UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

BECOMING A MASTER OF EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF PART-TIME STUDENTS UNDERTAKING CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Appendices:

Abbreviations:

CPD Continuing Professional Development

EMQ Email Questions

FE Further Education

FGI Focus Group Interview

FG1 Focus Group 1

FG2 Focus Group 2

HE Higher Education

SII Semi-Structured Individual Interview

MAES MA Education Student

MAEP MA Education Programme

MAEA MA Education Award

OECD Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

P Participant (of focus group interview)

PL Programme Leader

QAA Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education

R Respondent (to email questions)

V Voice (of interview participant)

WP Widening Participation

Tables:

Models:

PREFACE

This statement confirms that the research and writing presented in this thesis, except where explicit attribution is made, is entirely my own work.

ABSTRACT

This study is an exploration of students who study part-time to achieve a Master of Education award in the context of continuing professional development. Particularly interesting to this study is identity development and the effects on confidence/self-esteem as MA Education Students' cope with the interacting dimensions of personal, professional and study contexts.

The research found a triangle of tensions between professional, personal and developing postgraduate identities to be at the heart of transitions into becoming a postgraduate student. Students' investments of finance, time, cognitive effort and reprioritisation of lifestyle is made without guarantee of return. They experience low professional self-concept; they are daunted by self-doubts about meeting the demands of master's study; troubled by imposter feelings and preoccupied by their professional identities. However, confidence and self-esteem improve as study progresses and by harnessing personal qualities, and some support networks, students overcome barriers to achieve positive outcomes, which for some can be transformative.

An interpretivist methodology has been adopted using a case study approach with data collected from MA Education students at one post-1992 university. Twenty-five students were included in: two focus group interviews (each of five participants); five individual interviews and ten students participated in a series of four sets of email questions posed at regular points in one year of their degree. Braun and Clarke's (2013) approach to thematic analysis was adopted and themes emerged inductively.

There are several recommendations arising for both practice and policy. For practice all aspects of curriculum design and delivery must be mindful of the professional and personal qualities, not just student academic competencies, which contribute to masterliness. However, programme and module specific induction must include strategies to encourage students' envisioning of their possible selves as student in order to grow their confidence and self-esteem as students. Lecturers must be mindful about the motivations behind part-time, higher level study for continuing professional development and the factors which constrain deep learning. Recommendations for wider policy relate to urging government and educational leaders to validate the value of educationalists, of all types. This should be achieved by fully resourcing accredited master's study in both practical and financial ways.

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1 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 RATIONALE FOR THE RESEARCH

1.1.1 My Own Position

My role as Programme Leader for MA Education has motivated my interest in the complex challenges experienced by students who return to study part time at postgraduate level for continuing professional development. I have noted the pressures and demands on these students as they balance lifelong learning with their professional and personal lives. This study is, therefore, a response to my own informal observations, and personal experiences of similar contexts. During the years leading up to embarking on this research I have also worked with students in parallel situations at different levels of study. These students have included those returning to formal study at level 6 having already graduated in their subject specialism, but often they were new to Higher Education (HE) level study; Further Education (FE) practitioners from vocational backgrounds who were required to study at level 4 and 5 for their Certificate in Education and in-service Teaching Assistants progressing from a Foundation Degree to the third year top up of an honours degree.

1.1.2 Importance and Relevance of the Study

Tobbell, O'Donnell and Zammit (2008:4) state that 'Whilst there has been a research focus on transitions … postgraduate study has, largely been ignored.'. This research builds on existing literature which explores the postgraduate student experience and often combines

data from a range of PGCE, doctoral level and full-time students across a range of discipline areas. Unlike existing literature this research has a specific focus on part-time MA Education students (MAESs) undertaking continuing professional development (CPD).

This study is therefore innovative and original in its focus on an increasingly important, specific category of students; the outcomes are relevant for both practice and policy for the following reasons. Firstly, at a local level, the outcomes of the study generate better understandings of a complex postgraduate student group which participates in the largest master's programme at a post-1992 university. This understanding of the student journey will facilitate continued, effective curriculum development necessary for both student achievement and for similar Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) who are under pressure to meet the increasing pressures of recruitment targets. Secondly, according to 2015-16 statistics (Higher Education Funding Council, 2018) there is a general trend for increasing numbers of students at postgraduate level. This year on year increase is reflected by the MA Education programme at the HEI of focus and this suggests that more research into the programme is essential, especially with a specific focus on student type. Thirdly, as suggested by HESA (2018) the current climate of postgraduate loans is creating opportunities for many more to engage with master's level study across the range of disciplines. This, together with increasing attention on how well universities perform means it is essential that programme development meets the needs of learners. Fourthly, as an alternative to a leadership career route, the Chartered College of Teachers, inaugurated in 2017, (Chartered College of Teachers 2018) now encourages applications for Chartered Status. Teachers wishing to apply for Chartered Status submit a portfolio of evidence to be assessed at master's level, but without award of a masters' qualification. In the light of teaching has being labelled by Government as a masterly profession and Chartered Status endorsing level 7 professionals in compulsory education are experiencing further pressures to attain the status of Master of Education.

Finally, several individual reports combined and presented to Government as the Foresight Future of Skills and Lifelong Learning Report (2016) signpost the importance of master's education in bringing both personal and national economic benefits. Positive returns on personal and organisational investment include satisfying employment demands; contributions to individuals' agency through improved self-efficacy; self-esteem and '… resilience and value they attach to the future.' (Tuckett and Field 2016). Bhutoria (2016) in her report on economic returns to education claimed that higher degrees generate higher incomes and that those who are highly educated contribute to economic progress. New Economy (2017) reports that Government and employer roles in educational investment are reducing, while, according to Barnes, Brown and Warhurst (2016), the number of individuals bearing the costs and risks of HE study increases; this latter report confirms that HE degrees provide good value, though masters is not specified. However, BIS (2011) estimates there are substantial returns to master's degrees, with an average of just under ten percent premium in earnings for learners age 21 and in full time education. This contrasts with undergraduate degrees where the average return has marginally dropped (BIS 2011). Furthermore, the employment rate for masters' graduates has risen from five percent higher than for undergraduates in 1994 to eight percent higher in 2014 (Green, Hogarth, Barnes, Gambin, Owen and Sofroniou 2016).

1.2 THE CASE STUDY STUDENTS

Particularly interesting to this study is how MAESs' identities develop and reform as they manage the complexities of learning and develop masterly academic competence within a triangle of professional, personal and postgraduate lives. The students at the centre of this study present from across the educational spectrum with a common goal to achieve an MA Education. Their professional roles and responsibilities range from novice to experienced

practitioners and professionals with senior responsibilities in contexts which range from early years settings, through compulsory education, FE and HE and into commercial and public service organisations. Their interests are as varied and include special educational needs; teaching English as a foreign language; curriculum development; mentoring and research – in essence, every aspect of teaching and learning is represented Cottle (2016). The heterogeneous nature of the cohorts is also shaped by: time elapsed since previous academic study; protocols of previous subjects studied; their current professional practice; their time in practice; their organisation's culture and, as with any group of learners, their aspirations, motivations, personal characteristics and life priorities.

At postgraduate level the inference is that these students hold a first degree and are qualified in their professional roles and, therefore, on paper are competent both vocationally and academically. However, I have observed that they seem to lack confidence in their 'academicness'; and this tendency is supported by research about postgraduate students over many years, for example by Lahiff (2005); Wellington (2010); Morris and Wisker (2011); Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013) and O'Donnell, Kean and Stevens (2016). MAESs are generally professionals who are embedded within and measured against their professional standards, their professional identity is imposed upon them. These students find themselves in a position where they simultaneously must prove and improve their competence as measured by employer targets; their academic skills determined by Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) (2011, 2015) and programme criteria for assessment and, surely, some outcome to satisfy their personal needs. In short, in becoming a MAES, these students must satisfy the needs of their employer, the HE institution and themselves each having different priorities and different perspectives. These three aspects, i.e. the employer, the HEI and the students' own being, which influence and impinge on the students' motivations and aspirations, can be proposed as a potential triangle of tensions that must be accommodated by the student.

1.3 RESEARCH AIMS

The uniqueness of this study is characterised by the nature of the multi-professional students in this study who are transitioning to part-time master's study for purposes of continuing professional development (CPD). The study aims to explore the MAES experiences as they transition between their personal, professional and postgraduate identities; it builds on a small body of research exploring transition to postgraduate social science study. Literature which has stimulating my interest, includes a key research report conducted by Tobbell, et al (2008) and associated papers by O'Donnell, Tobbell, Lawthom and Zammit (2009); Tobbell, O'Donnell and Zammit (2010) and Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013) and, more recently O'Donnell et al (2016).

2 THE LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

The notion of becoming a master's student through a part-time, CPD route has directed the aim and objectives of the research and, consequently, the scope of the literature review. Pivotal to the notion of 'becoming' are the concepts of motivation, transition, learning and self-esteem and identity construction and formation. These interrelated ideas and theories are explored to provide a framework for my research; each has relevance to and consequences for the other and together they are bound by the concept of becoming. The literature review, therefore, reflects the focus on individuals and their experiences by taking a primarily psychological rather than, for example, a socio-economic or cultural, perspective.

There are two parts to the literature review: part one, Motivation, is an essential precursor to the more substantial part two on Experiences of Becoming a Master of Education Student. The section on motivation explains the circumstances that might trigger individuals' need to embark on a part-time MAEP whilst engaged in demanding careers and various life priorities. Many literature sources tend to use 'postgraduate' as an umbrella term to include PGCE, masters and doctoral students who are assumed mostly to be studying full-time and comment about motivation reveals mixed messages.

The second part of the literature review has four sub-sections, each exploring a different perspective on becoming i.e.: transition; self-esteem; characteristics of masters learning and

identity development. Each section has links with the other reflecting the master's student as a whole; a person who is grappling with a range of psychological and practical complexities as they work through their postgraduate studies. The exploration into implications of transition gives rise to questions about the nature of support that should be offered to students such as those who transition into master's study. Confidence is revealed in the literature as a key concern for postgraduate students and the section on self-esteem demonstrates how the terms self-esteem and confidence are interchangeable. In turn, the relationship between the strength of masterly competence and levels of self-esteem and confidence is established. In exploring the characteristics of masters learning the complexity of the experience is again emphasised with much in the literature aiming to specify what a master's student should be and do in an emotional, psychological and cognitively demanding context. Finally, the literature review turns to identity by firstly offering a summary of general definitions; there follows an exploration of theoretical perspectives to explain how an identity might develop and the associated challenges for the MAES. This section brings together how the concepts of motivation, transition, self-esteem and learning combine in identity formation and construction and concludes by highlighting specific challenges for MAESs as they develop their masterly academic identity.

2.2 MOTIVATION: WHY DO EDUCATIONALIST FROM WIDE RANGING CONTEXTS EMBARK ON A PART-TIME MA IN EDUCATION?

Individuals who work within any aspect of English education and training are subject to constant changes, updates and pressure to exceed the targets imposed on their learners' achievements. These are in addition to the challenges imposed by exponential developments in digital technology experienced throughout society. These individuals are, therefore, strongly motivated to engage in CPD which has relevance to and application for

their practice (Clapham 2016; McMillan, McConnell and O'Sullivan 2016; Scott et al 2014). The idea of engagement seen through Darling-Hammond and Richardson's (2009) ideas suggest that effective professional development should be sustained over time, collaborative, focussed and relevant to practice. In the context of informal learning Eraut's (2004) more precise definition of engagement is when learning becomes a by-product of deliberate activity undertaken for work-based goals. This focus on informal learning is not how a MAEP would be thought of, however, as students are undertaking CPD their goals will almost certainly be linked to their workplace. The idea of collaborative professional development is also reported on by Cordingley et al (2003) who note how this approach is related to positive outcomes for teacher practice and for teacher self-esteem and self-efficacy. This study of Cordingley et al's (2003) is drawn on in The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) (2014) report which concurs that collaborative professional development is the most effective form of CPD. Collaborative professional development is not overtly related to accredited qualifications by the OECD (2014) report, but the questions used in that research to identify the extent of, and need for, professional development do suggest that the MAEP is an appropriate vehicle for a collaborative professional.

