

# ON TEACHER BELIEFS, SELF-IDENTITY AND THE STAGES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** This article describes teachers as a professional group, focusing on pre-service teachers and refining their profiles on the basis of the studies carried out in educational research. Personality as a major contributor to beliefs and teacher presence in the classroom in a more general sense help to building teacher identity over the period of first becoming and then being a fully-functioning classroom practitioner. Teacher self-concept and identity are developmental in nature and undergo constant fluctuations. They make for the success and/or failure, enthusiasm or burnout of every individual teacher, irrespective of his/her teaching contexts. New teachers who enter classrooms for the first time do not enter them empty-handed. They hold beliefs which have various origins and enjoy varying degrees of sustainability over time and the experiences they encounter. These are discussed here, both theoretically and by means of illustrative studies. When considering teachers over their whole careers, clear developmental stages can be distinguished. These are shown in the form of different models presented in the literature on teacher training and development. The article concludes with a brief description of pre-service teachers' profiles.

**Key-words:** pre-service teachers, a professional group, teacher presence, classroom awareness, developmental stages.

## 1 - Teachers' beliefs about teaching

As Hargreaves (1993:51) puts it in his discussion of individualism and individuality in the educational context, "A school should have a mission or a sense of mission (...). Missions mitigate uncertainties of teaching by forging common beliefs and purposes among the teaching community". But teachers are individuals with their own motivations and their own missions. They do not come without preconceptions to their classrooms. They come from different contexts: educational, personal and social, and thus, they have different values and beliefs concerning teaching and learning processes. These are different on the personal, educational and experiential levels. What teachers bring first to their classrooms is temporary; it fluctuates and evolves with time until it reaches a stage of relative stability. Pre-service teachers (trainee teachers) are still learners involved in the process of completing their professional qualifications, they are individually different and what they bring along with

themselves to their new classrooms must be seen as important variables in how they see themselves in the role of teachers at the beginning of this professional journey. It may be assumed – as Kubler LaBoskey (1993: 23) puts it:

(...) novices do not enter teacher education programs as blank slates. After many years in classrooms they have ideas about what teachers do. But these ideas are derived from a student perspective, not a teacher perspective, and thus, they are very likely to be inaccurate, inappropriate or incomplete.

Such misconceptions may distort or block any new information presented in the teacher education program. Consequently, teacher educators need to consider the potential influence of student preconceptions on the reflective activities and programs they design and implement.

The fact that students have varied learning experiences will also make them have very different systems of beliefs and values in relation to their own performance in a classroom:

Not all prospective teachers enter teacher education programs with the same views. Students vary in their pre-intervention beliefs, particularly in the degree of orientation toward growth and inquiry. (*ibid.*: 23).

I would like to discuss pre-service teachers' beliefs about their role and position in the FL classroom and to interpret these beliefs in the light of all the factors that contribute to their formation. A lot has been written about the belief systems of teachers and the values they hold; this theme is very comprehensively presented by Richards and Lockhart (1994). Just to recapitulate, the authors classify the sources of teachers' beliefs into the following groups:

- teacher's individual experiences as foreign language learners
- teacher's own experience of successfully (or unsuccessfully) applied techniques of teaching in one's own context
- preferred teaching practices and routines in a given institution (*established practice*)
- personally driven preferences (e.g. preferences for more interactive techniques)
- knowledge relating to theories of learning/teaching acquired in the course of training or recently encountered (*educationally-based or research based principles*)
- acceptance of a certain approach or method in teaching (*principles derived from an approach or method*, e.g. belief in communicative language teaching as the best way to develop communicative skills of learners) (*ibid.*: 30-31)

Different sources of beliefs and/or their combination undoubtedly contribute significantly to a system of convictions held by an individual teacher in relation to:

- the language taught
- the specificity of a FL learning process
- FL teaching as a process
- the program and syllabus implemented
- FL teaching as a profession (*ibid.*: 32-41).

