

Examining the teacher identity-agency relationship through legitimate peripheral participation: A longitudinal investigation

This paper brings a unique, longitudinal perspective to the field of teacher identity by extending on Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of legitimate peripheral participation to theorise the relationship between teacher identity and agency in multiple and temporal practicum contexts. This study examined eight pre-service teachers in three teaching practicums over a three-year period. Findings reveal that each pre-service teacher became 'identity brokers' by employing agentic tools to affirm and maintain their identities within multiple practicum contexts. These agentic tools included demonstrating *situated knowledge*, *codes of practice* and establishing a *system of relations* with old-timers in each practicum school in order to gain legitimacy as a newcomer. In doing so, this paper demonstrates how legitimate peripheral participation offers a new way to theorise the complex and nuanced relationship between identity and agency in multiple and temporal contexts.

Keywords: teacher identity, professional agency, legitimate peripheral participation, communities of practice, teaching practicum, initial teacher education

Introduction

Significant attention has been given to the importance of developing teacher identity in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) (Chong, Low, & Kim, 2011; Harlow & Cobb, 2014; Thomas & Beauchamp, 2011). Pre-service teachers (PST) with a strong sense of teacher identity tend to be more reflective in their practice (Walkington, 2005); build stronger relationships with students, associate teachers (ATs) and colleagues (Coldron & Smith, 1999); and have a more defined understanding of their own personal teaching philosophy (O'Connor, 2008). Given these benefits, research has sought to determine how teacher identity can be developed in PST (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004).

This quest has revealed an important relationship between teacher identity and agency (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016; Vähäsantanen, 2015). Agency can be described as the intention to "make things happen by one's actions" (Bandura, 2001, p. 2) and some researchers suggest that it is this intentional and focused action towards

'becoming a teacher' that supports the development of teacher identity (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). This notion of 'identity-agency' is used to describe this mutual relationship between teacher identity and professional agency as it highlights the interconnected way that identity and agency works together (Eteläpelto et al., 2015; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). Ruohotie-Lyhty and Moate (2016) maintain that identity-agency requires internal activation to engage in meaningful and purposeful participation within a community and it is these interactions that support identity development. Yet, despite the importance of this, Thomas and Beauchamp (2011) point out that there are few studies that look at the deliberate actions employed by PST to support the development of teacher identity, particularly within the practicum context. Because of this, there is a pressing need to understand the deliberate actions used by PST to support their identity development.

The importance of context in this identity-agency relationship has gained currency in recent years. The context-dependent nature of identity-development has led to an increased focus on understanding identity development within contexts such as ITE programmes (Chong et al., 2011) and the teaching practicum (Johnston, 2016). While much of this research has examined this identity-agency relationship within single contexts, recent research has begun to consider identity development across multiple contexts, such as in collaborative university-school partnership programmes (Harlow & Cobb, 2014) and in several practicum settings (Johnston, 2016). Such research reveals both the challenge of identity development in temporal practicum settings (Johnston, 2016), yet also promise of early identity development in a sustained and supported university-school partnership model (Harlow & Cobb, 2014). This

suggests that there is a need for more research to gain a longitudinal understanding of this identity-agency relationship within multiple practicum settings.

This article seeks to address this gap by reporting on the findings of a longitudinal case study that has examined the identity-agency relationship in three practicum contexts over a three-year period. The purpose of this article is twofold as it seeks to; 1) to examine the development of teacher identity in PST situated in multiple and temporal practicum contexts over a three-year period and, 2) to theorise the relationship between identity, agency and context in these multiple and temporal settings. In this paper we demonstrate how Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of legitimate peripheral participation can be extended to theorise agency as brokering tool for identity development within such multiple and temporal contexts. In doing so, we reveal how the PST in this study became 'identity brokers' by employing 'agentic tools' to affirm and maintain their sense of teacher identity in each practicum community. We argue that PSTs can achieve both a strong sense of teacher identity and legitimacy within each practicum community without gaining full membership within each practicum school, a notion which challenges Lave and Wenger's (1991) original thesis. Multimembership within several learning communities is, therefore, argued to be a critical and previously overlooked factor in the identity-agency relationship.