Interestingly, the OECD (2014) cites that only ten per cent of teachers in England engage in degree like qualifications as CPD and the British Education Research Association (BERA) (2014a) suggests that, for school teachers, government does not necessarily support an accredited, academic route. This has been the government message for many years, for example the DfE (2010a, 2010b) prefers classroom observation and performance management as a route to the quality teacher and interprets courses external to the school environment as passive, therefore, inferring unproductive. This is significant for those individuals who are motivated to embark on an MAEP as they are clearly going against the grain of expectations and of what is supported. Engagement in CPD teaching and learning training programmes is managed by employing organisations and embedded within the culture of educational provision. Ofsted (2017) found that a '… continuous and strong …'

CPD programme led to positive outcomes for nursery schools and recommended more bespoke CPD where there were weaknesses. These weaknesses were already reflected by BERA (2014b:12) when it reported CPD as '… fragmented, occasional and insufficient …' and, for Jones (2015), CPD is based on a deficit model which is ineffective for professionals. Whilst there are no direct penalties for organisations who do not participate fully in CPD Ofsted (2017) is clearly suggesting that a lack of school improvement correlates with non-participation.

As part of the BERA (2014a) enquiry into the role of research in teacher education Cordingley (2014) found a number of ways for teachers to engage with research as part of their CPD. These include: engaging with experts outside the school environment who can challenge taken for granted assumptions; being exposed to new ideas in a challenging way; knowing why rather than merely what; looking at an issue from different perspectives and by being able to draw from research skills. For Cordingley (2014) competence in research methodology and an understanding of theory related to practice are central to teacher practice. However, whilst the interim report of the BERA (2014a) inquiry recognises the need for greater professionalism by teachers as implied by higher entry standards and qualifying requirements, they also recognise that government policy drives a shift from teacher education delivered by universities towards in-house, non-accredited CPD provisions. This is confirmed by the DfE (2016) guidance on their Standard for Teachers Professional Development which, whilst referring to the need for teachers to take account of scholarly research, makes no mention of accredited qualifications and overtly favours programmes of one-day type training.

The literature, therefore, reveals a dichotomy in the BERA (2014a) report between recognising the value of personal and academic competencies to be gained through masterly study and absolutely no suggestion of support to encourage teacher engagement in this type of higher-level accredited CPD. This dichotomy may explain the ambiguous messages

to be found in the literature about student motivation, for example Tobbell, et al (2008:28) claim that '… variability exists in students' motivation …', but there are '… extremely high levels of personal motivation …' (29) in applicants to postgraduate study.

Taking these factors into account, together with the very low percentages of school teachers in England who perceive they have a need for professional development (OECD 2014) it is surprising that a teacher, or other educator, would be sufficiently motivated to commit to the demands and challenges required for an MA Education Award (MAEA).

2.3 EXPERIENCES OF BECOMING A MASTER OF EDUCATION STUDENT

2.3.1 Transition

Tobbell et al's (2008:4) report on improving the quality of postgraduate learning experience reveals that the process of transition is closely connected to the notion of 'becoming' in that understanding and addressing the potential implications of a poor transition can ensure more effective learner engagement and success. In the context of education, transition tends to be discussed in terms of vertical, upward movement from one schooling context or level of study to the next and this generally applies to MAESs who normally progress from an undergraduate degree. Scott, Hughes, Evans, Burke, Walter and Watson (2014) in their research about transitions in Higher Education (HE) refer specifically to learning transitions. According to Scott et al (2014:1) learning transitions focus on how students deal with new learning and assessment patterns and they acknowledge that postgraduate students' experiences are '… complex and entwined with a range of other transitions.'.

An alternative perspective on adult learner transition is Schlossberg's (1998) transition theory which throws more light on types of changes which can arise in terms of relationships, routines, assumptions and roles. Schlossberg (1998) importantly claims that transition will only have occurred if the individual perceives that it has. Furthermore, she claims that successful transition depends on the four aspects of: situation (for example timing); self (for example commitment level); support from others and the individual's ability to employ coping strategies. This resonates with the notion of 'becoming' as a process which may never be achieved as proposed by Quinn (2010:123) who challenges the notion of becoming when she claims, 'we are always lost in transition'. Indeed Martin, Spolander, Ali and Maas (2014) explain that transition is change and about leaving the comfort and safety of what was previously known.

Evans and White (2010) in their discussion of transitions experienced by adult learners bring attention to the potential triangle of tensions as individuals oscillate between their personal, professional and postgraduate identities. A horizontal rather than vertical transition is suggested by the explanation that activities concerned with

> … maintaining employment, changing employment, balancing work and family life and finding personal fulfilment. … may be considered transitional where they involve changes in the adult's orientations to learning and career.
>
> Evans and White (2010:64)

Transition then, is a complex horizontal and vertical experience, but unlike the vertical movements experienced through school settings and into HE or Further Education (FE),

transition from undergraduate to postgraduate study is not well researched nor understood (Tobbell et al, 2008; O'Donnell et al, 2009; Tobbell et al 2010; Tobbell and O'Donnell, 2013; Scott et al, 2014 and McPherson, Punch and Graham, 2017). However, these sources do reveal misassumptions made by HE practitioners about the transitional challenges experienced by postgraduate students. Contrary to these misassumptions, O'Donnell et al (2009:27) claim that for those who transition to postgraduate study the experience is not '… more of the same …' nor is it simply about '… taking things to the next level …'. They found that students' difficulties in mastering the required level of academic competencies suggested a lack of readiness for study. Scott et al (2014) explain why this should be when they bring attention to master's students' diversity in previous study and life patterns. Scott's et al's (2014) masters students were faced not only with the challenge of the next level of study, they also faced transition between theoretical and applied study. In addition, Scott et al (2014) recognised the challenges of prioritising study when horizontally transitioning between full time professional and personal lives coupled with a part-time postgraduate study life. Transitional difficulties continued to be reported by McPherson et al (2017) who suggest that better feedback to help students understand masterly study would have helped his research participants overcome negative emotions and low self-concept.

Taking on board Schlossberg's (1998) transition theory the degree to which students can cope with transition will depend on their motivations (i.e. situation factors); their personal characteristics (i.e. self-factors); others in their lives (i.e. social factors) and their resilience (i.e. ability to apply coping strategies). The choice to change is a personal investment in time, energy and financial resources (Scott et al 2014) and this will affect the MAES's 'others' who in turn will be key in facilitating the change (Schlossberg 1998). James and Beedell (2010:45) conclude that

> One person's transition is simultaneously and subsequently, a generative part of the context of another person's transition.

This idea reveals that 'others' will not only influence the MAES' process of transition, but that they too will be affected by that transition. Not all 'others' in the MAES' life will be willing participants in the transition for example, their 'situation' factor (Schlossberg 1998) may not be timed right or they may feel that the process is out of their control.

Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013:127) when considering transition to postgraduate study in the light of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model takes the idea of 'others' further to include the 'new community' of the 'new educational context'. They conclude that

> … the work of transition is in the participation of the practices of the new community. The individual develops or changes in response to her/his action with and upon the new educational context.

Eraut (2004:18) sees the learning context in terms of a culture and claims that '… student engagement can be viewed as becoming literate in [that] culture.' or as Lawrence (2009:106) describes it '… becoming familiar with a context's discourses…'. Both affirm the suggestion that the student should take some responsibility for their transition. However, Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013) suggest that HEIs should address misassumptions about postgraduate support needs and this would result in more successful vertical transition.

In conclusion, the complexity of transition is clear: part-time postgraduate students who study for CPD must cope with new, higher level learning cultures and new organisations they must adapt their personal and professional lives to accommodate their forthcoming postgraduate life. In the case of the MAES part-time study requires both vertical and horizontal transition to postgraduate study giving rise to challenges in intellectual, social and emotional aspects. MAES make a choice to embark on their postgraduate journey may only imagine what that process will be like. The literature suggests that many will not be ready for new, higher level learning requirements and assessment strategies, yet their

preparedness to engage and cope with the culture of their new context will be necessary. Whilst there are claims that HEIs should support these transitions, MAES will also have to draw on personal coping strategies and require support from social networks as well as the HEI at which they study. However, if support from others is difficult to achieve relationships could be damaged which in turn could weaken personal resources of the self. There is, therefore, a tension between the individual taking personal responsibility and receiving support in the process of their transition. As Field (2010) claims, transitions can be emancipatory or challenging and may be the result of individual choice or third-party actions.

2.3.2 Self-Esteem

Definitions of self-esteem

The challenge in pinpointing a definition of self-esteem reflects the complexity of the concept and the perspectives from which the range of authors alluded to in this section come from. Discussion around self-esteem starts with James (1890) who defined the concept as being the total of an individual's successes divided by their pretensions where pretensions reflect '… personal standards and values …' (Branden 1969:306) or '… hopes, desires and aspirations …' (Mruk 2006:13) which the individuals believe they ought to achieve. Many others have built on James' (1890) original ideas to extend thinking about self-esteem; these include Rosenberg (1965), Branden (1969), Leary and Baumeister (2000), Dweck (2000), Coopersmith (2002) and Ellis (2005).

Rosenberg (1965) noted that self-esteem is about a self-evaluative approach which compares the self with others and saw the nature of self-esteem as being rooted in a social or cultural base. Branden (1994) associated levels of self-esteem with levels of success,

aspiration and worthiness as well as self-evaluation. Unlike Rosenberg (1965), Branden (1994) notes that self-esteem is about our relationship with ourselves and that it is neither comparative nor competitive, rather that it is about one's own confidence in abilities, rights and entitlements. Both authors suggest that there is a need for an individual to adopt an element of reflexivity to experience their self-esteem levels. Leary and Baumeister (2000) argue for a different function of self-esteem that is as a sociometer. Leary (2003:271) describes the sociometer as '… a kind of psychological meter or gauge that registers social inclusion and exclusion.'. Leary and Baumeister (2000) believe that measures of self-esteem correlate with how individuals perceive others to accept or reject them. This correlation resonates with both Rosenberg's (1965) insights into how individuals influence each other's behaviours and emotions, and strongly suggests that self-esteem is driven by interpersonal relationships. Relationships are certainly at the heart of those individuals who will experience the process of becoming an MAES within social environments of academic study; professional practice and personal lives.

Coopersmith (2002) suggests the words competent, successful, significant and worthy make up self-esteem and describe the degrees of belief a person has about themselves. This reflects Branden's (1994) earlier work connecting an individual's self-esteem with their confidence to cope with life challenges, he states:

> … the primary meaning of self-esteem [is] confidence in the efficacy of our mind, in our ability to think. … confidence in our ability to learn, take appropriate choices and decisions, and manage change.
>
> Branden (1994:227)

This connection between the terms self-esteem and confidence and efficacy is extended by Bandura (1977) who defines self-efficacy as the levels of confidence individuals have in their own abilities. This definition is picked up by Lane, Lane and Kyprianou (2004) who also demonstrated a noticeable correlation between self-esteem and self-efficacy in the

academic performance of postgraduate students. It is also interesting to note that OECD (2014:183; 184) reported how 'Self-efficacy refers to the level of confidence teachers have in their abilities' and that there are '… positive associations between teachers' self-efficacy and … [their] enthusiasm, commitment, job satisfaction and teaching behaviour'. Significantly, Lawrence (2000) associates self-esteem with confidence in personality and confidence in abilities both being aspects for successful study at master's level QAA (2015). Seifert (2004), in his paper on understanding student motivation, also sees self-esteem as a term interchangeable with confidence. As professionals within education teachers are representative of all MAESs; an outcome of confidence from study is, therefore, a reasonable quality to anticipate and value.

Learning improves confidence

Research (for example including: Mistry, White and Beradi 2009; Stierer, 2000; Burchell, Dyson and Rees, 2002; Davis and Preston 2002; Turner and Simon 2013; Wellington, 2010; Morris and Wisker 2011) into postgraduate study consistently cites improved confidence in both academic and professional contexts as a key outcome. However, whilst neither the levels of confidence, nor the context/s of improvement are revealed, confidence is always an issue for students. In one of the few studies researching the relationship between teacher training and self-efficacy, Hoy and Spero (2005) reported a decline in teachers' self-efficacy at the end of their first year of qualified practice and related this to the level of support received. Levels did increase, but reduced again after a substantial number of years practice. There was also an increase in self-efficacy when perceptions of their practice improved. This offers a reason for some individuals' perceptions of their self-esteem and confidence being lower than it could be when they commit to a journey of masterly study and may explain some of the increased confidence at the end of study.