Also learners involved in the process of teaching as passive “receivers” (yet also seen nowadays as active participants and decision-making agents in the teaching process) become significant sources for the beliefs their teachers hold. To make the whole dynamics of beliefs even more complex, learners’ convictions and their sources clearly have significant influence over the way classroom processes occur. To a certain extent, these beliefs relate to the same areas as the teachers’ systems but will often be of a more indeterminate and misconceived nature, lacking in expertise and awareness of teaching and learning processes and their complexities. Their beliefs are formed by the:

- perception of the language learnt and how difficult it is
- attitude to the TL speakers (positive and negative images and stereotypes)
- nature of language learning in its different areas of competence (skills and different aspects of language knowledge)
- learning experiences of the past at different stages of education
- attitude and perception of oneself as a person and as a learner
- individual goals learners strive for in their language learning (*ibid.*: 52-57)

## 2 - Self-concept and teacher identity

### 2.1 - Defining the concepts

The concepts of self-identity in general and teacher identity in particular are fundamental to our understanding of what the teaching profession means to an individual and of the tensions and conflicts teachers experience at different stages in their professional career. This is most transparent at the initial stages of becoming teachers.

Generally, the modern concept of identity rests upon four major assumptions (Rodgers & Scott 2008: 733):

1. that identity is dependent upon and formed within multiple *contexts* which bring social, cultural, political and historical forces to bear upon that formation;
2. that identity is formed in *relationship* with others and involves *emotions*;
3. that identity is *shifting, unstable and multiple*; and
4. that identity involves construction and reconstruction of meaning through *stories* over time.

In the teaching profession, the contexts (assumption 1) are very complex and relate to schools, programs and curricula, educational policies, developmental and study groups, pupils, families – the teacher’s own and pupils’ families, among many others. Multiple relationships and interactions (assumption 2) are formed between teachers and pupils, colleagues, mentors, school authorities and, beyond the classroom, parents - just to mention the most fundamental and obvious. The instability of identity, up to a point (assumption 3), undergoes changes under the influence of multiple external factors based on the changing contexts and people involved in interactions and relationships, under the influence of changing concerns and demands placed upon teachers. This changing character however must lead to a time when an individual teacher feels sufficiently safe and comfortable in his/her professional position at the level of self. Achieving professional competence allows him/her to reinterpret the initial self, through experiences and reflecting upon them, in his/her own *stories* (assumption 4).

In their overview of various perspectives on self-perceptions, Beane and Lipka (1996: 4) state that:

The concept of self has a central place in personality, acting as a source of unity and as a guide to behaviour.

Self-perceptions are multidimensional and hierarchical, although at one level they tend to blend into a general sense of one.

Self-perceptions tend to seek stability, consistency and enhancement.

Self-perceptions may be based on roles played by an individual, as well as attributes one believes he or she possesses.

While the self may be an “initiator”, self-perceptions arise mainly in a social context, influenced largely by feedback from “significant others”.

Taking the above into consideration, we may then assume that a self-concept (as a way one views oneself) can and should be enhanced as it contributes to one’s self-esteem, which is understood as “the relative value one attaches to the self concept or the degree to which one is satisfied with it” (*ibid.*: 9) The enhancement of self-concept first of all requires a person to develop an ability to explicitly reflect upon his or her self own qualities and also their origins. It may exert a positive influence on their development or it may impede it. Self-esteem, as directly related to self-concept, expresses a sense of self-worth, which can be enhanced by positive thinking about oneself, but also by examining the system of values the self-concept is based on.

Self-perceptions function at different levels (*ibid.*: 10-11):

- *the specific situation level* – daily functioning and activities performed,

interacting with others and receiving feedback from them, which become a part of our self-perception (or not)

- *the categorical level* – may result from the feedback from others (we see ourselves as others see us) or it may result from *attribute self-perception*, in other words, we imagine what others think about ourselves. It relates to the roles we perform
- *the general sense level* – it is a compilation of the specific and categorical levels and forms the holistic picture we have of ourselves. This level is generally assumed to be “resistant to change” as it usually results from a chain of situations and events, and feedback (either positive or negative) received in this period.