Development of teacher identity within communities of practice

Research suggests that identity construction is an ongoing and socially legitimated process where individuals interpret themselves as a particular kind of person within a certain context (Beijaard et al., 2004; Coldron & Smith, 1999; Ruohotie-Lyhty &

Moate, 2016). Lave and Wenger (1991) suggest that identity development is context-specific and is enriched through membership in a community of practice, such as a teaching practicum, where individuals are recognised as a legitimate participant by other members. Research suggests that the practicum context can play an important role in either strengthening or inhibiting the development of teacher identity (Johnston, 2016; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). Because identity development is such a social and context-dependent construct, researchers urge that both the context and the way that individuals make sense of this context should be examined when investigating professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016). For this reason, teacher identity research should consider the strategic actions, or agency, that individuals employ within their teaching contexts.

Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that the notion of legitimate peripheral participation is central to communities of practice and identity development. Legitimate peripheral participation provides a way to understand the construction and reconstruction of identities by examining the relationship between newcomers (such as PST) and old-timers (such as ATs) as newcomers (PST) enter into a community of practice (teaching practicum). Full participation within a community of practice is desirable as it provides access to certain knowledge, ways of knowing, and modes of conduct, which are inherent in the practice of old-timers (Wenger, 1999). Old-timers act as gatekeepers to either restrict or enable the movement of newcomers from ‘outsider’ knowledge to ‘insider’ knowledge (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this sense, the extent to which newcomers are given access to move centripetally within a community of practice determines the breadth and extent of their learning trajectory. In the practicum context, ATs are tasked with mentoring PST into the roles and

responsibilities of teaching and, because of this, identities can be challenged when ATs and PST seek to either maintain or transform the status quo (Cobb & Harlow, 2017). Legitimate peripheral participation is a useful tool to examine the relationship between identity, agency and context because it focuses on the deliberate actions that newcomers, such as PST, employ to achieve centripetal movement within the community of practice.

However, there has been growing criticism about Lave and Wenger's (1991) conceptualisation of identity development within communities of practice. Fuller (2007) argues that such conceptualisation assumes that newcomers must either replicate or comply with the practices of old-timers and the status quo of the community in order to achieve centripetal movement. This is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it postulates that newcomers, such as PST, need to reproduce the practices of old-timers, such as ATs, to gain full membership within a school community and, accordingly, support their identity development. Secondly, it assumes that newcomers are an 'empty vessel' to be filled by old-timers, and negates to acknowledge their past experiences, knowledge and developing identities. While Lave and Wenger (1991) note that tensions between the practices of newcomers and old-timers can challenge existing practices within a community and reconstruct new identities among old-timers, Johnston (2016) points out that the temporary timeframe of teaching placements makes it both difficult and complex for PST to do so. Rather than having the desired transformational effect, identity clashes can be perceived by old-timers as failure to achieve practicum requirements. For this reason, Johnston (2016) questions whether it is even possible for these "temporary newcomers" (p. 544) to achieve full membership status, and ultimately identity development, within the

practicum context. On the other hand, some studies have found that PST have the potential to make rich and valued contributions in their practicum schools (Cobb & Harlow, 2017). This suggests that overcoming an ‘identity clash’ is possible; however, further research is needed to understand the deliberate actions, or agency, that PST employ to overcome these identity tensions within their temporary practicum experience.

In addition to this challenge of identity construction and reconstruction, a growing number of academics have also questioned the idea that identity development occurs within a singular community of practice (James, 2007). There has been much critique about Lave and Wenger’s (1991) ill-defined notion of community and the spatial boundaries in which a community exists (Fuller, 2007; Jewson, 2007). As a result, the term ‘community’ has frequently been interpreted as a single, bounded and delineated context that has no overlapping or interacting boundaries with other communities. However despite this (mis)interpretation, Wenger (1998) acknowledges that it is possible for individuals to be members in multiple communities, each overlapping in their purpose, form and function. He uses the term ‘brokering’ to describe individuals who are able to traverse multimembership and effectively coordinate, connect and “open new possibilities for meaning” (p. 109) within and across multiple communities of practice. Wenger maintains that brokering is a complex job as it “involves a process of translation, coordination, and alignment between perspectives” (p. 109) while also requiring sufficient legitimacy to influence practice and address conflicting interests. Professional agency is at the centre of this brokering practice and, therefore, highlights the important relationship between identity, agency and context.