Connection between low confidence, motivation and assuming a student identity

Branden (1994) claims that self-esteem offers insights into understanding motivation. The commitment to study at a time of experiencing low self-esteem, or confidence, as suggested by Hoy and Spero (2005) raises questions about what motivates students to study at masterly level. This is especially so when taking account of Branden's (1994) links between the challenges to interpersonal relationships and self-esteem and the earlier proposal in this literature review that employing organisations are not obliged to support masterly study. This apparent contradiction between low levels of confidence and a motivation to commit to higher level study goes some way to explain Blair, Cline and Wall's (2010) claim that adult students entering HE are not comfortable with their ability to succeed as students. Blair et al's (2010) research also suggests students new to HE express doubts over their self-image and confidence through their self-perceptions of what it is to be a student. This strongly suggests that student motivational factors to study is complex and even contradictory. It is acknowledged that most MAES in the context of this study are not new to HE, having already achieved a first degree. However, in my experience, they may be new in terms of time lapse since previous study; new discipline protocols and new academic culture.

Where Bandura's (1977) ideas are considered, if an individual embarks on an activity within which they have invested their self-worth, but they lack self-efficacy, there is a loss of self-esteem. As Seifert (2004:144), having taken Bandura's work into account, states:

> Self-worth is intimately connected with performance for many students and doing well is important to one's sense of worth and dignity.

The question arises here as to what the characteristics of 'doing well' are, if Lawrence's sociometer is used 'doing well' is how a student might compare themselves to another student. Dweck (2000:127), on the other hand, sees self-esteem, as

> … a way of experiencing yourself when you are using your resources well – to master challenges, to learn, to help others.

which suggests that 'doing well' could be more about self-measures than comparisons. Erol and Orth's (2011) longitudinal study on self-esteem development in fourteen to thirty-year olds led them to suggest that a sense of mastery and self-esteem have a reciprocal influence on each other. Taking this into account and if Blair et al's (2010) suggestion that MAESs cannot identify themselves fully as students is correct, then their levels of motivation and self-esteem are reduced.

Confidence and learning improve reciprocally

Branden (1994) claims that self-esteem is about confidence with one's rights and entitlements, for example the right to learning support as is discussed by Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013). This, together with Leary's (2003) connections between self-esteem and social exclusion, could explain how feelings of isolation lead to anxiety. In turn, these anxieties can negatively affect levels of self-esteem and confidence and, consequently, effective learning. This connection between levels of confidence and learning is highlighted by Lawrence (2000) who maintains that self-esteem and intellectual attainment cannot be separated. His research, of adult learners who struggle with basic literacy skills, strongly indicates that those who feel confident tend to achieve more and those who lack confidence tend to achieve less.

Self-esteem, learning and managing change

The importance of self-esteem in learning is revealed by Coopersmith's (2002) contention that self-esteem contributes to the degree of responsiveness a person has with others' expectations of them and, therefore, an individual's learning mind-set or readiness. Both

Dweck (2000) and Coopersmith (2002), in their discussions about school children, place personal qualities, or abilities (for example resilience, perseverance and determination) as being significant for their level of self-esteem. These personal qualities, or resources, are relevant for successful masterly academic learning as defined by QAA (2015); they tie in with Branden's (1994) ideas for functioning effectively and contribute to the self-efficacy required for self-esteem. Dweck (2000:132) places emphasis on the role of self-esteem as part of the self-belief system, which influences the degree of determination held by an individual as they progress through life. From a different perspective Coppersmith (2002) suggests that feeling good about yourself, due to positive self-esteem, increases involvement and successful performance in learning. It becomes clear, therefore, that the ability to develop and effectively utilise personal qualities is a process that corresponds to the level of self-esteem. Personal qualities are important in the process of successful learning and they undoubtedly fit within Leary and Baumeister's (2000) claim that high self-esteem increases the ability to cope in practical ways. The idea of coping practically mirrors Branden's (1994) ideas mentioned earlier in this section; his notion of effective functioning is also significant for those aiming to engage in the learning process successfully. Ellis (2005) also supports these ideas and claims that qualities of persistence are higher with higher self-esteem; he goes as far as to suggest that the level of self-esteem has profound consequences for how much can be achieved.

Branden (1994) considers self-esteem to be important for employees, such as MAES, who face burgeoning demands in the face of fast paced changes in policy, technological and professional requirements. This connects with Bandura's (1977) reminder that contextual pressures are highly influential on an individual's sense of self and, therefore, suggests that self-esteem can rise and fall depending on context. The type of contexts which both Branden (1994) and Bandura (1977) highlight are strongly echoed in contemporary times where Government policy imposes continual changes in the education arena and technology has exponential effects on everyone's lives - personally and professionally and as a postgraduate student. The relevance of confidence in the learning process is also

considered by Illeris (2014:10) who suggests that to change (because of learning which might be termed transformative) individuals will have to face taking risks in their practice and this will demand increased '… confidence that important changes are possible and worthwhile.'. Over twenty years ago Branden (1994:208-9) took the wider view point about the overall goal of education, rather than learning, as being to '… function effectively in the modern world …' and suggested that self-esteem means '… confidence in our ability to cope with the challenges of life …'. Nothing had more importance to Branden (1994:209) than 'learning how to use one's mind' which is an essential factor in and contributor to any postgraduate learning context.

All change, imposed externally on, and internally by, individuals demand continued responsiveness in terms of adaptability and flexibility from those individuals. Branden (1994) warns that it is costly and dangerous for individuals to be over attached to the known and familiar and claims that the ability to manage change is at least in part a function of self-esteem. A student studying a higher-level qualification for CPD will, therefore, need positive self-esteem to enable them to deal with new ideas for application in the workplace. Furthermore, Branden (1994:227) states that we have an 'urgent need for self-esteem' with the increase in and range of judgements we must make. A dichotomy emerges here, as the response by employers to managing change is to embed an ongoing requirement for professionals to undertake programmes of CPD training. However, those changes are controlled by the employer's focus on organisational needs. So, whilst self-esteem is required to manage change, the ongoing push to learn more and do better within the constraints imposed by the organisation, reinforces any feelings of deficit in the professionals who receive the CPD. The individual is, consequently, in a context where their agency is compromised and their perceptions of others' views of themselves is as deficit. Both implications are likely to have negative effect on their self-esteem and self-confidence.

It is acknowledged, of course, that some degree of positive sense of self is necessary for an individual to be sufficiently driven to engage (Deci and Ryan 2000c) with study, though this may initially be low. Such motivation may relate more to achieving personal goals than organisational goals. Coopersmith (2002) suggests that high self-esteem enables a person to move more directly and realistically toward their personal goals and suggests that a deeper self-knowledge and self-understanding arises with higher self-esteem. Working towards personal goals, however, may not always be possible where MAESs are aiming to satisfy employer CPD motives, especially if they are sponsored by their employer. In this case, although the choice to study may be a personal one, there may be an expectation by the employer of a return on investment for organisational rather than personal goals. Tensions arising here would be particularly apparent where the core identity values are threatened (Illeris 2014) and this is considered further in the section on identity.

It can be concluded that coping with the process of becoming a master's student in the part-time CPD context will demand strong personal qualities and academic skills. The literature reveals that there is a relationship between the strengths of these qualities and skills and the levels of self-esteem and confidence – each feed the other and, when positive, result in effective learning. This raises the suggestion that growth in self-esteem, or confidence, is as worthy a goal for education as is the growth of intellectual skills.

2.3.3 Characteristics of master's Learning

Effective learning is affected by all aspects of any master's student transition as revealed in other sections of this literature review. To further understand the journey of becoming a master's student it will be useful to have insights into what kind of learner the master's student needs to be; what they should expect from their learning opportunities and how they deal with these.

A useful starting point are the andragogical assumptions about adult learners as presented by Knowles, Holton III and Swanson (2015). The andragogical model is rooted in human resource development and adult training for organisational benefit, but is championed by Knowles et al (2015) for its flexibility. Examples of andragogy's flexibility include: Pew (2007) who analysed it in the context of HE student motivation; Blackley and Sheffield (2015) who applied it to a digital curriculum for initial teacher education and Hagen and Park (2016) who demonstrated how well andragogical assumptions align with current neuroscience-based thinking about learning. There are six assumptions about adult learners (Knowles et al 2015) which are briefly: adults must understand why they are learning something; they have a self-concept of making their own decision; they have relevant previous experience on which to build new learning; they are ready to learn; they will learn best in ways meaningful to their needs and their extrinsic motivation is especially related to improving working life and consequently personal life.

Another way of thinking about being masterly is recorded by QAA (2011, 2015) documents which offer descriptors of master's graduates' attributes including: competence in research methodology; abilities of criticality, dealing with complex issues and autonomy; originality in application of knowledge and transferable skills for employment. It is interesting to note how the 2015 document emphasises professionalism, unlike its 2010 predecessor. This acknowledgement of employment skills within masters learning lines up with andragogical assumptions. It can be proposed, therefore, that in becoming masterly elements of academic identity are intertwined with being professional.

Beyond the characteristics documented by the QAA (2011 and 2015) and professional standards for practitioners in schools, FE and HE (DfE 2011; Education and Training Foundation 2014 and Higher Education Authority 2011) there are many perspectives on

what it is to be a successful HE student. Illeris (2017) embraces Friere's (1974) and Knowles et al's (2015) ideas when he proposes that adults know their own minds when it comes to learning and will be disinterested in irrelevant content. Barnett (2007) resonates with this as he believes that learners should take ownership of their study and that progress depends on being interested. He talks about ownership in the sense of how students can influence through programme evaluation and this would be essential to assure relevant content for CPD students. Barnett (2007:7) identifies additional characteristics which combine to create the 'will to learn' these include: excitement, passion, self-confidence, tenacity and openness. He also comments on two types of being committed to study; one relates to practicalities such as making time and the other to giving oneself up to study. Without these dispositions and qualities Barnett (2007) claims that a learner cannot move forward in the right direction through their study.

Barnett (2007:102) proposes some dispositions and qualities that are '… especially fitting …' for HE students. He discusses how willingness and determination can enhance student qualities such as integrity, courage and respect for others. Others also comment on what it is to be masterly. For example, Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner, (2007) favour a need to develop aptitudes for self-direction, metacognition awareness, and a disposition toward learning. Abilities of reflection are also thought to be essential for effective learning by many learning theorists including Schon (2016); Kolb (1984) and Mezirow (2000) with Barnett (2007:102) using the deeper approach of 'reflexiveness'. Scott et al (2014) aim to precisely describe masterly achievement, for example: being more able in criticality; articulation of concepts; application of learning and others. According to Scott et al (2014:43) defining characteristics provides '… clues as to how a good student might think, behave, feel or act …' and, for them, sophistication has replaced superficiality in learning, but they do not specify by precisely how much.

Blackley and Sheffield's (2015) reflection on the nature of part-time students in the context of andragogy suggests that transition in postgraduate study is as much about developing maturity as it is about developing appropriate skills and competencies. Maturity might be measured by the degree of dependency the learner will have on support for learning; with over-dependency comes reliance (Forrest III and Peterson 2006) which is not conducive to masterly characteristics. However, such dependency may be necessary for master's students when, for example, previous study was a different discipline or the gap since previous study leads to out of date study skills and low confidence.

It is one thing for students to have the necessary characteristics for learning, but to further understand their journey a view on what might facilitate their effective learning may be helpful. According to Jarvis (2010), Friere (1974) champions the teacher student relationship; open communication with students; understanding their prior experiences and aspirations; knowing their starting points and encouraging critical reflection on these. Much of this relates to Knowles et al's (2015) andragogical assumptions and facilitative approach particularly regarding prior experiences. For some adults a pedagogical approach is demanded if the maturity assumed by Knowles et al (2015) andragogical model is insufficient. For Barnett (2007) student self-belief will lead to appropriate dispositions and qualities (and, therefore, maturity) and lecturers should foster self-belief by providing students with space to develop. However, success depends on students having time or cognitive ability to use that space effectively and according to Scott et al (2014) masters' students do not always have these resources.

Wellington (2010:146) found that even doctoral students expressed '… stress, fear, isolation and anxiety …' when discussing their writing experiences and, if this is the case, it is fair to suggest that the same applies to masters' students. It is not just anxiety caused by lack of competence that constrains effective learning; Barnett (2007:116) is troubled by constraints of '… forediscloseed outcomes …'. All HEI students' achievements are constrained by learning

outcomes and Barnett's (2007) concern is that this may inhibit opportunity for meaning making and reflection on new understandings. Even Knowles et al's (2015) student-centred approach calls for learning contracts to direct students towards an end goal. Although these are based on the learner's need to know and are constructed with the individual there is an element of constraint unless constructed in a broad, open ended manner. A MAES, therefore, will need emotional strength, practical skills and minimal organisational constraint to cope with learning.