So the general sense about oneself, that is, one’s identity, derives from one’s attributes (personality) and interaction with external feedback. In conceptualizing the constructs of personality and identity, in the Vygotskian tradition, it is understood that personality plays a deterministic role in the development of identity. However, personality is not seen by Vygotsky as an inborn set of qualities of an individual but:

The formation of the personality is based on a process of involvement with public cultural meanings that individuals, in the process of their participation, transform into personal sense. In this process, the specifics of the individual play an important part, causing the personality to be a uniquely individual psychological structure. Through being invested with personal sense, human needs achieve the character of sense-providing motives, which are the chief determinants of a person’s action choices and make up the core of the personality (Van Huitzen *et al.* 2005: 272-273)

Van Huitzen *et al.* (*ibid.*: 273) emphasize that “the personality development runs parallel to the creation of personal identity” and leads to professional identity which is seen as one’s profile based on a fairly stable course of decision-making influencing one’s professional actions. In this continuous process, a significant role is assigned to both cognitive and affective experiences which are basic to thinking and thus final decision taking. They assume that “personality and identity development involve an integration of intellectual, emotional and volitional elements” (*ibid.*: 275)

Also Zembylas (2003: 213)) in his comment on teacher identity points to the evolving character of teacher identity as a characteristic of

constantly becoming in a context embedded in power relations, ideology and culture. (...) construction of teacher identity is at the bottom affective, and is dependent upon power and agency, i.e. power is understood as forming the identity and providing the very condition of its trajectory.

The agency is understood here as a teacher's ability to reflect and mediate his/her actions through this reflection. But also irrespective of its social grounding (interaction, group identity, identification with the group) teacher identity derives from his/her knowledge about the self. This knowledge allows an individual to understand his/herself and his/her motives and in consequence, it allows an individual to reconstruct his/her identity with a view to adapting, improving, creating and succeeding in a given professional context. As such, it needs to be explicit. The term "self-concept clarity" as used by Thomas and Gadbois (2007) is fundamental to understanding student-learners identity development.

Self-knowledge embraces a wide range of qualities, one of them being emotional-ity. This component of self-knowledge is called by Goleman (1995) *Emotional Intelligence* (EI). Wojtynek-Musik (2001), in discussing the need to develop awareness of one's identity, and affective self-knowledge in particular, points out different aspects of EI:

- awareness of one's own emotions, deriving from an observation of one's mental state and an ability to apply them to optimal decision making;
- coping with emotions, in other words identifying their intensity and controlling them to overcome critical situations and to return to normality;
- an ability to motivate oneself - synonymous with concentration on goals, perseverance in achieving them, despite disappointments, and not being distracted by short-term desires;
- an ability to recognize the emotions of others, leading to empathetic and altruistic behaviours (...);
- being more aware of relationships and social actions of caring and sharing;
- commencing and maintaining relationships with others, directly related to being able to understand the emotions of others and using them to their advantage when dealing with matters to be addressed and solved (Wojtynek-Musik, K. 2001: 35-36, translation mine).

There is quite a substantial body of research on measuring emotional intelligence. For example, Duran *et al.* (2004) use the *Trait-Meta-Mood Scale* as a tool for measuring perceptions of one's EI. It consists of three dimensions:

- Attention to Feelings (attention paid to one's emotional states)
- Emotional Clarity (understanding of one's emotional states)
- Repair to Moods (the ability to regulate one's emotional states) (*ibid.*: 387)

Aspects of EI constitute a significant part of one's identity but in particular have to be considered as essential for teachers whose actions are based on interaction and

(complex) relationships. They constitute the basis for being effective in classrooms, schools and other educational and non-educational contexts. Teachers' competence in "perceiving emotions, facilitating thought, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (...) might render teachers less vulnerable to teacher burnout" (Chan 2006: 1043). Also, as research shows, emotional intelligence shows direct association with the affective dimension of one's functioning on the level of one's self-esteem, anxiety and reactions to stress (discussed in Duran *et al.* 2004). Emotional intelligence is also directly linked to the cognitive dimension at the level of intellectual achievement and the social one, as expressed in types of interpersonal relations with others.