This notion of brokering across multiple communities of practice is particularly pertinent to PST as they are members of multiple practicum and professional communities over the course of their ITE programme. Not only does each practicum school provide membership to a new community of practice, but PST are also temporarily located within each of these communities. What, then, happens to the development of teacher identity in multiple and temporal practicum contexts over time and, in what ways is agency used to broker identity development in multiple communities? Until now, research has largely overlooked these questions. This research seeks to address this void through a longitudinal examination of the identity-agency relationship in PST who experience membership in multiple and temporal practicum contexts.

Background to study

This research was part of a larger study that examined the development of teacher identity in eight PST who were completing a Bachelor of Teaching (BTchg) (primary) at The University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand. During this three-year programme, PST spent periods of time completing university-based teacher education courses alongside regular practicum experiences. Table 1 provides an overview of the programme structure:

(Insert Table 1 here)

All PST were placed in the same practicum school for the first year of their ITE programme. During this year they had weekly teaching placements and a three-week teaching practicum at the end of the year. They also experienced working with two different ATs and with two different classes during this year-long placement experience. In their second and third years, PST experienced two different practicum schools and two different ATs. In total, the PST experienced three different practicum schools during the course of their three-year ITE programme and worked with four different ATs in four different classes.

Methodology

Study design

This research employed a longitudinal multiple case study design to examine this identity-agency relationship in eight PST who experienced multiple practicum contexts over a three-year period. A longitudinal multiple case study seeks to study a particular phenomenon that occurs in multiple cases over time (Leonard-Barton, 1990). As such, this research design enabled researchers to identify patterns and gain “... a close-up view of those patterns as they evolve” (Leonard-Barton, 1990, p. 248). Each of the eight PST provided a separate case to examine the identity-agency relationship in multiple practicum contexts. The deliberate actions used by PST to enact their sense of teacher identity were considered to understand the development of this identity-agency in each practicum context, over time.

Participants

Full ethical clearance was gained from the University of Waikato's ethics committee prior to commencement of this study to ensure that all ethical procedures had been thoroughly considered and addressed.

Pre-service teachers

A research invitation was extended to all 29 PST who were based in a Collaborative University School Partnership (CUSP) school (refer to Harlow & Cobb, 2014 for further details). Eight PST gave informed consent to participate in this research. This sample consisted of one male and seven females. Seven PST identified as New Zealand European and one as New Zealand Māori.

Associate teachers

In total, 26 ATs from 14 different schools agreed to participate in this research. Table 2 provides an overview of these schools and ATs.

(Insert Table 2 here)

Data collection

As Table 3 shows, data sources include: 1) focus group interviews with PST both prior to, and immediately following each of their practicums; 2) semi-structured interviews with ATs; 3) lesson observations of PST during each of their practicums by the practitioner researcher; 4) PST daily reflective journal during each of their practicums; 5) PST daily lesson evaluations on their teaching during each of their teaching practicums; 6) ATs weekly feedback on the teaching practice of their PST and; 7) field notes written by the practitioner researcher.

(Insert Table 3 here)

Data analysis

Multiple data sources enhanced the validity of the qualitative data and ensured that instances of identity enactment were accurately verified. To assist with this process, *NVivo*, a qualitative data analysis programme, was used. Transcribed interviews, lesson observation field notes, practicum reflections and AT feedback documents were uploaded into the programme for analysis. The analysis of data involved a two-staged, *a priori* approach to thematic analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In the first stage, themes such as ‘undertaking roles and responsibilities for teaching’, ‘building relationships with AT’, ‘building relationship with teaching staff’, and ‘involvement in the wider life of the school’ were identified from a review of literature. This, in turn, guided our initial thematic analysis of data. This was followed by a second theoretical analysis where theoretical concepts from Lave and Wenger’s (1991) notion of legitimate peripheral participation were identified as *a priori* theoretical themes. These included ‘situated knowledge’, ‘codes of practice’ and ‘system of relations’. Data from the first thematic analysis were then reanalysed and recoded according to these theoretical themes. This two-staged analysis process ensured a comprehensive and theoretical analysis of data.