Interestingly Endedjik, Vermunt, Meijerand, Brehelmans (2014:1116) found that:

> … only one third of the student teachers changed in the direction of independent meaning-oriented learning. This study found little evidence that student teachers became more self-regulating throughout the postgraduate professional programme. This shows that opportunities for directing one's own learning might be a necessary but not a sufficient condition to increase students' conceptions and skills to become self-regulated lifelong learners.

Many studies, for example by Lahiff (2005); Wellington (2010) Morris and Wisker (2011) Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013) and O'Donnell et al (2016) pick up on the theme that confidence plays a part in how learners engage with learning. Hammond's (2004) study, concerned with practitioners in the Lifelong Learning and Skills sector, argues that the inculcation of confidence through risk-taking is important for new teachers in their journey to becoming free-thinking practitioners. The purpose of Hammond's (2004:553) study was to explore the 'soft' outcomes of lifelong learning and her Results demonstrated that every one of her 145 interviewees '… mentioned increased self-esteem as a central outcome of their learning.'. Furthermore, Turner and Simon (2013) found that increased confidence

arising from learning at master's level positively affected confidence in the professional context.

Resisting challenges, such as those experienced by MAESs as they strive to grapple with the need to be flexible in their working lives and yet conform with academic protocols, is discussed by Lawrence (2000). He is concerned about the emotional and social consequences of what is perceived by an individual to be their low ability. As found by Wellington (2010) and Morris and Wisker (2011), the participants in Lawrence's (2000) research experienced embarrassment when admitting being unable to demonstrate competent literacy skills. Failure in the skills valued by what Lawrence (2000:xvii) terms the master's 'society' can result in a loss of confidence as a student especially. Those who Dweck (2000) describes as having an entity theory will withdraw from study due to their tendency to avoid risks which might lead to perceived predictable failure. Lawrence (2000) goes on to suggest other consequences of loss of confidence including displays of aggression or boastfulness or arrogance creating barriers and leading to inability to take advice. The potential here is for students to unrealistically inflate their own self-belief and aspirations resulting in amplified feelings of isolation already arising from transition (Penketh and Goddard 2008) and lack of an understanding HE culture (Tobbell and O'Donnell 2013).

Coopersmith (2002) explains that anxiety and self-esteem are closely related and that threat, such as that of failure in a new environment, releases anxiety by attacking the self-esteem. Lawrence (2000) in his research around self-esteem explains that the over-anxious person cannot think clearly and, therefore, if a master's student cannot think clearly, they cannot learn effectively. The issue of anxiety is then significant and transition through higher levels of study, with new peers, in a new environment exposes student to considerable threat. Certainly, Blair et al's (2010) undergraduate participants consistently cite the challenge of anxiety, caused by uncertainty, guilt around neglect of other responsibilities, conflicting roles and loss of control and determination. A decrease in self-

esteem then may suggest that anxiety levels in an individual have been increased due to the pressures of the learning environment.

However, the outcomes from study can be life changing or have transformative effects all having implications for personal and professional life; for example, a perceived higher status; career progression or shifts in value base. Illeris (2014) also identifies emotional aspects of learning particularly where transformation in identity is concerned and becoming an MAES has strong potential for this to occur. Transformative learning can positively modify a learner's practice and requires all aspects of learning; i.e.: the intellectual; emotional, social and context (Illeris 2014). On the other hand, Knowles et al (2015) are concerned that modification can create unwanted challenge for learners to their previously accepted and valued practice.

Defining a masters' student is fraught with subjectivity and MAESs have much to live up to especially as Scott et al (2014:43) accede, the student who is transitioning to embody master's characteristics has other identities too. To enable effective learning the environment needs to support andragogical assumptions whilst recognising that there will be many aspects of master's study that leads to anxiety. To deal with this a more supportive approach is demanded, whilst at the same time avoiding student dependency.

2.3.4 Identity

As with concepts of transition, self-esteem and learning, identity is a concept related to becoming a MAES and is defined in many ways. One's sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, engagement, role satisfaction and effectiveness are all enhanced through

identity (McNaughton and Billot 2016) and, for Beauchamp and Thomas (2010), identity is how you define yourself and are viewed by others. According to Wilson and Deaney (2010), identity fulfils the need to be socially validated and Illeris (2014) picks up on the idea of social validation in his claim that an individual's identity is reflected in how they perceive others' views of themselves.

Illeris' (2014) model of identity is based on three concentric circles, with a stable, central core representing those aspects of the individual unlikely to change throughout the life time. The central core, surrounded by a personality layer, is vulnerable to change if the individual is sufficiently transformed by new learning; this layer reflects deep aspects of the person such as their value system. The outermost, third layer, is the preference layer which is more changeable and belongs closely to the self-perception. This latter aspect of identity can adapt to different contexts depending on whether the individual has the energy or inclination for change (Illeris 2014 and Wilson and Deaney 2010). These ideas are echoed by Martin et al (2014:203) who see identity as '… fluid, multi-dimensional [with] some aspects being selected and temporary.'. Herrmann et al (2017) claim that identity is about a person's past and present and how these relate to their future. This claim resonates with Illeris' (2014) belief that identities continue to develop and form through lifelong learning and this certainly reflects the part-time master's students in Scott et al's (2014) study. These students bring experiences from past study and professional practice as they engage in a present new role as master's students with goals of informing and progressing their future.

Identity can be viewed from a multitude of perspectives which comprise the characteristics of becoming a MAES. These include: personal aspects (for example: physical characteristics, talents, flaws, believes and emotional goals (Wilson and Deaney 2010)); social aspects (for example: race, gender, occupation and hobbies (Wilson and Deaney 2010 and Barak and

Brekke 2014)), role aspects (for example: social position such as Master of Education (Jazvac-Martek 2009)) and learner aspects (Bunce, Baird and Jones 2017).

Identity formation and construction

The connection between learning and identity creation is pivotal for Illeris' (2014) and his ideas that identity includes three dimensions of the cognitive, emotional and social are based within psychological ideas of identity formation. On the other hand, Scott et al's (2014) research reflects a more sociological view of identity construction. They provide insights into how the structures, or rules, imposed on student teachers' during their masterly study constrained their agency in developing the kind of professional they aspired to become. Scott et al's (2014) insights reveal that structures imposed through professional standards can constrain MAESs' agency in developing their aspirational postgraduate learner. Organisational structures, whether within the HEI or the employing organisation, have agentic implications for those engaged in becoming a MAES.

Illeris (2014) reflects on how, once adulthood, is reached an individual's identity has become stable as portrayed by the core identity in his three concentric circles model of identity. Generally, the individual has progressed through adolescence into a route of employment and gained permanent relationships. This stage of complete identity reflects

> … more or less the kind of balance between stability and flexibility that is characteristic and appropriate for adults …
>
> Illeris (2014:87).

At the point of deciding to become a MAES there will be a need for the individual to adopt a postgraduate learner identity and this change will demand a conscious choice (Wilson and

Deaney 2010). Barak and Brekke (2014:621) discuss how the '… process of becoming …' is about expanding the relevant knowledge and competencies within the kind of community of practice championed by Wenger (1998). Within a community of practice there is opportunity for creating, negotiating and constructing an identity (Soreide 2016). Such a process reveals the discursive nature of identity formation, but engaging in that process is more than just choice since the individual must take responsibility for their identity formation. Barnett (2007) claims that through a disposition to learn students own their own learning opportunities and become diligent and active in their engagement. For Wenger (1998) engagement in identity formation is understood through participation in the practices of the community to which an individual belongs. Furthermore, Wenger (1998) claims that participants in communities of practice can take on a range of possible imagined aspects of their learner identities. This idea relates to the notion of possible self as explored by Chan (2014). Participation in a MAEP provides opportunity to interact within a community of, at some level, like-minded people and give rise to the sense of belonging alluded to by Wenger (1998) thus creating opportunity for the formation of an academic learner identity.

Other aspects that can influence identity formation are identified by Soong, Tran and Hiep (2015) in their reflections on becoming doctoral students. Their experiences reveal how social and cultural factors, such as professional networks and professional identity, are significant. They also draw from research about doctoral students who bring a wealth of professional experience to their studies and yet are challenged by having to develop, or reconstruct, a learner identity. It is easy to anticipate that MAESs will experience a tension, or barrier, to learner identity when that learning is generated through a location, i.e. the HEI, different to that in which it is applied, i.e. the professional context. In this respect, identity requires a level of self-agency (Scott, 2014; Soong et al 2015) as the MAES navigates the structures, or cultures, where they experience their personal and professional identities and yet are aiming to become a postgraduate learner.

Illeris (2014) talks about both progressive and regressive transformations to the identity. Progressive transformation is about development, that is, going forward in some positive way, whereas regressive is when the subject of a transformation might hold back for some reason. For example, where there are conflicts between identities such as Wilson and Deaney (2010) describe between the professional and personal, or where the demands of the new challenges leading to the transformation are just too much. Scott et al's (2014) ideas expand on Illeris (2014) ideas as they see the transformative process of identity occurring in one of three ways. Firstly, they propose accretion where the original identity is kept; secondly absorption where the original identities are lost or, thirdly, deletion where parts of the identity are lost to accommodate new characteristics.

Identity and transition

Experiencing change through new learning as a MAES is to be expected, even hoped for, however, as identity formation occurs 'tensions between identities may not be resolvable, but nonetheless productive.' (McNaughton and Billot 2016:644). For the MAES tensions could arise if new learning which affects fundamental aspects such as values were strong enough to destabilise not only the personality layer, but also the core. Considering that the nature of identity formation relates to others' perceptions of the individual, tensions will, therefore, probably also arise between the individual and others in personal, professional and postgraduate contexts.

Lam and Pollard (2006) in their research about children progressing through education acknowledge that transition is a change process and a shift from one identity to another; the notion of negotiating multiple identities will be part of the process of becoming a MAES. James and Beedell (2010) cite Denzin (2001) who talks about epiphanies or turning points in life and intersections of different lives such as the public, private and student. An alternative way of thinking about change in these contexts is to see the process as one of '…

becoming somebody personally, educationally and occupationally …' (Ecclestone, Biesta and Hughes 2010:7). These three aspects of 'lives' or becoming' are likely to be experienced by MAESs trying to balance their professional, personal and postgraduate lives. This could be exacerbated by individuals not wanting to let go of already formed identities as suggested by Quinn's (2010) and Blair et al's (2010) findings that adults in HE had doubts about perceiving themselves as students.

Identity and self-esteem

Wilson and Deaney (2010) claim that the identity is self-evaluated through the self-esteem requiring self-verification. Feedback from others in all three contexts of the MAES' professional, personal and postgraduate identities contribute to this self-verification. A discursive process of negotiation and change involved in constructing and forming the MAES identity, or the '… habits of the heart and mind …' (Barak and Brekke 2014:621) will emerge. As with self-esteem the development of a strong identity depends on positive interrelationships – they are both co-constructed. According to Bandura (1977) self-esteem measures a person's self-beliefs from two perspectives, firstly the degree to which a person is confident in others' acceptance and valuing of them and secondly whether a person has confidence in them self in a specific situation

It follows then, that where an individual does not feel accepted and valued and/or is not confident in their competence and capability, self-esteem will be low and identity confused or ill-defined. However, according to Illeris (2014) even a regressive transformation can be the basis of an increase in self-esteem when appropriate support is in place. For example, if a MAES withdrew from the programme because it became overwhelming to continue their released energies may result in more effective professional or personal lives.

Identity and Learning

Transition through the learning process implies a potential for identity re-formation, certainly Illeris (2014:40) holds learning as central to identity and proposes that

> The concept of transformative learning comprises all learning that implies change in the identity of the learner.

Tobbell et al (2008) make the connection between student involvement and participation in learning and identity formation. A strong learner identity, characterised by engagement and effort in learning, and propensity for success is evident in Bunce et al's (2017) research into the student as consumer; they also found, however, that students who identified as consumer rather than student did not achieve so well. According to Martin et al (2014) deep learning is necessary to develop a strong identity and vice versa and in turn deep learning depends on a commitment to develop the academic competencies required at level 7. It can be deduced, therefore, that how the individual perceives and engages with their postgraduate identity is significant to their outcomes. Field (2010:xxiii), reflecting the importance of the possible-self-concept, suggests that 'people imagine themselves otherwise and indeed this imaginary alternative self is a necessary precondition for transformative learning.'.

