmes in the preparation of beginning teachers became increasingly apparent to me. Teacher education programmes appeared to bridge students' previous experiences of being a student in the teacher-student relationship towards an appreciation and sensitivity of how they might *be* as the teacher in this relationship. During this time, I completed postgraduate papers in educational philosophy and history which supported a Masters of Education thesis which researched the dominant ideological features within an alternative form of schooling with a concern for relationships.

Upon the completion of my thesis, I was employed in a teaching and leadership position in a newly established private training establishment that sought to operate in a way that was consistent with a particular worldview. This organisation offered pre-service early childhood, primary and secondary teacher education programmes as well as a counselling programme. I was extensively involved in curriculum development at paper and programme levels, along with the construction of several undergraduate degree programmes in teaching and education. Within eighteen months of employment, I took up the position of Chief Executive Officer / Dean of Education

within this organisation. During this time, I worked with colleagues to answer the question: How do we organise ourselves, and our organisational culture, to align our practice to our espoused philosophy? I co-wrote and presented an academic paper which called for a relational model in teacher education. While my initial interest was the curriculum development within the organisation, my focus turned towards the organisational culture of the institution in light of my particular interest in the relational nature of educational practice. Collegial discussions considered the teacher-student relationship in relation to the growth of an educational community amongst staff and students, the design of new facilities, the titles given to those with responsibilities, and the pastoral care and mentoring of students. During this time, I was involved as a founding and executive member of the Teacher Education Forum Aotearoa New Zealand (TEFANZ), which gathered together providers of teacher education in New Zealand with a view to advocating politically for quality degree-based teacher education.

After serving for eight years in this role, I halted my teaching career and resigned from the position of Dean to care for my terminally ill mother, a relational experience that was like no other.

Teaching at university

I came to the university in 2002 because I knew a person there who was in a leadership role at that time. My entrance into teacher education came through the provocation and mentoring of this professor. I arrived at the university at a time where courses needed to be written, when the school and the programme of postgraduate studies were very young. The head of the school gave me the space and freedom to write courses which reflect my deepest beliefs and influence the programme towards things I valued. I enjoyed the freedom to develop courses on completely original topics. I got a sense of being trusted as a staff member and felt empowered. I was allowed to be incredibly creative.

Along with my interest in the topic I was teaching, I progressively taught and wrote courses that expressed my desire to explore the special character of education, something that I felt very close affinity with. Over the course of teaching at the university, I taught papers on Educational Leadership and Professional Practice to postgraduate and undergraduate students. I have been very intentional in using

'appreciative inquiry' and 'phenomenological analysis' to provoke a greater awareness, sensitivity, and commitment to our pedagogic practice as teachers and leaders.

But my experience at the university wasn't always like that, as the school moved on. When the number of postgraduate students increased, and slowly the system came into place, I found less flexibility. When the number was very small, it gave teachers a lot of freedom. When people were teaching at AUT for 10 or 15 years, I wondered whether the creativity gets stifled a little bit. As times and people changed, I received mixed messages between the policy language and the real lived language. They are saying things that relate to the ideals and bigger picture of education but in their practice they are very pragmatic. People have got seduced by managerialism and lost sight of why we are here. Gaps between me and the institution started to emerge.

When the school required me to teach a course which I had a mild/less interest in, I would keep up my interest and try to think of ways to make the content more interesting. I would make the content problematic by connecting some of the sociology and philosophy behind the course. Students have got to be attuned into real issues.

I noticed that students cope with dialogue at different levels, and the biggest shift would be the difference between a first year undergraduate student and all the other students I taught. I attributed the difference to the students' school practices, school ways of thinking, their commitment, and their own life experiences. It seems that first year teaching is a bit more extrinsic, while other students can handle some of the more difficult questions.