Findings

Development of teacher identity

To begin, an analysis of teacher identity was conducted in each of the PST over the three-year period. PST were asked to explain and justify their sense of teacher identity

at the conclusion of their first, second and third practicum. At the end of their first year, seven PST identified as a teacher. In contrast, one PST (PST 7) did not see herself as a teacher. At the conclusion of the second year, all PST, except for PST 7, identified as a teacher. This pattern remained consistent at the end of the third practicum. These findings show that seven PST developed a sense of teacher identity after their first year of the CUSP programme (refer to Cobb & Harlow, 2017 for further details) and this sense of teacher identity remained stable in their second and third-year practicums. In contrast, PST 7 did not see herself as a teacher throughout the duration of her ITE programme. In each case, this sense of teacher identity appeared to be developed early in the ITE programme and remained stable over time. This finding is significant considering that each PST worked in multiple practicum schools, including those in low and high socio-economic areas, with large numbers of culturally diverse students and with students who had significant behavioural and learning needs.

This analysis provided a basis for examining the relationship between teacher identity, agency and context over time. The findings revealed three deliberate actions that PST used to broker their sense of teacher identity in each of their practicum communities. These deliberate actions include PST demonstrating their understanding of *situated knowledge* and *implicit codes of practice* as well as actively building a *system of relations* within their practicum context.

Situated knowledge

In this study *situated knowledge* refers to the demonstration of knowledge that is deemed valuable by old-timers (e.g. teachers) (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This *situated knowledge* can include knowledge about assessment practices, curriculum and lesson

planning as well as more tacit forms such as knowledge about the routines and procedures inherent in classroom and school life. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), newcomers are more likely to gain legitimate access to a community of practice when *situated knowledge* is displayed to old-timers in the community.

PST with a strong sense of teacher identity were found to actively demonstrate *situated knowledge* to gain legitimacy as a teacher. Prior to their practicums, each of these PST spent significant time with their ATs to ensure that they were familiar with the classroom routines, curriculum content and the children's learning needs. In doing so, they believed that they would gain respect and access to future teaching opportunities from their AT. The following excerpt at the conclusion of their Year 2 practicum demonstrates this:

PST 8: If you want to get the best feedback, interaction and knowledge from your AT you have to create that relationship ... you're not going to get that otherwise. You need to turn up on the first day [of school] and know the routine, know what they do, know how they do it ...

[Year 2 Post-practicum Focus Group Interview]

ATs strongly valued the demonstration of this *situated knowledge* as it built trust in their relationship. PST four's AT commented on this:

She spent a long time with the children at the pre-practicum visit and asked lots of questions about their background and really wanted to know where they started ... which I haven't had before. She wanted to get to know the learner before she taught them. It takes a lot of trust to give a student teacher that much control of your class. From her pre-practicum

visit, the questions she asked — I just had a gut feeling about her. I just thought ‘no, I can trust her. I can just give her my class and be alongside her’. And you don’t do that with everybody.

[AT interview, PST 4, Year 3 practicum]

Interestingly, PST 7 was not proactive in demonstrating her *situated knowledge*. Prior to her second practicum, PST 7 indicated her desire to wait for instructions from her AT before engaging in teaching activities. This passive approach to practicum meant that she failed to demonstrate knowledge about the processes, routines and requirements of teaching. This appeared to inhibit her AT’s trust in her professional competence. This is evident in the following statement:

I think from the start she sat back and watched things. I think after the first week she realised that it is much better to be involved.