Challenges of identity formation

In becoming a MAES the individual will encounter challenges and changes in identity with the consequent effects on personal and social relationships which, according to Lam and Pollard (2006), may not be anticipated by those students. This risk of identity transitions becoming 'problematic if a viable identity in one context does not transfer to another.', is highlighted by Ecclestone et al (2010:7) and (Scott et al 2014) suggests that others' willingness to support the process of change is essential. Where CPD leads to different or improved ways of practising, postgraduates experience their learner identity formation as their professional and personal identities simultaneously change, or transform, described by

Scott et al (2014) as a process of transformation through deletion. Individuals need energy (Illeris 2014) to overcome any deep-rooted reluctance to commit to an identity that may threaten already well-established identities in their professional and personal lives. They will have to choose which identity takes priority and when. Considering the importance of interrelationships in identity formation, the potential effect of becoming a MAES could threaten or enhance significant professional and personal relationships.

Martin et al (2014) suggest that already formed identities may not be very malleable, for example where an individual's value system is concerned. In Illeris' (2014) terms this relates to values established within the core identity which would require a transformative life crisis to create change. However, in Illeris' (2014) model the preference and personality aspects of the identity are malleable. For practical purposes the first phase of forming the MAES identity will be coping with the process of mastering the personal and academic competences required. For Illeris (2014) this opens opportunity for the MAES identity to be accommodated within the preference layer and, given sufficient energy on the part of the MAES, established in the personality layer. Identity requires an understanding of new rules and a fit with new cultural expectations (Monk and McKay 2017) to overcome any feelings of fragility. Such feelings may be caused by perceptions of being an outsider or of being judged as not having assumed a student identity (Blair et al 2010 and Tobbell and O'Donnell 2013). This need to regard the self as a student will depend on gaining familiarity with the competencies required to become a MAES (Hermann et al 2017). Whilst this can be achieved through immersion in communities of practice, deep learning and an imagined possible self, there may be institutional barriers to overcome.

Illeris' (2014) ideas suggest that transformative learning affecting MAESs identity formation takes place where a strong personal engagement is generated by a pedagogically supportive HEI environment which also facilitates a close student group. Tobbell et al (2010) also believe that the supportive environment, in whatever form, helps students to overcome the

challenges and complexities of study to boost their confidence and competence necessary for identity formation. Hallett (2010), however, revealed that master's students, regardless of the stages of their journey, identified an ongoing need for study support. Mis-assumptions on the part of the HEIs about the level of postgraduate students' competence has been reported in the literature for over a decade (for example: Manathunga, 2005; Tobbell et al; 2008 and 2010; O'Donnell et al 2016; MacPherson, 2017). These mis-assumptions lead to lack of support and consequently diminishes the opportunity for identity formation.

Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) claim that a heightened sense of professional identity may lead to a stronger sense of agency, or voice, in that context. Conversely then, it can be proposed that in developing postgraduate identity, such as experienced on the way to becoming a MAES, the individual's sense of agency in the professional context, as it fluctuates in concert with the formation and transformation of the academic identity, will be threatened. This negotiation between the professional and postgraduate identities, will also have implications for the personal identity. Such tension is reflected by Wilson and Deaney (2010) when they identify how identities compete according to the different contexts in which they are played out. Scott et al (2014) accept this as a process of transformation through deletion.

Developing academic identity is also discussed by Murakami-Ramalho, Militello and Piert (2013) when they consider the difficulties doctoral students have in developing research knowledge and identity as a result of their experiences in practice. Although becoming an MAES does not have the same emphasis on research as becoming a doctoral student the academic competencies and consequences are strongly mirrored in both contexts. Citing Taylor 2007, Murakami-Ramalho et al (2013) comment on the additional challenge that being a novice in research and expert in practice brings. The transition to assimilating an academic identify will present greater challenge for part-time students because, according

to Murakami-Ramalho et al (2013), whilst full time students engage with academic cultures easily, without the mantle of academic identity part-time students at advanced level tend to be perceived by others as engaging in a hobby. It is doubtful that many MAESs would agree with this, but if this is how others perceive the MAES identity this will surely diminish how the MAES perceive themselves as students.

Conclusion

The journey through postgraduate study is complex and identity development is a process with uncertainty and conflict. Within the role of postgraduate student, a commitment to developing characteristics which enable negotiation between professional, personal and postgraduate lives is necessary. The MAES must make choices and take responsibility for their postgraduate identity as it is negotiated and constructed within the context of others and through which they will experience social validation. A strong identity is necessary to enhance growth in all senses of being a learner i.e. knowledge, intellectual capacity; personality and character, sense of purpose and moral capacity (Barak and Brekke 2014). The process of becoming an MAES is certainly about change in terms of knowledge and a key feature of achievement is the formulation of a learner identity (Martin et al 2014). Identity formation is enhanced by self-efficacy, motivation and feelings of competence.

2.4 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The themes from this literature review reveal that the path in becoming a postgraduate student, such as a MAES, when studying part-time for CPD is one which presents individuals with challenges arising from three contexts. Each of these contexts, i.e. the person, the

professional and the postgraduate represents different identities to be managed, developed and transitioned between. These transitions are fuelled by motivations, emotions, the process of learning and the interrelationships between the individual and their friends, families, colleagues and their new academic environment.

The following research questions arise from the literature review:

2.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions of specific relevance to the research aims have been raised by the literature review:

1. How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university perceive their motivations for becoming a MAES?
2. How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university experience transition in becoming a MAES?
3. What are the implications and consequences of the journey to becoming a part-time MAES undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university?

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents my rationale for the methodological framework used for this research. My research philosophy is presented, and I have justified how I made the final decisions in constructing my plan for research using a case study approach. All aspects of the research are underpinned by ethical considerations and the Request for Ethical Approval (App 1) procedure is outlined in Section 3.8. A profile of the participants is offered and my data collection methods (focus group interviews; semi-structed interviews and email questions) are explained along with a detailed account of their implementation. This, together with the presentation of my thematic data analysis procedure; my responses to potential pitfalls, limitations of data collection and insider-researcher issues, provides the reader with sufficient insights to understand my actions and replicate the study.

Educational research is '… varied and complex…' (BERA 2011:3) and at its heart is concerned with problems of facilitating effective learning. This research is concerned with educational professionals who decide to study part-time to achieve a MA Education Award (MAEA) for their continuing professional development (CPD). Of key interest are their experiences as they grapple with simultaneous transitions between their three identities of person, professional and postgraduate student and what this means for becoming a MA Education Student (MAES).

The research questions, therefore, were raised by the literature review:

1. How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university perceive their motivations for becoming a MAES?
2. How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university experience transition in becoming a MAES?
3. What are the implications and consequences of the journey to becoming a part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university?

3.2 RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

The ontological basis for the study was born out of relativism because of two factors. Firstly, the research took place within one context, i.e. the programme of study and represented by participants from one cohort of students studying at a specific time. Whilst there are many similar programmes of study within the UK and internationally, each operate within their own organisational and programme cultures, the former responding to local and wider political and economic cultures. Secondly, all participants of this study share a common context, but each bring to bear their own personal, professional and academic discipline-based perspectives; individually their experiences evolve and are shaped by their journeys of becoming MAESs.

The research aimed to explore and interpret individuals' realities through gaining insights to their understandings, ideas, feelings and their own responses to their learning experiences in different contexts as they progress towards masterly status. The complexity of human nature is reflected by the perspectives mentioned above as they dynamically interact to reduce or destroy what Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011:7) refer to as the '… order and regularity of the natural world.'.

Considering that this type of research is

> … rarely amenable to precise measurement or given to all-encompassing solutions to its many challenges.
>
> BERA 2011:3

the study was not intended for purposes of generalisation – the situation was as unique as the individuals within that situation. Epistemologically, the findings elicited in the research emerge from the meanings and experiences of the participants in the study; the nature of this research is to explore and inform rather than confirm. The paradigm for the study, therefore, was interpretative rather than positivist and, as the findings were interrogated within the political frame of the participants as educationalists, the discussion does take on aspects of critical pedagogy (Freire 1970). When deciding on the methodology, account was taken of the research design being based on a naturalistic enquiry which simply put means '… obtaining data in as natural a setting as possible.' (Newby 2010:117). Lincoln and Guba (1985:43) defend a '… naturalist paradigm …' as being appropriate where the research is designed for emergent data. Guba and Lincoln (1994) have referred to naturalistic methodology as constructivism and Pring (2000) explains the notion of constructivism by claiming that knowledge, in qualitative research, is a construction of our deliberations developed by the interpretation the researcher derives from participant interpretations. The methodological framework reflects elements of phenomenology as the aim of the research was concerned with understanding the experiences (Newby, 2010) of becoming an MAES. There are also elements of ethnography, though not strictly speaking. According to Wellington (2000:45) ethnography is a branch of anthropology which employs a '… key research strategy … of participant observation….'. Such research would have required that I became an insider in the sense of becoming a MAES. Wellington (2000) cites cases where the researcher has gone under cover in covert research, this would not be possible, nor appropriate, in this research because I was known to the participants as a Programme Leader (PL) and member of the staff team which delivers the MA Education Programme

(MAEP). However, as an insider I do know the programme intimately and the students very well; I have also experienced part-time postgraduate study for CPD as a MAES and currently for my doctorate and, in these ways, I am extremely close to being a participant observer.

3.3 THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

By considering my research questions and associated research philosophy as discussed above I used Cohen et al's (2011) six methodological styles on which to base my rationale for my choices. These styles are: historical; surveys; case studies; ex post facto; experiments; meta-analysis; action research and qualitative and are briefly outlined in the next paragraphs. The characteristics of these styles are then considered in relation to how I justify my choices.

According to McCulloch (2011), historical research in education investigates what has gone before, how things progress through time and how current policy and practice originated. For this study, it was important that I gathered the voices of current students which, of course, historical research would not provide for.

Gorard (2001) believes that surveys are useful when data is not available through other more robust methodologies such as experiment. He claims that they are not useful for '… gathering opinions, attitudes and explanations.' (Gorard, 2001:80) and, therefore, would be unsuitable for this study.

There is a broad range of experimental research styles which Cohen et al (2011:312) explore in depth, they conclude that

> The essential feature of experimental research is that investigators deliberately control and manipulate the conditions which determine the events in which they are interested … .

To '… deliberately control and manipulate …' as indicated in the quote above is the complete antithesis to an appropriate methodological framework for this study. Cohen et al (2011) draw from several authors (for example: Cooper and Schindler 2001; Kerlinger 1970 and Lord 1973) to explain that ex post facto research is a form of experiment which takes place after an event. The purpose would be to discover how or why that event occurred when that event would be impossible to replay, for example due to ethical reasons. Again, this would not relate to my study.

Another methodological approach that could have been used is where previous research is synthesised for purpose of meta-analysis. When arguing for research synthesis methods in education Davies' (2000:372) explains that meta-analysis is a method by which data is accumulated from many previous statistical studies which generally focus on the measurement of '… *effect* size of an intervention.' (emphasis as original). This study is not concerned with an intervention and, furthermore, contextual considerations important to this study are unlikely to be recognisable within a meta-analysis as explained by Davies (2000).

A common methodological approach in education research is action research. According to McNiff (2013:24) action research is undertaken by practitioners and '… involves learning in action and through reflection …'. McAteer (2013:12) agrees with this claim and emphasises that improving practice requires '… ongoing and evolving action …'. There is definitely an aim to ultimately improve practice in this study, but not primarily to interrogate my practice. Rather it is to understand the experiences of students, which may ultimately contribute to ideas for improved practice.

In view of the naturalistic context of the research and the notion that '…quantification runs risk of depersonalisation.', (Ions 1977 cited in Cohen et al 2011:14), it was straight forward for me to reject those styles which suggest a quantitative approach i.e. surveys, experiments and meta-analysis. In preference to these I adopted an interpretivist methodological approach and qualitative style which allowed me to engage with appropriate individuals about their experiences.

Kirk and Miller (1986:9) associated qualitative research with being naturalistic claiming that qualitative research is '… any research distinguished by absence of counting.'. They also state that 'Qualitative research is an empirical, socially located phenomenon ...'; more precisely they compare qualitative to the nature of and quantitative to the number of. Braun and Clarke (2013:4) take these ideas a little further and identify 'Big Q qualitative research' and 'small q qualitative research'. They define Big Q as relating to a qualitative, or interpretivist, paradigm where a positivist and quantitative approach is rejected. They explain how Big Q research acknowledges context and can be different for different people or even for one person in different circumstances. On the other hand, Braun and Clarke (2013) see small q research in terms of data collection strategies used within both positivist and interpretivist studies. Both these definitions, of 'Big Q' and 'small q' can be related to my research.