I would seriously consider students' feedback. I like to be encouraged. I don't like negative feedback and feel a bit hurt. I preferred criticism which is very carefully worded where somebody is appreciating the relationship and is working towards refining my practice for the benefit of all. I weighed up what students were saying but I don't see myself as having to meet all the things that they raise. I'm not answerable to my students in the first instance. In the first instance I'm answerable to myself as a teacher, and according to the things I value, what is my position here and if my position is that what they're saying to me is very insightful and I have a blind spot and they're showing me that, great I thank them for it. If what they're telling me is that through their criticism is that I'm causing them to think well I'm not going to change, I

celebrate that so I have to weigh up why they are telling me this, what's their motivation and I deeply consider it.

I believed that opportunities outside of teaching influences my teaching practice, such as being involved in a research committee, as a way of getting people together, to think constructively about teaching and learning. I was involved in the school research committee which was formed voluntarily. Together with colleagues, I ran school conferences and other things *as a way* of building a sense of community. We tried to influence the collegial relationships that existed in the school; believed that research should enhance community and collegiality rather than separating staff, and attempted to bring back a human face to what research should be about. Meeting likeminded people who are concerned about education and students' experiences reminded me that I was not alone. We kept finding strategies to remind ourselves of the bigger picture of not what is wrong with the place, but what is right with the place. Alongside my postgraduate activity, I began a doctorate. The focus of my doctorate was re-oriented towards the lived experience of the teacher-student relationship. I was personally challenged to revisit my experience of this critical relationship, having spent many years working from assumptions and theories. The ways people talk about relationships, the stories they told about the experience shocked me and so from the very first interview on I think it would be fair to say I've been shocked time and time again. I've been shocked about the nature of a really good teacher-student relationship and I've been more shocked about teacher-student relationships that are very dysfunctional, even awful. Now you've got to keep in mind that I'm interviewing people who are inside teacher-education in New Zealand. Now I don't expect poor relationships to be in teacher education. We're training teachers. We're role models but in amongst that there are more stories that involve pain than show celebration and I've just been shocked. So right from the word go it has sensitized me to how people experience relationship so I can't teach without thinking about my own experience of what's currently taking place but I'm also asking myself at times, what is the experience like for a student sitting in my class. So research has led me to ask that question whereas before I might have asked the question, am I being efficient, am I being effective but now I ask what is the experience like for them, how are they

experiencing this class. A very different question, I never know the answer but the question for me is very powerful and it keeps me on edge.

Philosophy

For me philosophy speaks about the real messages, the hidden curriculum, the goal that we're actually aiming for and I think in New Zealand society we're having a real tension over that issue. We have been through the last three decades where we've been pushed into certain ideologies and philosophies and I guess I don't see us sufficiently addressing that issue in teacher education and yet I look at all the subjects we do and all the subjects we teach as reflecting a particular philosophy which in my mind is mostly very pragmatic and I just think they've got to be attuned into real issues. I think teaching is an incredibly serious business. I have no tolerance for teachers who don't care for the students; one of the things that concerns me in the university environment, which has a traditional value for knowledge. My problem is that, if we are valuing knowledge in some way, we don't understand the seriousness of the relationship with a student, that is the experience that we call education.

I guess I have always taken the view that when you go into a classroom with students, then you closed the door. You don't just close students into the classroom. You close the world out of classroom. And my view is, even if there are constraints, who we are as teachers, when you closed the door with a group of students and you've looked into their eyes, then as a teacher, I feel responsible to be creative, to be someone who is feeling, someone who is sensitive, someone who trusts my hunches, who provokes thinking, who asks questions that I don't know the answers of. Even if there are constraints from above, I think, when I close the door of the classroom, for me, all of a sudden, becomes me and the students.

The PBRF (Performance Based Research Funding) has caused us to have to value things that we took for granted before. Before, we would offer consultation, we would care for our colleagues; we would pass around academic papers. Now we seem to need to have to document some of these things in the name of Peer Esteem and these other categories which normally we just would have taken for granted as being part of our collegial environment. Now we are counting these things and recording these things and for me that's not something I really want to do... The person we are involved with is more important than the numbers that I crunch in the name of a PBRF. Again, we

have a clash of values. What I value in a humane and critical education is not the counting of numbers. I don't see that the PBRF ends up with a solution that measures the quality of research. I don't think it measures a research culture. I think it's a mechanism for the distribution of funds rather than the enhancement of educational research and so I am disappointed and I won't play the game.