[AT interview, PST 7, Year 2 practicum]

These findings show that PST with a strong sense of teacher identity, actively exercised *situated knowledge* early in each of their practicum contexts. As gatekeepers of knowledge, resources and experiences, ATs were more likely to provide PST with access to further teaching opportunities and experiences once this *situated knowledge* had been demonstrated. This suggests that the demonstration of *situated knowledge* early in the practicum may be a deliberate action used to affirm PST sense of teacher identity and to broker a certain degree of legitimacy within the practicum community.

Codes of practice

Codes of practice refer to the demonstration of dispositions that are deemed necessary by members of a community. Dispositions such as punctuality, responsibility, attentiveness, resilience, initiative, organisation, dedication and the ability to work collaboratively are generally implicit codes that are highly valued by the teaching profession (Harlow, Cooper, & Cowie, 2014). Wenger (1999) explains that *codes of practice* are implicit because they tend to be innately understood and accepted by old-timers. Newcomers entering a learning community may be unaware of these implicit codes and old-timers may restrict newcomers from gaining legitimate access if these implicit *codes of practice* fail to be displayed (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Gaining full membership to a learning community is therefore dependent on the demonstration of these implicit codes.

The findings revealed that PSTs with a strong sense of teacher identity understood the significance of these implicit *codes of practice*. PST 2 spoke of the importance of demonstrating these codes to her AT:

You're making a huge impression ... so you want to try and show all those things like initiative, organisation, flexibility, responsibility and punctuality.

[Pre-service teacher 2, post-practicum focus group interview, year 3]

In post-practicum interviews, PSTs with a strong sense of teacher identity explained that gaining legitimacy within each practicum was dependent on demonstrating these codes. Because of this, they actively worked to display these dispositions to significant others in their practicum communities.

ATs strongly valued the demonstration of these implicit codes. They acknowledged that this established trust and respect. PST 1's AT explains this:

He presented himself professionally each day and was always punctual. He was extremely focused and committed to the task of becoming an effective teacher. He did this by showing resilience, acting responsibly, and was fully involved in the classroom on a daily basis.

[AT practicum report, PST 1, Year 2 Practicum]

In contrast, PST 7 did not consistently demonstrate these implicit *codes of practice*, which impacted on her AT's trust. Her AT commented on this:

I generally had to check that she was on track. And I'd have to check that she'd had the resources and her preparation beforehand.

[AT interview, PST 7, Year 2 practicum]

It is unclear if it was PST 7's weak sense of teacher identity or her lack of agency that obscured her from both recognising and exercising these implicit *codes of practice*. However, what is clear is that her inability to demonstrate these implicit codes restricted PST 7 from gaining legitimacy in each of her practicum experiences.

Systems of relations

Engaging in *systems of relations* is a third deliberate action used by PST to publicly affirm their sense of teacher identity. *Systems of relations* are built on the understanding that all teaching tasks, activities and knowledge have meaning when they are experienced as part of a broader relational system within a social community

(Lave & Wenger, 1991). An individual not only defines these relations but is also defined by them. Learning to become a teacher therefore requires “becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by these systems of relations” (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). In this study, PSTs with a strong sense of teacher identity actively built relationships with key stakeholders within the learning community as a way of strengthened their *system of relations* and publicly affirming their teacher identity. Being seen as a teacher by significant others was an important way of displaying their teacher identity in each practicum setting. The following section examines how this strategy was used to build relationships children and other teachers in each practicum community.

Children

Seven PSTs spoke of their intention to build relationships with children in order to be defined as a teacher by significant others. PST 1 reflects on this:

Everything I could do to make myself look like a teacher, I'd make that happen ... I needed the children to understand that I wasn't a student. I basically saw myself as a relief [substitute] teacher.

[Year 2 Post Practicum Focus Group Interview – PST 1]

Being seen as a teacher by other children in the school was important for identity affirmation. Because of this, involvement in extra-curricular activities helped to validate their role as a teacher within the school and further build this *system of relations*. PST 5 commented on this:

If you just go in and tag along with your AT for the first week, then straight away the whole school sees you as a student teacher. But if you go in and are taking a team, then kids are like ‘Oh, there’s another teacher in the school’

[PST5, Post-practicum Focus Group Interview, Year 2]

As PST 5 noted, being acknowledged as a teacher by other children enabled her to strengthen her *system of relations* and gain a sense of belongingness, acceptance and legitimacy within the wider learning community.