Maxwell (2005) suggests that the real strength of qualitative research is in providing the researcher with an understanding of the processes by which things take place. Maxwell (2005:75 italics as original) also suggests that questions in qualitative research can discover what experiences mean to participants and how context influences participants' behaviours; that is the processes of '… *how* things happen rather than *whether* there is a particular relationship …'. Maxwell (2005) also argues that the difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that qualitative is about process whilst quantitative is about variance which again provides a rationale for qualitative when this research is about how students experience the process of becoming a MAES. It is depth of data I required to understand the process of how becoming a MAES happens and in this light Braun and Clarke (2013:4) compare the '… 'shallow', but broad …' characteristics of quantitative approaches to the '… detailed and complex …' accounts which I aimed for. A qualitative approach further supports the intended research by enabling a representation of individual students' experiences as it provides them with the opportunity to explore and voice their understandings of the causes and consequences of these experiences. This is not to suggest, however, that qualitative and quantitative approaches are mutually exclusive both are often useful to supplement and/or verify each other's Results (Glaser and Strauss 1999).

The nature of the questions gave participants opportunity to look back and reflect on their learning experiences which introduced some characteristics of a retrospective longitudinal study. However, the focus of the research was not to capture an historical narrative, but to discover any tensions experienced when becoming an MAES. Certainly, no documented records of historical events were called upon, though participants were at liberty to refer to any documents, for example reflective diaries/journals they may have kept, to inform their discussion responses. In the event, I did not suggest this and so far as I am aware students did not take that initiative; it was their verbal construction of events that formed the data collected.

An experimental approach, for example ex post facto, was certainly not what the research was about as there was no intention to collect previously existing data to test a hypothesis. Rather the research has been to explore naturalistic circumstances as they were understood by the participants. This research has some similarities to action research in that it is hoped the Findings will contribute to improved understanding of part-time MAESs who study for their CPD and, therefore, inform future practice concerning such students. According to Pring (2000) and McNiff (2002), this is a key aim of action research. However, action research in its purest sense is not what this research has been about because that would have required an evaluation of my own practice and the implementation of the recommendations arising from that evaluation which, in turn, would require a re-evaluation (Newby 2010 and McNiff 2002) to confirm successful outcomes. This research was relatively short-term and small scale providing only a snap shot of a group of individuals' perceptions at specific times of their study; data was collected over the period of 15 months with only the email respondents invited to engage with data collection on more than one occasion.

Having rejected historical, survey, ex post facto, experimental, meta-analysis and action research approaches to the methodology the case study was considered. Yin (2018) claims that there is no formula for knowing whether case study research is an appropriate choice. He does, however, suggest that if there is a desire to obtain '… "in-depth" description of a social phenomenon.' (Yin 2018:4) case study is suitable. Importantly, Yin (2018) reveals that there is a wide range of criteria in different contexts which define case study research. Thomas (2016) also acknowledges this breadth of circumstances where case study research applies. Taking account of this, along with Pring's (2000) criteria, a case study framework was found to be appropriate in the following ways. My interest in the case derived from my intimate and 'local knowledge' (Thomas 2016:98) and my purpose was exploratory and explanatory, there has been no intention to evaluate. The cohort at the centre of the research is unique as a part-time, multi-professional group studying an MA Education for purposes of CPD and, in this respect, has 'particularity' (Pring 2000:40, Thomas 2016:10), there is no intention to generalise. As

an example of MA cohorts, the MAESs stand out in terms of numbers recruited as compared to other MA cohorts within the HEI and has also bucked the trend nationally in this respect; the literature review demonstrates that the cohort overcomes many barriers to embarking on study. Ultimately, as a real-life study the outcome can inform policy and practice.

3.4 THE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

As an interpretivist study, there has been no attempt to secure a sample such that generalisation of outcomes can be achieved as would be the case in a positivist study. It is the uniqueness of the individuals within the participant group that calls into question whether it is realistic to think in terms of population and sample at all. Emmel (2103) argues that the terms sample and sampling are merely convenient ways to articulate how, what they describe as cases are identified, since these terms are so commonly used in the literature. Furthermore, Sim, Saunders, Waterfield and Kingstone (2018) argue that pinning down the sample size before undertaking the research is incompatible with the exploratory nature of qualitative paradigms. Their study concluded that the decision about sampling at the planning stage of research serves practical rather than methodologically sound purpose and it is more appropriate to consider saturation of data to determine whether the necessary sample has been achieved. Emmel (2013:33) agrees with this and specifies that the sampling '… may be redesigned as research progress.'.

The participant groups volunteered from cohorts of students registered at a post-1992 university MAEP to study part-time for CPD. It is only these MAESs themselves who know their own experiences and from whom lessons can be learned. This was the key factor in deciding that no other stakeholders, such as employers, providers, curricula developers or

deliverers, in the MAEP would be necessary to answer the research questions. The programme is open to professionals within settings ranging from early years to lifelong learning as teachers, lecturers, trainers and mentors. Some are newly qualified, some are experienced and hold senior posts; some hold first degrees; others have achieved access to teaching qualifications through vocational routes; some hold roles where teaching is the prime function, and for others education is very much a secondary function of their main employment, for example nurses. There are men and women of all ages appropriate to being employed within these diverse teaching and learning contexts.

The characteristics of the final participants met with the original intentions to have as an eclectic group as possible and, thereby, reflect the nature of the MAEP. Data was collected from, among others, a primary school head teacher; primary school teachers; an early years practitioner; secondary school head of department; a special education needs coordinator; HE practitioners; a self-employed consultant for school CPD; a local authority trainer; a health service employee working also as an associate lecturer in Further Education (FE) to deliver a professional qualification. The diversity of the resulting participants was appropriate in reflecting the diversity of the cohort including gender balance. This diversity and gender balance has had no negative consequences on the validity or reliability of the research. Wellington (2000) would categorise this sample as a non-probability, purposive sample. Patton (2015:46) confirms the appropriateness of this approach when he argues for seeking data from individuals who are '… information rich …' and '… informative …' about the focus of the study in which they are involved.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

3.5.1 Introduction

The original intention had been to collect data over one year from a series of three Focus Group Interviews (FGIs) with the same participants. This was not possible as so many students had achieved master's credits in previous awards and qualifications. Additionally, students were at different phases of study within the MAEP and were not travelling together through the programme. Therefore, two FGIs comprising a mix of participants as explained in Section 3.4 above were held. The FGIs and semi-structured individual interviews (SIIs) did take place at a point in the programme that is pivotal for all students and that was at the completion of the Evidence Based Practice module when students were working on their assignments. This module had a reputation for challenging even the most capable of students and, therefore, in this respect all students shared the same recent and demanding experiences on the programme. In a bid to achieve a more immediate response about ongoing experiences a series of four email questions (EMQs), spread out over one year of study, to two groups each of ten students was used. Appendix 3 summarises data collection methods and numbers of participants.

To decide which data collection methods to use a review of literature revealed that commonly used methods for this type of study included FGs or FGIs and semi-structured, face to face individual interviews (SIIs) (for example: Tobbell et al, 2008; Blair et al, 2010; Hulse and Hulme, 2012; Chan, 2014 and more recently: Jaber, 2017 and Turner and Tobbell, 2017). Tobbell et al (2008) also collected data through email diaries and Jaber (2017) used Skype as a medium for face to face interviews.

I initially invited prospective participants in person during my own and colleagues' lectures and then followed up this invitation by email. I explained the research; gave opportunity for any initial questions from students and urged them to respond to a follow up email should

they wish to participate. From those students who volunteered to participate it was possible for me to hold two FGIs each with five participants, a number appropriate to Morgan (1988) recommendations. Bloor, Frankland, Thomas and Robson (2001) suggest over recruiting to ensure sufficient participants on the day and warn against too many in the group because of the difficulties of transcribing data; Barbour (2007:59) suggests that there is no '… magic number …' but recommends a maximum of eight and reminds the reader that each member of the group should have opportunity to voice their comments. After the implementation of the FGIs; five more students agreed to participate in SIIs. Two groups, each of ten students, agreed to respond to a series of four sets of email questions (EMQs) spaced over the period of one academic year. Five respondents in the first group and three respondents in the second group answered at least some EMQs.

3.5.2 The Focus Group Interviews and Individual Interviews: Common Ground

Both the FGIs and all the SIIs were conducted face to face at a time and private location within the university which had been agreed with all parties. The structure of both FGIs (App 4) and all the SIIs (App 5) followed the same pattern; ground rules were loosely defined in terms of the amount of time allocated and order of proceedings to allow for flexibility if required. Informed consent forms (App 1) were distributed, although these had previously been forwarded by email, and signed responses collected from participants; standard ethical considerations were covered within the consent forms and this is discussed further in the section on Ethical Considerations. As suggested by Wellington (2000) other information for the participants included why they were invited to contribute to the research and how long the process would take. Participants were invited to ask questions, none of significance were forthcoming on any occasion and I gave them the chance to change their minds about participating, but no one declined the opportunity. I used both an audio recorder and my smart phone as a back-up as suggested by Morris (2015) and this proved to be very useful during the first FGI when the audio recorder had not been switched on correctly. All

recordings were of very good quality with very few words inaudible. My intention to take key hand-written reference notes along the way did not happen during the FGIs as my engagement with the discussions took precedence. However, there was more opportunity for noting significant comments during the SIIs and this was a great bonus when neither recording device was successful for one of the interviews (App 6).

The use of pre-prepared open questions (App 4 and App 5) provided a balance between allowing respondents to range across a wide area of comment and yet provided focus for their comment. This technique also offered opportunity for my supplementary, probing questions to be included for purposes of clarification and for following up any unexpected departures on the part of the participants. The nature of the questions was carefully considered in terms of their relationship to the research aims as well as whether they may be leading; understandable or make assumptions, but at the same time allowing for the voice of the participants to come through.

I was conscious of the potential for my 'guilty' insider-researcher knowledge (Williams 2010) which might have led me to challenge participants and, therefore, take me out of my researcher role. Having said that, as a practitioner-researcher and insider-researcher of an interpretivist study it is acknowledged that I am unavoidably part of my research (Drake and Heath 2011). My position of PL could also have led to issues of power and intimidate some participants, however, I worked to build a positive relationship with participants outside and within the interview context. Also, on a professional level several of the participants held more senior roles to myself in their own organisations – I believe there was no negative effect on data collection in relation to power issues. Power issues and researcher bias and subjectivity are acknowledged and discussed further in the section on Power and Insider-Researcher Issues below.

It was important to build rapport with the participants (Gubrium and Holstein 2002). Certainly, the face to face situation offered a personal ambience and provided an encouraging environment in allowing participants to fully make known their situated, or tacit, knowledge. Matthews and Ross (2010) believe that this gives depth and richness to the data. There was no intended coercion brought to bear by me on students to participate and as 'experts' in the context of the data collection they were able to share their understandings with each other and me in the FGIs and with me in the SIIs and EMQs. Of course, it is impossible for me to know the real reasons for their participation. I was mindful of Morris' (2015) concerns about the degree of sensitivity of the interview content. My research has not been sensitive in terms of deeply personal issues such as with HIV or abusive relationships. However, the data does reveal that becoming a MAES can be an emotional experience and asking participants to reflect on their experiences could have triggered such emotions.

I worked hard to adopt an informal, yet purposeful approach and was mindful to use verbal, and non-verbal, language that would not influence participants' responses. In this manner, I aimed to avoid any bias which would have negatively affected the validity of the data. On reflection it was not only the students in transition as I too had to transition between my professional role and interviewer conducting research. Although Blair et al (2010:7) had concerns about interviewees being able to give '… honest, balanced self-review and analysis …' when asked to look back on previous experiences, as with Turner and Simon's (2013:13) participants, I believe my participants were '… able to articulate cogently and powerfully …'. The data transcripts (App 7) confirm that I did not constrain the conversation beyond being mindful of time and purpose. I took on the role of active listener as far as possible and aimed to notice both what was said and how it was said. If I was alerted to any ambiguities or contradictions in the participant's response I clarified these using further questions. The participants, of course, were at liberty to seek clarification about questions from me and each other.

At the end of the FGIs and SIIs participants were thanked for their time and valuable contributions. Cousin (2009) champions the use of summarising the discussion with participants to allow for amendments and clarification to be made. In line with Cousin (2009) time was offered for participants' personal reflections on the process and they were invited to make further comments, retract or amend anything that had transpired. Participants' right to withdraw was reiterated at the end of the sessions.