Clandinin and Connelly (1995:102) when discussing beginning teachers use teacher narratives which they call "stories of position and positioning, on the landscape". They make a valid assumption based on the life-stories of the selected teachers that an initial job assignment, be it a full-time job or a position as a supplementary teacher, affect in a dramatic way the forming of identity and professional self-confidence in the future. As presented in an example, a stable position in a given school allowed the start-up teacher Tim to

solve a dilemma between the demands of the classroom and the demands outside it. These out-of-classroom demands of the professional knowledge landscape were encased in a healthy-school story that defined the moral horizons for creating a sense of teacher identity in his school.(...) Because Tim made the school story his own, he became confirmed in his identity as a teacher (*ibid.*: 107).

Another story on the other hand, that of substitute teacher Benita, demonstrates a certain disequilibrium, as she "experienced a dilemma between the classroom teacher she wanted to be and the classroom teacher she believed she had to be in order to be successful in her changing classroom assignments" (*ibid.*: 107-108). This situation left her with feelings of insecurity and "unease" about her professional identity.

The development of teacher identity seen from a constructivist position is described by Rodgers and Scott (2008: 751) in the following statement:

We define self to subsume teacher identities and to be an evolving, yet, coherent being that consciously and unconsciously constructs and is constructed, reconstructs and is reconstructed in interaction with cultural contexts, institutions, and people with which the self lives, learns, and functions.

## 2.2. Process of professional identity development

In general it is believed that the development of one's identity correlates with age, following Eriksson's theory of personality development. Discussing the identity development of teachers, we should then consider the stage of adulthood and its affective, cognitive and social characteristics as determinants of identity. Beane and Lipka (1996: 26) characterize adulthood in the following way:

In adulthood, self-perceptions are characterized by seeking stability; that is the individual views himself or herself and is seen by others as consistent in expected situations. The stability we envision comes from two related sources.

The first of these is a progression through social roles and social states.

(...) Second, the self-perceptions stimulated by these roles and states will be constructed, changed, and/or evaluated as the result of the accumulation of experiences.

Thus in teacher development, it is necessary to take into consideration the situations teachers experience in their professional lives right from the start, from the pre-service level when the first perceptions of oneself are constructed on the basis of individual beliefs held and also their experiential dimension. From a Vygotskian perspective, teacher training programs and education in general have one major aim, which is the development of an individual's professional identity (Van Huitzen 2005: 274-276). Following from that, Vygotsky concentrates on the factors conducive to the development of teacher identity, which relate to:

- Participation in a social practice (teacher training)
- Aiming to achieve the ideal (Vygotsky's zone of proximal development)
- Developing awareness of one's own motives and needs as teachers (public standards *versus* individual needs)
- Correlation between clearly stated goals and actual practice
- Development of one's identity as a guided and supervised process
- Emotional experiences of teachers as fundamental to their identity development

Kegan (1982, 1994) sees this seeking for identity or rather formation of a teacher identity as a well-defined five-stage ongoing developmental process, as teachers create their own stories over time. Rodgers and Scott (2008) discuss stages 2-4 of Kegan's model, which are relevant for teacher identity formation, with the exceptions of stage 1, since it is described as "the latency age child" and stage 5, a developmental achievement that goes beyond middle age (*ibid.*: 752) (Table 1).

**TABLE 1.** Development of teacher identity (based on Rodgers and Scott 2008: 740-741).

Stage	How does the teacher make sense of social, political, and historical forces?	How does she make sense of her relationships with others?	How does she construct/re-construct meaning through stories?
Stage 2: <i>The instrumental knower</i> ( <i>The Imperial Balance</i> )	Concrete states outside herself	Teacher role concept formed. Rule-based interactions with others. Lack of perspective on those relations	Superficial understanding of experiences; Black and white perceptions of situations
Stage 3: <i>The socializing knower</i> ( <i>The Interpersonal Balance</i> )	Conforming to the external forces and identification with them. Also threatened with those he/she does not identify with. No individual perspective as yet.	Importance of the opinions and expectations of other people. Empathy for others and sympathy for oneself. Not accepting criticism (an instance of offence).	Focused on emotions and feelings, reflecting upon them. Importance of relationships at different levels (teacher-pupil, teacher-school) Narration "colored" by affective reflections, lack of perspective. Stories influenced by what the teacher thinks is expected of him/her
Stage 4: <i>The self-authoring knower</i> ( <i>The Institutional Balance</i> )	Awareness of external forces and their influence. One's own perspective on the world and himself/herself. Able to define himself/herself and her position.	Clear sense of identity, responsibility and affectivity. Formation of one's own standards and values, reflecting upon criticism constructively. Aware of contradictions and able to cope with them. Cooperation with others (value of mutual support)	Able to self-reflect on the basis of individual experiences. Seeing the impact of relationships on teaching, able to control them.