Interestingly, PST 7 did not have the same intentional approach to building *systems of relations*. As a result, she found it difficult to be seen as ‘a teacher’ by the children:

I feel I have made some progress with some of the children in terms of how they see me as a teacher in their class. In saying this, I am also experiencing some trouble with establishing my role in the classroom.

[PST 7, Practicum Reflection – Year 2 practicum]

This shows that children play an important role in validating PST sense of teacher identity. Building *systems of relations* is a deliberate action that PST with a strong sense of teacher identity used to gain public legitimacy as ‘a teacher’ from children within each practicum context.

Teachers

Similarly, building relationships with other teachers was deliberate action that seven PST employed to build their *system of relations* within each practicum context. In doing

so, this enabled PST to be defined as a teacher by other teachers in the school. Prior to his third practicum, PST 1 discussed this intentional strategy:

I'll get involved in my syndicate [teaching team] quite a bit. I want to make sure that I'm getting involved with other teachers as well. I want to find myself in the staffroom having professional conversations with those teachers. Having correct discourse. Showing them that I'm not the student teacher ... I'm a teacher.

[PST1, Pre-practicum Focus Group Interview, Year 3]

This passage articulates a strategic approach to building relationships with staff members, which was evident in all PSTs with a strong sense of teacher identity. These PSTs recognised that such involvement would grant access to a wider range of resources, knowledge, opportunities and experiences to support their learning trajectory. Other staff members appreciated this approach:

Our principal, deputy principal and other staff members have been impressed with [PST 8]. I think the way she has asked questions, used her voice in the staffroom and formed relationships with other teachers... I think that shows them that she's actually like a teacher, not necessarily like a student teacher.

[AT interview, PST 8, Practicum 3]

In contrast, PST 7 did not interact with other teachers. Her ATs commented on the difficulties she faced in engaging with other teachers at both a professional and social level. This lack of professional engagement gave PST 7 few opportunities to be validated as 'a teacher' within the school community. PST 7 also relied heavily on her

ATs to initiate and support her integration into the school community. This finding is significant because it contrasts with the approaches of the other PST who recognised that affirmation of their teacher identity is legitimated by a community of significant others, not just their AT.

Discussion and conclusion

The correlation between teacher identity-agency relationship has been well documented (Eteläpelto et al., 2015; Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016), yet legitimate peripheral participation offers a new lens to theorise this complex relationship within multiple practicum contexts. This study demonstrates how PST with a strong sense of teacher identity employed deliberate actions, or agency, to affirm and maintain their sense of teacher identity within each teaching practicum. Legitimate peripheral participation provides a way to theorise these deliberate actions, or ‘agentic tools’, and their relationship to identity and context. Of interest is the nature of the agentic tools that PSTs employed: demonstrating *situated knowledge*, *codes of practice* and building a *system of relations*. The first two tools, *situated knowledge* and *codes of practice* were recognised and valued by old-timers in the community of practice. These tools built trust with old-timers and gave PSTs legitimacy to establish a *system of relations* within the wider learning community. This *system of relations* validated PST as ‘a teacher’ by significant others within each practicum context and enabled them to gain legitimacy within their school community. Through such process, PST achieved access to knowledge, experiences and opportunities that would further affirm their teacher identity. In contrast, PST 7 failed to demonstrate *situated knowledge* and the necessary *codes of practice*, which resulted in a lack of trust from old-timers, such as her ATs. This also inhibited her ability to establish a *system of relations* within each

practicum context which, in turn, limited her ability to gain legitimacy within her practicum communities. This confirmed to her that she was not a 'real teacher' and further fuelled and maintained her cycle of passivity. Identifying and conceptualising these agentic tools has enabled us to understand how PST use agency to gain legitimacy within multiple practicum contexts.