I would like to believe that a great proportion of adult educators in New Zealand share my ideas. The reason I think that, firstly I think, education policy does not reflect a democratic society, doesn't reflect, I guess, the culture and history of New Zealand, and I think completely foreign to it. And I think the Quality Public Education Coalition (QPEC) which was set up against these policies, is just one organisation that's publicly coming out, which has been supported by a lot of teachers, to say the way we're being asked to think isn't right. I have presented at conference about this, past supervisors, Ivan Snook and others, are drivers in that community. What I am saying is that these organisations, for me are evident that there is a wide body of people who are functioning as teachers to a greater standard than what the policy asks. For me, the policies in place are not about efficiency and effectiveness, they minimize it. They are about achieving pass rates. Good teachers do it anyway, but good teachers do more than that.

Reflection

My teaching experience recommenced in a different university with a priority on postgraduate teaching and supervision, and my doctoral studies. Much of my postgraduate teaching and supervision involved international students for whom English was often their second language. Over time, I became more attentive and sensitive to the messages and dialogue we shared relationally. I became alert to some of my taken-for-granted ways of "being-in-relationship". I noticed how important the teacher-student relationship was for students. These students were particularly attentive to not only *who* I was but also *how* I was.

I saw this teacher provoked thinking. I went to see this person, you know, what's your secret? And he said to me, I just want to provoke thinking. I listened to that and I recognised that as something I love to do. I love to provoke thinking because I study philosophy, I study sociology, I have taught in primary and secondary school, and I am very mindful of teacher-student relationships. I am from a big family, you know, eight

people in my family, relationships and dialogues are very important. So I guess I look for ways of teaching that completely connect people, what's going on in the classroom. I think teaching is about conversation. I feel very privileged by what I am learning. As a person I am learning in education, what I am researching, I feel very privileged. Here I am heading 50, and I am still learning. I think to myself, why can't that be my students' experience? Somehow, in their study, they are learning completely new things. But the process of learning those new things actually ..., make them open towards one another, make them caring, make them wanting to contribute to conversation. I am fiercely against the ideas that education is about the individual. For me, it's about the community. That's why people must be talking. I don't value selfish students. I value students who want to contribute to others. So I guess I had a number of different teaching settings. I've been humbled in the process. As a consequence, I have learned to value the process as much as the product. Because for me, at the end of the day, one of the great outcomes of education is the formation of character, not just the mind, body, but formation of the person, about who they are.

I spend a lot of time trying to think of ways to make the content more interesting. So for me say something like I was asked to teach a course on technology as an example and it's the technology curriculum and I thought to myself well I haven't taught this for a long time and I have a mild interest in it... What I did was that I decided that one of the ways that I will keep up my interest was I talked about the sociology and the philosophy of the curriculum.

Recently, I had a BBQ with a student I had taught in a Year 5 class in 1983. Over the course of the evening and the many stories that were recalled about particular classroom experiences, I was reminded of the transformative power of education which can 'enable' our students, and teaching as a serious relational business was put into a person's history and can never be taken out. Surely, this is what sustains us as teachers!

My long term goal

My aspiration is to be a 'fully-presenced' educator who influences others towards relational education. I remain research-active with two research approaches: Appreciative Inquiry and Hermeneutic Phenomenology.

I will continue to advocate and model:

- The experiential and relational 'essence' of teaching and learning
- A 'critical' perspective which supports the centrality of the teacher-student relationship
- Educational experiences which are relevant, meaningful, emancipatory and holistic
- Professional practice which shows education as dynamic, embodied and 'in-play'
- Leadership that attends to the 'lived' techné and phronesis of each moment as this influences the relational culture of educational organisations.

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