3.5.3 Focus Groups Interviews: Rationale

FGIs were chosen because according to Punch (2009:147) a group interview, such as a focus group, can bring out '… aspects of the situation that might not otherwise be exposed.' and stimulate participants to make '… explicit their views, perceptions motives and reasons.'. There were two FGIs which provided a time effective opportunity to gain the voice of as many participants as possible.

Cousin (2009:52) claims that research into Higher Education (HE) students' experiences is an example of where focus groups can be applied and celebrates the richness of data achieved from the '… group dynamic …'. She sees that the process of co-constructing knowledge within a focus group leads to development of '… understandings rather than truth seeking.' which is in keeping with the constructivist methodological approach chosen for this research. Another example of this is discussed by Wall (2001) in her research into the use of focus groups with undergraduates where she finds four key reasons to justify their use. Two of these are mirrored in this research in that (a) the students belong to a group studying the same programme at the same university and (b) the outcomes of the research should be of interest to both the researcher and the participants. Indeed, data derived from the debriefing that Wall (2001:27) set up to determine participants' experience of the focus group process indicated that it had been a '… useful exercise …' and that discussions had

been '… constructively critical …'; participants felt able to '… express their views in a safe non-threatening environment.'.

Wall (2001) anticipated that the requirement for students to attend a focus group in addition to attending classes might lead to reluctance to participate. There was no requirement for MAESs to participate in this research; they volunteered, but the timing of the FGIs dovetailed with lectures and this undoubtedly helped recruitment as did the experience of a process that they too would be involved in for their own research study.

3.5.4 Focus Group Interviews: Implementation

The FGIs commenced with me introducing myself in the context of this research; I explained the purpose of the study and ethical framework (App 4) and we agreed ground rules such as avoidance of talking over another speaker (Cousin 2009) anonymity and confidentiality. Participants in Wall's (2001) research expressed concerns about confidentiality, but this can never be truly resolved where a group of individuals share confidences. I then invited each of the group to introduce themselves. Although participants were studying the same module, this was used as an ice breaker as recommended by (Morris 2015) and a genuine getting to know each other activity. Having completed the initial data gathering activity the FGI commenced; Morgan (1988) suggests that as few as two broad questions for an unstructured group could be sufficient to stimulate a discussion and generate the necessary data. I used more than the recommended two, but they were phrased in such a way to generate '… relatively uninhibited discussion that tends to be a feature of focus groups …' as discussed by Barbour (2005:39). The questions also allowed participants to share a '… range of opinions, perceptions [and] feelings …' in line with Krueger and Casey's (2015:21) claims that focus group interviews which lead to emergent ideas.

I was mindful of issues that might arise during execution of the FGIs, for example, as noted by Wall (2001) the dominant member who may take control of the discussion and the dynamics of the group creating a need in participants to conform with each other. Chioncel et al (2003) and Barbour (2007) also consider this need to conform to what others believe, identified by them as groupthink, as the counterpart to obtaining information about individual perceptions. Generally, there was consensus within the groups, though the interview approach to conducting the FGIs went some way to mitigate for group think and a dominant voice coming through. The group setting and turn taking seemed to mitigate for any one participant being overwhelmed by another as Arksey and Knight (1999) suggest can occur when they discuss paired interviews. Interestingly, the idea of imposter syndrome (Clance and Imes 1978), did come through in the data, however, this was not confined to the female participants. Wall (2001) reflects on the significance of the facilitator's, or moderator's, role in terms of the power relationship with participants that could distort the data and the management of focus group dynamics mentioned above. On the other hand, Barbour (2007) sees an advantage here for focus groups in that the strength in the group dynamic can balance the power relationship. Having anticipated that stronger voices may present during the FGIs it was interesting to note that in the event these stronger voices had their own stories to tell and their influence in the groups seemed more about giving authority for others to speak about their situations rather than subdue them. The transcripts (App 8) also reveal that participants felt able to engage in conversation with each other in response to my questions; thus, offering more considered responses.

Cousin (2009) reminds moderators that periods of silence should be allowed and that there is data in the gaps as well as the content; this did not arise to any noticeable degree in my FGIs perhaps because of the almost turn taking approach adopted by the participants. It may have been this factor that contributed to participants not initially engaging in discussion with each other. This was understandable, but towards the end of both FGIs the participants (and probably myself) relaxed sufficiently for deeper interaction to occur which,

as found by Morgan (1988), contributed to rich data being returned. Some useful insights about their learning experiences was generated and the data was revealing, detailed, personal and honest (examples can be found throughout the Presentation of Findings chapter). Kirk and Miller (1986) suggest that participants' knowledge of themselves could be distorted by their needs to comply with, or by their adoption of, imposed external messages and this is taken account of in the data analysis. It was noticeable that some of the younger, less experienced participants were less keen to contribute. I overcame this reticence by inviting such individuals, by name, back into the discussion and giving time at the end of the FGIs for further comment. The anticipated one hour, recommended by Cousin (2009), was necessary with both groups overrunning slightly. Transcripts are available for review on request.

3.5.5 Semi-Structured Individual Interviews: Rationale

Braun and Clarke (2013:77) suggest that the most '… familiar …' data collection method in qualitative research is one to one interviews and Morris (2015:1) concurs with this by claiming that it is a '… powerful way to gather data.'. Pring (2000:39) sees interviewing as '… the answer to the problems …' arising in qualitative research through using observations and surveys which do not get to the individual's '… consciousness and intentions [which] are the significant factors in explaining why things happen as they do.'. In other words, interviews allowed participants to bring their own unique insights and reflections to the research though, as recognised by Lahiff (2005:5) when she quotes Scott 1996, it is accepted that '… reflecting back on experiences may attract a certain amount of 'post-hoc rationalisation'.'. This concurs with Morris (2015:13) who empathises with the interviewer as someone who '… can only [try] their professional best … to reflect reality.' and who '… can never be totally sure [to] have succeeded.'.

I conducted five in-depth SIIs, one of which was via Skype; one at a workplace and one at the participants home to overcome the problem of travel for the participants; all interviews occurred after the FGIs and adopted a typical interview format. I chose the semi-structured approach over a structured or unstructured approach because, as Morris (2015) comments, they are more conversational with more scope for the participant voice than the structured approach and unstructured were unnecessary as I had a focus in mind. Face to face could be used with a questionnaire type interview, but the structured and constraining nature of this approach could detract from the rich data (Maxwell 2005) which is such an advantage of the qualitative approach.

3.5.6 Semi-Structured Individual Interviews: Implementation

Following the FGIs, I conducted SIIs with the aim of allowing individuals space to tell their personal stories in more depth than possible during the FGIs. The SIIs also provided opportunity for me to consolidate and even identify further themes and I began each interview with an open invitation to participants to talk about their experiences of the journey in becoming a MAES (App 5). I wanted to maintain a similar focus to that of the FGIs, but the data from the FGIs generated some new thinking for me and I used additional probing questions to find out if the SII participants shared similar experiences, for example the effects on participants' others and their attitudes to study and learning. This is an example of how I was engaging in reflexivity during the data collection period. I also probed deeper where I felt there may be more to come or on areas that sparked an interest in me. In this respect some questions were focused in a specific direction, though I aimed to be neutral. I was happy for interviewees to range across their experiences, understandings and perceptions as I felt that, whilst they may deviate from what I anticipated in their answers, everything they offered would have importance for them and, therefore, would be important for my research. I actively listened and used non-verbal cues to encourage interviewees if they became reticent – it was important that they understood that there

were no wrong answers. Research similar to this (Tobbell et al, 2008; Blair et al, 2010; Hulse and Hulme, 2012; Chan, 2014 and more recently: Jaber, 2017 and Turner and Tobbell, 2017) includes interviews ranging from thirty-five to ninety minutes, on average mine took approximately fifty minutes and so are in keeping with previous research.

The Skype interview took on the same format and process as the other SIIs, though a little longer. I believe this participant was also more relaxed and reflexive than the others and more prepared to dig deeper. This may have resulted from the participant being in their own environment and feeling more in control (Morris 2015), however, it may have been to do with the nature of their personal philosophical outlook and much the same data may have developed had the interview taken place in person. We had an excellent internet connection throughout which otherwise could have diminished the quality of the data collected. Transcripts are available for review on request.

3.5.7 Email Questions: Rationale

For their research on transitions into postgraduate study Tobbell et al (2008) asked participants to maintain an email diary which formed the basis for follow up, face to face interviews. Morris (2015), however, focuses on the use of emails as a medium for interviews. He claims several advantages in this respect, for example time and location convenience, economy, and removes issues that might arise around class or gender, etc. My initial aim was to gain data at four points in one academic year from 10 participants in a bid to gain ongoing and more immediate reflections than otherwise might be gained from the data gathered from other participants on one occasion. Accounting for the constraints of the students who held full time professional posts and who may work or live at a distance from the university made the use of emails an appropriate data collection method. Email questions offered the potential convenience of responding at relative leisure, at a time and

in a place of their own choosing. As responses to EMQs proved disappointing I invited a second group of 10 students to engage in this process, the limitations of this data collection strategy are discussed more in sections 3.5.8 and 3.10.

More recently James (2017) successfully used email interviews in an exploration of the lives and identities of colleague academics and, as with my rationale for using this medium, it offered her participants time and space '… to think and make sense of their experiences …' (James 2017:abstract). The process should allow participants more control about what they say, rather than the way it is said (Hardy and Bryman 2004) and according to James and Busher (2009) should provide the same type of data as would be expected from other types of interview. I had anticipated that as with James' (2017) participants, mine would engage in a reflexive process, though this is always more challenging through the process of writing. A clear advantage for me in using EMQs would be that I would not have to transcribe the data as that would be written by the participants.

3.5.8 Email Questions: Implementation

As with the FGIs and SIIs Information to Participants and Consent Forms were distributed to students and they gave their consent through email. The plan was to capture data at four specific points of the academic year - at the beginning, middle and end; this did not allow respondents the luxury of delaying replies in the way that James' (2017) participants enjoyed. Morris (2015) predicts the need for follow-up emails and warns that even with this tactic there is no guarantee of a response. Most of my initial group of 10 participants needed reminders to respond and it gradually became clear that most of them had silently taken advantage of their right to withdraw from further participation in the study. I continued with the depleted number of participants and commenced a second cycle of EMQs with a new cohort of students and ten new participants. However, the same story

unfolded, in the end five respondents from each group of EMQs contributed data (i.e. ten in total). Whilst James (2017) reports how her participants enjoyed returning to answer the email later when not busy; my participants seemed to move on with their other lives. However, the data gathered proved to reveal similar insights to the FGIs and SIIs, demonstrating Guest, Bunce and Johnson's (2006) findings about their research into saturation.

Data collection can go badly (Braun and Clarke 2013) and for Morris (2015) failed interviews are not uncommon and can result from lack of trust, fear or simply nothing to say. I had anticipated emails would give opportunity for respondents to give full, and lengthy, responses to my questions but I was frustrated and disappointed by unannounced withdrawals and sparse responses. In view of the difference between my experience of this method and the more positive experience promised by the literature I have reflected carefully on what could have gone wrong. I have found several possible factors to explain the problems and these could be useful for other researchers' consideration.

I had used the student email system rather than personal email addresses. The expected advantage for participants to control responses in their own time, also gave them freedom to disengage without feeling accountable. Unlike traditional interview situations the email context is devoid of '… normal social frameworks of face to face encounters …' (James 2017:10). Despite championing the email approach, James (2017) admits that something is missed without face to face interaction. Some of James' (2017) participants felt anxiety about whether their responses were adequate. The missing non-verbal cues, especially important for participants who may feel inexperienced in research, may have left them reticent about asking for help with their responses. One of James' (2017:13 punctuation as original) participants said, '… maybe in email communication clarification is not always easy???'.

Participants consented to receive and reply to four emails and I, therefore, felt it unethical to engage in an iterative process, as James (2017) had done, beyond reminders and resending EMQs. My plan to capture data at four specific points of study did not allow the luxury of delayed responses in the way that James' (2017) participants enjoyed. Since the time of the EMQs implementation I realise how reticent students are to answer emails perceived by them as irrelevant; for example, the Postgraduate Taught Experience Survey which is distributed by email, at best receives a 30 percent return on the master's programme of this study. The potential for questionnaire overload reflects intrusion into the lives of individuals who squeeze study tightly between personal and professional lives. If questions are too complex or there is too little or too much information given Morris (2015) warns that the opportunity for clarification is not so immediate as in the face to face context. Like my participants, James (2017) experienced slow or non-existent responses and her participants sometimes forgot to reply or lost the email thread; it is possible we both overestimated the extent to which participants normally engaged with email as an everyday means of communication. Finally, participants may have initially only agreed to participate to please me as their PL, seeing me as an authority figure rather than a co-producer of knowledge.