Identifying these agentic tools also helps us to understand how PST used these tools to broker their sense of teacher identity in multiple practicum contexts. As 'identity brokers', these agentic tools offered a way for PSTs to maintain their sense of teacher identity within multiple and temporal contexts. Because of this, their identity remained stable and consistent over time. This is demonstrated in the way that all PST developed their sense of teacher identity early in their ITE programme, and their sense of identity remained consistent throughout. This reveals that PST sense of teacher identity didn't change through exercising agency, rather agency was used to broker their identity in temporary practicum contexts by affirming to others, and themselves, what they already believed. This included PST 7, whose passive agency seemed to publically and privately affirm that she was not a 'real teacher'. Her deliberate (in)actions became a self-fulfilling prophecy that reaffirmed and maintained her poor sense of teacher identity. Wenger (1999) describes good brokers as those individuals who can make connections across communities, coordinate and align perspectives, and open new possibilities for meaning. Because PST held temporary multimembership status in each of their practicum communities, this required them to broker differences in teaching philosophies, teaching practices and the school culture in a way that respected, valued and gained legitimacy amongst old-timers, while also maintaining their sense of professional 'self'. As a result, PST could protect and

preserve their newly developed teacher identities across multiple communities of practice, rather than complying with the status quo and replicating the practices of their AT (Fuller, 2007). These agentic tools were a significant factor in this brokering process.

Legitimate peripheral participation provides an insightful way to theorise this relationship between identity, agency and context, yet it is based on the assumption that it is possible for newcomers to obtain full membership within each practicum school. Like the students in Johnson's (2016) study, PST in this study were also unable to become full participants in their school practicum communities because of limited practicum time frames. However, PSTs with a strong sense of teacher identity were able to move beyond the peripheral participation of a 'temporary newcomer' (Johnson, 2016) and become 'legitimate newcomers' within each practicum school. As legitimate newcomers, these PST perceived themselves as a valued part of the school community for the duration of their teaching practicum. Likewise, old-timers acknowledged the limits on their membership, yet still acknowledged them as a valid, valued and active member of the school community (Cobb & Harlow, 2017). This supports Johnston's (2016) earlier claim that full participation is not achievable for PST who are temporal community members. It also challenges Lave and Wenger's (1991) assumption that movement within a community of practice is both linear and centripetal. This study has shown that PST with a strong sense of teacher identity achieved movement within the practicum context, yet it was neither linear nor centripetal. This indicates that centripetal movement is not the only way to achieve legitimacy within a learning community and that non-linear movement can also support a newcomers learning trajectory.

In addition, this study also challenges Lave and Wenger's (1991) conceptualisation of identity development. Lave and Wenger maintain that identity is achieved by being positioned at the centre of a community of practice. However, this study shows that PST who engage in multiple communities of practice for temporary periods of time can achieve a strong sense of teacher identity without achieving full membership status within their practicum communities. As previously discussed, PST in this study employed agentic tools to broker their sense of professional identity in multiple practicum contexts, despite not achieving full membership status. This suggests that it was the process of multimembership that affirmed and maintained identity for these PST, rather than being centrally positioned within a singular community. This finding supports Jewson's (2007) earlier claim that identity development is not confined to a single context. This is significant as it suggests that membership within multiple contexts is an important, and often overlooked, factor in the identity-agency relationship.

As a small case study of eight PST, there are limitations in the ability to generalise the findings of this study. It is recommended that a larger scale study explore the enactment of teacher identity within varied practicum contexts. It is also acknowledged that the integrated structure of the BTchg programme at the University of Waikato may have supported an early development of teacher identity (Harlow & Cobb, 2014). More research is needed to determine if the strategies used by the PST in this study are consistent with strategies used by PST in other ITE programmes, including one-year and distance learning programmes.