Reporting on his experiences over years as a teacher of English in a German school, Appel (1995) sketches out the evolution he had undergone in his approach to the profession of teacher and the formation of his identity. As in other areas of professionalism, a shift in perceptions in teaching can also be observed. Appel supports Schon's (1987) perceptions:

the glamour of professionalism in our society has faded away over the last two decades, because "experts" are no longer seen as providing relevant answers to the world's problems. (...) the professions (be they medicine, architecture, management, law or teaching) have defined the relationship between their academic source disciplines and practice as one "in which rigorous professional practitioners are instrumental problem solvers who select technical means best suited to particular purposes. Rigorous professional practitioners solve well-formed instrumental problems by applying theory and technique derived from systematic, preferably scientific knowledge (Schon 1987, quoted in Appel 1995: xii).

This tendency is also reflected in classroom practices as advocated and promoted by modern methodologies in which the teacher is no longer an expert, or at least this may not be his/her major role. Although there is a high degree of autonomy given to learners these days, the teacher is still allowed to remain a relevant source of knowledge among other sources (the learners themselves, for instance). However, the teacher is more often seen as a guide, facilitator, and monitor of a learning process. Training programs in teacher education fully promote this approach to the teaching profession.

Brown (2006: 682) sees the development of teacher identity as an ongoing integration of social interaction on the one hand and “unconscious psychological processes, internal narratives of disturbance (...)” on the other. On the basis of a case study carried out among pre-service and novice teachers, he concludes:

Students’ perceptions of volition were related to the dynamic interplay of intrapersonal forces. The ability to take responsibility for one’s actions, to make decisions and to challenge the decisions of others, was shaped to some extent by students’ own perceptions of their historical, current and future identity. Agency is determined reflexively through one’s inner identifications with the actor who wishes to act.

Even nowadays, pre-service teachers often come from very traditional teaching contexts (certainly true of the Polish school system) and there may be a certain confusion of perception of the roles they are confronted with as learners at schools and learners at teacher training institutions, which preach a new model for a teacher’s roles. In a real classroom situation pre-service and novice teachers may experience a certain disequilibrium (destabilization), which may seem highly threatening. This disequilibrium results from the dilemma of choosing between what kind of teacher a trainee would like to be (based for example on the models studied during the training period), and the reality of the classroom and school, which may seem to impose certain roles on the teacher.

Apart from this, there are a whole array of possible reasons for the feeling of disequilibrium experienced by the trainees and novice teachers. It will most obviously derive from their perceptions of oneself in relation to:

- the person I am
- the person I want to remain
- the person I hate to be
- the teacher I fear to be
- the teacher I want to be (Brown 2006: 677)

In his longitudinal study of trainees and novice teachers, based entirely on student voices expressed in the form of intrapersonal comments (an extended student-written narrative) and interpersonal comments (in-depth personal interviews) made by trainee students, Brown (*ibid.*) describes a case study of Merryn, a novice teacher whose development of teacher identity he observed over a period of time. He says:

Merryn is threatened by the mergence of multiple identities, and the difficulties this multiplicity invites. The disequilibrium comes from the inability to use the emergence of multiple identities as opportunities to extend the range of choice of action. Instead, the multiple identities associated with the different aspects of the teacher's role are experienced as threats to identificatory coherence (...) Becoming a teacher is experienced as becoming an increasingly fragmented person (p. 676).

But this will not always be the case. For many students, disequilibrium can contribute to personal and professional growth if seen not as threatening but rather as "leading to an expanded, integrated self, more diverse and richer in the possibilities for action that multiple identities afford" (*ibid.*: 676). Brown sees a mentor teacher (a trainer) as "the significant other" that can influence a trainee in his/her personal and professional growth by consciously monitoring this experience of disequilibrium a novice inevitably faces in the initial stages of a professional career.

### 3 - Stages in teacher professional and career development

Like in the case of our life-stories, development is seen as a process which is "successive, linear, hierarchical and progressive, with higher stages being more advanced than lower stages" (Mok 2005: 56). These characteristics of life changes as reflected in professional stages of development will be highly idiosyncratic both in terms of time periods and transitions from one stage to another, as well as in the individual teacher's approach to them. So the criterion of time and teaching in terms of years does not necessarily correspond to the stages. It may be approach to teaching, one's role in it and the major concerns (their thematic focus) of the teacher that will delineate different phases of his/her development (*ibid.*).

The traditional understanding of the stages of teacher development expressed in Fuller's generally accepted model (1969) follows the criterion of concern as the major variable of transition from one stage to another in teachers' professional growth with successive years of teaching. This model sees teacher development as a three-stage process:

(...) the self is most concerned in the first stage of survival. Teachers have anxiety about their adequacy, class control and the evaluative opinions of students and colleagues. At

the second stage of mastery, task is the largest concern. Teachers are concerned about the performance of their teaching tasks and they are therefore concerned about managing the teaching situations such as students, time, resources, etc. At the third stage, the impact of their teaching upon students is most concerned. The impact concerns relate to the social and learning needs of pupils, discipline method, curriculum choices, etc. (Mok 2005: 55).

This description comes from the study results of Mok's project (2005), in which the sample of 402 teachers described their professional life in three stages:

- \* stage one: from 1-5 years of teaching
- \* stage 2: from 6-10 years of school career
- \* stage three: from 11-24 years in the teaching profession

The statistical analysis of the data showed that there were ten concerns the teachers expressed about their teaching and that they differed according to the different stages of their development and career (Table 2).

**TABLE 2.** Teachers' concerns at different stages (adapted from Mok 2005: 67-68)

Stage:	Concerns (in ranking order):
Stage one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Student discipline and relationship with students</i></li> <li>• <i>Students' learning and performance</i></li> <li>• <i>Avoidance of conflict</i></li> <li>• <i>Teaching efficiency</i></li> <li>• <i>Personal teaching style</i></li> <li>• <i>Teaching ability</i></li> <li>• <i>Evaluation and criticism</i></li> <li>• <i>Aspiration in education</i></li> <li>• <i>Job prospects</i></li> </ul>
Stage two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students discipline and relationship with students</i></li> <li>• <i>Teaching for students' learning and performance</i></li> <li>• <i>Students' social and non-academic needs</i></li> <li>• <i>Personal teaching style and achievement in school</i></li> <li>• <i>Avoidance of conflict</i></li> <li>• <i>Teaching performance</i></li> <li>• <i>Initiate changes in school</i></li> <li>• <i>Prospects in teaching</i></li> <li>• <i>The education system</i></li> <li>• <i>Non-teaching motives</i></li> </ul>
Stage three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students' learning and performance</i></li> <li>• <i>Teaching performance</i></li> <li>• <i>Personal teaching style and students' non-academic aspects</i></li> <li>• <i>Teaching efficiency</i></li> <li>• <i>Avoidance of conflict</i></li> <li>• <i>Student discipline and relationship with colleagues</i></li> <li>• <i>Aspiration in education</i></li> <li>• <i>Job prospects</i></li> </ul>

An interesting personal account of the first six years of teaching is given by Appel (1995), in which he defines transition periods between the stages of his teaching career as *Survival*, *Change* and *Routine*. The teaching experiences are presented in the form of personal diary and analysis of its entries from a longitudinal perspective of six years of teaching English as a foreign language in a German school. The *survival stage* is defined by Appel as a phase of solving immediate problems encountered in the classroom. First of all these problems relate to class discipline and teaching strains in school contexts, such as staff relationships, control and uncertainty about teaching. At stage two, as Appel puts it himself, the concerns are “no longer about coping with the classroom situation, but about influencing it as well. It describes what were, for me, new perceptions and new methods” (*ibid.*: xvi). The third stage embraces experiences of how changes previously experimented with can be implemented on a more regular basis to contribute to more humanistic and, at the same time, easier to control classroom situations.