To conclude, this paper offers a unique way to theorise the nuanced interrelationship between agency, identity and context. Legitimate peripheral participation places focus on relationships within a community of practice, however this research has extended this conceptualisation by examining PST engagement within multiple and temporal practicum contexts. Firstly, it has identified that PST with a strong sense of teacher identity act as identity brokers by employing agentic tools to affirm and maintain their sense of teacher identity across multiple communities of practice. These findings have implications for the way practicum is conceptualised, particularly given that teacher identity appears to be developed in the first practicum experience and that subsequent practicums reinforce, rather than change these identities. Sustained placement and practicum experiences over a longer period of time may have greater success in strengthening teacher identities, particularly for PST who have a poor sense of teacher 'self'. In addition, collaborative partnerships between ITE providers and local schools may provide an important bridge to help these PST with the tools they need to broker the multiple learning communities that they encounter during their ITE programme. Further research is now needed to examine identity development in such sustained and collaborative approaches to learning communities. Finally, these findings also challenge the notion of identity development proposed in Lave and Wengers (1991) thesis and, therefore, extend on the conceptualisation of legitimate peripheral participation to consider identity development within multiple contexts. It is recommended that future research places greater emphasis on identity development within multiple and temporal contexts.

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Table 1. BTchg programme structure

BTchg Year	University Course Requirements	Practicum/Placement Requirements
1	Professional Practice and Inquiry 1 course co-taught with teachers at the local placement school (theory and practice). Other university courses taught on-campus during the university year (theory).	One-day a week placement in a class at a local placement school for the duration of the university year. Three-week practicum at the conclusion of Semester B in their placement classroom.
2	1.5 semesters based on-campus completing teacher education courses (theory).	Six-week practicum in Semester B at a school of their choice.
3	First half of Semester A on-campus completing teacher education courses (theory). PSTs return in Semester B to complete their final semester courses.	Eight-week practicum halfway through Semester A at a school of their choice.

Table 2. Overview of participating schools and associate teachers (ATs)

	Year 1 2012			Year 2 2013		Year 3 2014	
	School	AT		School	AT	School	AT
		Semester A	Semester B				
PST 1	School A	AT 1 ¹	AT 2	School B	AT 13	School I	AT did not agree to participate
PST 2	School A	AT 3 ²	AT 4 ¹	School C	AT 14	School J ³	AT 20
PST 3	School A	AT 5	AT 3 ¹	School D	AT did not agree to participate	School K ³	AT 21
PST 4	School A	AT 4 ¹	AT 1 ¹	School E ⁺	AT 15	School K ³	AT 22
PST 5	School A	AT 6	AT 7	School F	AT 16	School L	AT 23
PST 6	School A	AT 8	AT 9	School G	AT 17	School M	AT 24
PST 7	School A	AT 3 ²	AT 10	School E ⁺	AT 18	School J ³	AT 25
PST 8	School A	AT 11	AT 12	School H	AT 19	School N	AT 26

Notes

¹ These PSTs had ATs that chose to participate in this research in both Semester A and Semester B

² These PSTs were placed together in Semester A (refer to Author 1, 2014 for further details)

³ These PSTs were in the same practicum school

Table 3. Overview of data sources

Data sources	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-practicum focus group (8 PSTs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-practicum focus group (8 PSTs) Post-practicum focus group (8 PSTs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-practicum focus group (8 PSTs) Post-practicum focus group (8 PSTs)
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group interview with ATs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One interview with each AT (7 in total. One AT chose not to participate). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One interview with each AT (7 in total. One AT chose not to participate).
Lesson observations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One lesson observation at the conclusion of the placement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One lesson observation of each PST (8 observations in total). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two lesson observations of each PST (16 observations in total).
AT reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of practicum written report (8 reports in total). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly written feedback to each PST (48 pieces of written feedback in total). End of practicum written report (8 reports in total). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly written feedback to each PST (64 pieces of written feedback in total). End of practicum written report (8 reports in total).
PST reflections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly reflective journals completed by PSTs (8 reflective journals in total). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily reflective journals completed by PSTs (8 reflective journals in total). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily reflective journals completed by PSTs (8 reflective journals in total).
Practitioner researcher's field notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly field notes kept by the practitioner researcher throughout the first year placement experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioner researcher's field notes kept after each focus group interview, AT interview and lesson observation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Practitioner researcher's field notes kept after each focus group interview, AT interview and lesson observation.