In a similar vein, using the criterion of teacher concerns, the stages of teacher development were described by Katz (1976) as *survival*, *consolidation*, *renewal*, *maturity* and by Burden (1980) as *survival*, *adjustment*, *mature*. Other theories look at the way teachers approach their development from initial induction to in-service experiences, exploring what needs and interests they have (e.g. Fessler & Christiansen 1992, among others). This development and perception of its phases are directly linked with the career stages of a given teacher (Table 3).

**TABLE 3.** Stages of a teacher’s career (based on Fessler & Christiansen 1992)

Stage in teacher’s career	Description
<i>Pre-service</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• training to become a teacher ( a variety of paths)</li> <li>• re-training (in the case of a change of job or subject taught)</li> </ul>
<i>Induction</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the initial period of teaching in a given school adapting to its norms and regulations</li> <li>• moving on to a different school age or level of teaching</li> </ul>
<i>Competency building</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• professional development through personal investment in developing one’s skills</li> <li>• establishing one’s own methods and techniques of teaching</li> </ul>
<i>Enthusiastic and growing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being skilled and competent but motivated to develop further</li> </ul>
<i>Career frustration</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the stage of teacher burnout: lack of enthusiasm</li> <li>• lack of job satisfaction and disillusionment</li> </ul>
<i>Career stability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the feeling of plateau</li> <li>• routine in teaching, no development and stagnation</li> </ul>
<i>Career wind-down</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ready to retire</li> <li>• reflecting on the previous stages of his/her teaching career</li> </ul>
<i>Career exit</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• retirement on the grounds of age</li> <li>• change of a profession/job</li> </ul>

Another perspective on teacher development is described in the work of Berliner (1994), who assumes the centrality of teachers' thinking about their job conceptualized by the types of cognitive processes involved in different phases of teacher development, which are seen as evidence of the development of teaching expertise. Berliner sees teacher expertise development as a five-stage process (Table 4).

**TABLE 4.** Stages of teacher development: teaching expertise (based in Bartell 2005: 27)

Level of development	Cognitive approach	Description
Stage 1. <i>Novice level</i>	<i>Deliberate</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning the theoretical basis for teaching</li> <li>• Non- contextualized knowledge</li> <li>• Novice's perception of the importance of teaching practice</li> </ul>
Stage 2. <i>Advanced beginner level</i>	<i>Insightful</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering first experiences</li> <li>• Forming perceptions of individual cases as patterns</li> <li>• Modifying behavior according to experience</li> </ul>
Stage 3. <i>Competent level</i>	<i>Rational</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make their own decisions and sets goals</li> <li>• Ability to plan accordingly</li> <li>• Awareness of a hierarchy of importance</li> </ul>
Stage 4. <i>Proficient level</i>	<i>Intuitive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have informed intuitions about what works and what does not</li> <li>• Holistic perception of the teaching context and learners</li> <li>• Quite extensive experiential knowledge</li> </ul>
Stage 5. <i>Expert level</i>	<i>Arational</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expertise deriving from extensive knowledge and experience</li> <li>• Ability to respond to a variety of situations <i>fluidly and effortlessly</i></li> </ul>

As was discussed above, consecutive stages of a teacher's career are marked by fairly clear-cut concerns and themes, but it also needs to be acknowledged that motivation and attitude towards the job constitute a significant factor in the developmental process of teachers' growth (discussed elsewhere, Gabryś-Barker in preparation).

#### 4 - Characteristics of a pre-service teacher as a professional

The picture of pre-service teachers seems to be pretty homogenous across various studies on this group of professionals-to-be. The studies unanimously show student teachers as a group of professionals-to be who go through almost traumatic experiences in confronting their deeply ingrained idealistic view of the profession, a confrontation between theory acquired as a body of knowledge and what they are faced with as classroom reality. Perceptions of the classrooms as imagined and as ex-

perienced make trainees take a different stand: they struggle for “survival” (Katz 1976, Burden 1980, Appel 1995, Mok 2005). Hence the major concerns of trainees’ are about their own affectivity and the way they are seen by their mentors, their peers and above all their students in the class. They are greatly concerned with building authority with their pupils either by being overwhelmingly friendly or by going the other way by being extremely authoritarian and controlling. As theoretical knowledge fails, they tend to revert to the models of teaching known to them, their own teachers at different levels of their education. Even though these models were often criticised by them, they now seem to offer a safe way to keep the face and “survive”. With time passing, trainees’ motivations undergo certain changes and at least are severely shaken, as their preliminary expectations are not fully satisfied. They become very technically oriented in their classroom concerns and focus on the techniques of teaching and how these help them become “real professionals” and expert teachers. (Gabryś-Barker 2008)

Trainee-teachers in my study (Gabryś-Barker 2008) as in many other studies present themselves as idealistic and performing a mission, but one which is not always very well-grounded in their own individual teaching contexts. What seems most important in the pre-service teachers’ narratives analysed in the above study is that all the trainees who express their views see themselves as involved in a developmental process of becoming: becoming more aware and more reflective, more creative and able to share their knowledge and also to share themselves as people with their learners. They reveal a very strong need to reflect on themselves in their own classrooms. The analysis offered in my 2008 study but also in others (e.g. Younger *et al.* 2004) may be of very modest value, however, they constitute a starting point for focusing on **how** to develop reflective abilities in those trainees. This development needs to start early in the course of their studies and practicum period at schools, being the most fundamental quality in building one’s identity and teaching expertise. The first step is developing awareness of this need and the willingness to reflect.

At the pre-service stage, the motivation to study to become a teacher comes to the fore as significant in creating novices’ identities. It is most intimately related to the main beliefs expressed by trainees about teaching. They are enumerated here in order of frequency of occurrence as mentioned by the trainees:

- a mission to be accomplished
- a highly specialist job requiring professionalism
- a sharing of knowledge developed through study and experience
- performing a well-prepared role

(Gabryś-Barker 2008)

These systems of belief can be conceptualized as metaphors *of a victorious battle, a lighthouse showing the way in difficulties, a guided tour or acting on the stage.*

According to the subjects, they derive from:

- models of former teachers that the trainees recover from their memory, mostly from the primary and secondary levels – positive examples and, as such, copied by the trainees in their own classrooms, but also negative ones and, as such, rejected by them
- one's personality traits which determine preferred styles of management and interaction with the learners
- the new teaching experiences of trainees.

The major practical experiences of teaching influence the evolving motivation to teach and also systems of belief previously held, now confronted with classroom reality. The majority of trainees see the period of school placement as extremely fruitful, but not without flaws (Gabryś-Barker, in preparation). The major drawbacks, as described in the studies of Wilson *et al.* (2002) and Hascher *et al.* (2004), among others, derive from the different attitudes showed and treatment trainees received in their placements. This is most strongly expressed by the comments on the inadequacy of mentoring and mentor preparation, the excessive control exercised over the trainees-teachers, which is seen as very limiting. The criticism also relates to not enough appropriate (helpful) feedback and assistance given by mentors. Also, as expected, the amount of teaching practice, being an obligatory part of the teaching module in the different teacher training institutions the pre-service teachers come from is always seen as not sufficient. During their school placement the trainees try out their theoretical knowledge and, becoming dissatisfied, first discard it and build their "expertise" on more intuitive and experiential bases. However with time, they mostly overhaul this judgement by becoming more aware that perhaps it is not the flaws in theory but their own incomplete knowledge in certain areas of teaching and its management, or the specificity of a situation they find themselves in, that need amendment by more study, more experience and more reflection.

These attitudes of trainees need to become more important indicators for the way in which pre-service preparation should be designed. Teacher educators and trainers should be more aware of them, as they have major implications for the way training programmes ought to be constructed and their general objectives of formulated, how mentor teachers are trained and selected for the purpose of carrying out effective supervision of novices. As we know, a great deal of attention has been paid to developing fully aware teachers, whose professional awareness comes not only from knowledge acquired but from "digesting" it in reflection. Awareness of what reflectivity means,

of what productive reflection consists in and of how to develop and implement it should constitute basic elements in all pre-service training.

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