Interestingly, despite only one participant engaged with all four sets of EMQs and a second with just three, there has been much to gain from the EMQ data taken together with other data collected.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

3.6.1 Introduction

I considered the data analysis procedure as a necessary part of the planning and design stage of research as recommended by, for example, Punch (2007) and Maxwell (2005); as Wellington (2000:134) explains data analysis is part of the '… research cycle … it is formative, not summative.'.

When analysing the data, I was aware that my understandings, derived from my data, were based upon my interpretation of participants' own interpretations of their understandings. This could have given rise to some subjectivity on my part which may have led to a compromise in terms of my revealing the truth according to the participants' realities. However, this did enable me to interpret the data for application within the context in which the information would be used. This apparent compromise of what Maxwell (2005:106) terms '… 'objective truth' …' does not, again according to Maxwell (2005), detract from the usefulness or believability of a study. Cousin (2009) suggests that one way to be aware of researcher contributions to the data is to include these contributions when coding the data. However, Hopf (2004) explains that one of the challenges of qualitative and exploratory research is that accurate information may be difficult to achieve as the research can evolve, indeed grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1999) is based on this concept. Hopf (2004) also comments on how participants' understandings and interpretations of the information provided may differ from that intended and, therefore, they may not be as informed as either party believes.

For this research the determination to explore (Kirk and Miller 1986) understandings, reflections, ideas and meanings has led towards an inductive approach. Therefore, the data analysis strategy I adopted was based on Braun and Clarke's (2006 and 2013) thematic approach with aspects of a grounded theory in that I aimed to allow themes to emerge from

the data rather than begin with pre-determined themes. Thomas (2016) explains how induction, as would occur through the process of grounded theory, generates to theories. For Thomas (2016), however, the concept of abduction is more relevant to the case study framework. Thomas (2016) understands that theories are more tentative when ideas are generated through data collection based on complex relationships between the researcher and participants. He questions what or how much participants can truly reveal in the moment of data collection as they and the researcher interact with each other's interpretations. These interactions also occurred as I undertook the data analysis, and this reflects Thomas's (2016) acknowledgement that what might be accurate in the moment, may change in future contexts.

3.6.2 Data Analysis: Overview

As mentioned earlier in this section the data analysis strategy was based on Braun and Clarke's (2006 and 2013) approach to thematic analysis which, as acknowledged by them, has no specific rules and is open to an evolving and emerging process. During the process of data analysis, I recognised Wellington's (2000) prediction that my qualitative approach to data collection and analysis would not be straight forward due to the quantity and range of data generated by using open questions (Kvale 1996; Morgan 1988). I also acknowledged that issues can arise from researcher and participant interpretations (Maxwell 2005) and in line with Kirk and Miller's (1986) advise, I was careful to avoid selecting or rejecting data unfairly, so I transcribed the data verbatim. This enabled me to avoid assumptions to creep into my analysis and to account for all data, including gaps and non-reporting aspects which are both part of the unfolding story. I was also able to re-read the transcripts thoroughly several times. There was a short delay between the FGIs and transcribing the audio tapes, this proved to be most beneficial as the intervening period gave me opportunity for further literature review and reflection.

The SIIs, which took place after the FGIs, were transcribed more immediately after the interviews and the responses to the EMQs were reviewed as I received them. When discussing one to one interviews Kvale (1996) and Kirk and Miller (1986) suggest that contextual factors not able to be collected by the audio recorder should also be included in the transcription. Kvale (1996:170) suggests that decisions about the transcript style depend on how it will be used and that '… doing justice to the interviewees …' and thinking about the readers' needs are ways to think about the process.

As this research is not about the process of group interaction it may be argued that the non-verbal communication signals are not required data. However, I did note several incidents that seemed to be of interest, for example when there was some ironic laughter during one of the FGIs which indicated group agreement with the speaker (FG2:64) and this was useful in the data analysis process in bringing back to mind the actuality of the situation. The data collected through the FGIs and SIIs provided a wealth of insights and whilst the data from the EMQs was initially disappointing it terms of quantity, it did prove to be consistent with other data, but with some additional specific data in response to more specific questions asked, for example in relation to definitions of confidence.

3.6.3 Qualitative Data Analysis Procedure

In total there were fourteen transcripts (data items) deriving from the combined FGIs; SIIs and EMQs as presented in Appendix 10. An overview of the process of data analysis is described below and examples from each step are found in Appendix 11. More detailed examples of how developing ideas were hand-written and mind-maps created are available on request. As I became more confident in the process of data analysis and more familiar

with the data and themes that emerged, the procedure for each data item took a slightly different though similar approach.

Step 1

1. The transcripts were printed out in a two-column table with the right-hand column empty
2. I made hand written notes against the transcripts in the empty column to identify initial points of interest and codes

Step 2

1. I then undertook an exercise of compressing codes, so that common ideas were combined into one code and rejected others. I placed the resulting codes into a table against the relating data. I did feel reluctant to delete too many codes despite the number being generated and kept a miscellaneous section.
2. Codes were then attributed to initial themes

Step 3

1. The themes for each data item within a set were then combined and reduced
2. A summary of key themes was produced

Step 4

1. Finally, the themes for all three data sets were combined and further reduced in number again and these are presented in the Analysis of Findings and Discussion chapters.

3.7 QUALITY OF RESEARCH

Validity and reliability are contentious concepts in qualitative research. Maxwell (2005:105) argues that validity is a '… goal rather than a product …'; it '… can never be proven …' and is 'relative'; he sees validity in terms of how threats to the research are eradicated rather than in terms of methods of research. Thomas (2016:76 emphasis as original) goes so far as to claim that '… all forms of enquiry, especially social enquiry, produce knowledge that is *provisional …'* and, therefore, validity and reliability are not appropriate constructs for qualitative research. These arguments are driven by the acknowledgement that I and my participants are part of the same world being researched and, as Thomas (2016) points out about the qualitative case study framework, I have no intention to find out something specific to prove a point, rather I intend to find out what there is to know. This compromises total objectivity by inviting bias due to my subjectivity in data analysis and reactivity or reflexivity of the participants as they interact with me. Certainly, like James' (2017) experience, at the end of one of my FGIs a participant asked me if their data had been what I wanted. Cousins (2009:35) agrees and draws the following analogy

> Trying to make qualitative data analysis reliable in ways that wholly emulate quantitative data analysis is like trying to make apples taste like oranges.

Furthermore, regarding the concept of validity, Winters (2000) believes that this is out of place in qualitative research which is aligned with positivist epistemology. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that trustworthiness is a more appropriate concept than reliability and validity in qualitative research and that this could be tested by the four criteria of credibility,

transferability, dependability and confirmability. Each of these criteria is discussed below in the context of this research.

First, the question of research credibility as proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) has been addressed in several ways. I understand the culture, or context, of the case being researched in that I lead the MAEP; am involved with the participants as their lecturer; have, in the past, studied in the same circumstances and currently study at postgraduate level for CPD. Data was collected at different points in time; the participant group represented a range of perspectives as described earlier and my observation is that we maintained an appropriate relationship throughout the research procedure. There were opportunities to develop agreed understandings and co-construction of meanings. I aimed to keep my pre-conceptions at bay, for example, I did begin the study with the idea of tensions arising between the personal, professional and postgraduate identities, but realise now that where there are tensions there can be harmony too. Whilst a formal process of referential adequacy (Lincoln and Guba 1985) was not used, I would argue that the process of transcribing and analysing data throughout the period of data collection achieved the same result of comparing analysis to determine consistency of outcome. Peer debriefing and member checking were not considered a requirement in addition to the other credibility processes that took place as discussed above.

Kirk and Miller's (1986) analysis of validity and reliability in qualitative research is couched within ethnographical observations, however, their examples of incomplete and inaccurate data collection because of asking the wrong questions are transferable to all data collection contexts. To avoid confusions between participants and myself about easily acquired definitions and interpretations of terminology that may have locally accepted understandings I offered definitions, for example 'learning' in the EMQs (App 9). This is a reminder that data collected in qualitative research is based on participants' own perceptions of their socially constructed experiences and my honesty in the interpretations

of that data may be influenced by my own experiences, understandings and values. Aligned with this notion is that an advantage of using FGIs, as pointed out by Morgan (1988), is that participants received minimal direct input from me to stimulate the discussion as I used open question techniques and was prepared to allow participants to take control of discussion that arose. Of course, this meant more limited control regarding data generated and I had to achieve a balance between allowing participants to explore their ideas and reigning them in to keep focussed within the area of research. This also applied to the individual, though the FGIs also facilitated increased levels of participant control which probably alleviated some of the potential researcher power issues and thereby added to the trustworthiness of the process.

Second, the criterion of transferability of the research to other contexts has been established through the rigour and trustworthiness of the methodology so far as any limitations would allow. Transferability in quantitative studies would be thought of in terms of generalizability. Generalizability is a question of how far the outcomes of any research are '… true or relevant to the wider population or a different context.' (Matthews and Ross 2010). Considering the methodological approach, and the small sample, of this research generalizability is not an aim. Whilst it is acknowledged that generalizability is an important measure of research quality, (Matthews and Ross 2010) this type of limitation would be expected from an interpretivist approach (Wellington 2000) and when researching within one's own local context (Punch 2009) such as in this research. In addition, Maxwell (2005) considers that generalizability outside the context of the research is unlikely to be important in qualitative research and Thomas (2016) would agree with this in view of the case study framework of the research. However, it is hoped that lessons may be learned from this study locally and further afield. Therefore, transferability is sought and, in a bid, to determine that research has transferability I have presented a precise and detailed methodology in this section.

Lincoln and Guba's (1985) considerations of validity and reliability in qualitative research is echoed by Kirk and Miller (1986) when they advise that in some part avoidance of accidental circumstances can be achieved by careful recording of the methodology employed; explicit description of the process; identifying an appropriate sample; being careful to ensure that clarity about the focus of research is maintained during discussion and being aware that Results may be only part of the bigger picture, in short the perspective of the research should be clear throughout. The aim to achieve this is evidenced throughout this work. Moreover, the data has provided what is known as 'thick descriptions', by drawing out what participants think and feel. Thick description is a term commonly associated with Geertz (1973 cited by Thomas 2016) and according to Thomas (2016:234) '… captures the essence of interpretative analysis in its synthesis of reporting, reflecting and meaning making.'. It refers to that which is meaningful to the participants within their own contexts.

Third, regarding dependability (and there can be no credibility without dependability (Lincoln and Guba 1985)) I have offered a thorough record of my research process which would enable this research to be repeated.

For confirmability to be achieved the reader of the research should be able to track the analysis and the Results back to the data derived from the participants and be able to understand elements of researcher bias as would be expected in an interpretive methodology (Braun and Clarke 2013). In this research, notions of bias are inherent in the methodology; the challenge associated with interpretations between myself and my participants having already been discussed earlier in this chapter. Arksey and Knight (1999) have also alerted me to be mindful that the contexts in which the participants in the research find themselves can influence their reactions to questions. For example, messages deriving from participants' organisational culture could lead to distortion in their data; this could also apply to my approach in the data analysis process.

Finally, the strength of credibility and confirmability within my study is also increased by using a process of triangulation. As discussed by Braun and Clarke (2013), in this type of interpretivist study the intention behind triangulation is not to take me closer to the truth as would be the aim in a positivist study. For this study, the purpose of data triangulation is to give rigour to the data findings by decreasing the chance of error (Patton 1999) and, therefore, as suggested by Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe and Neville (2014) in their study on the use of triangulation in qualitative research, provide better insights to my area of interest.

The strategy of using different data collection methods relates to the credibility of the study (Patton 1999) since the benefits of one method has counteracted the limitations of the others (Shenton 2004). Patton (1999) emphasises that the purpose of using different methods is not to generate the same findings from each, but to see any inconsistences as opportunity for achieving the deeper insights I hoped for in my research. This method of triangulation is consistently supported by qualitative researchers (for example: Patton (1999); Shenton (2004); Flick (2007); Braun and Clarke (2013) and Carter et al (2014). My approach was to use three different methods of collecting data as summarised below and detailed previously in this methodology chapter:

- the email questions were quite structured but always with space for open comment. These allowed more opportunity for reflection and amendment on the part of the respondent and it was easier for the respondent to opt out of answering any questions or withdrawing from the study;
- The focus group interviews gave more opportunity for me to ask supplementary questions and gave opportunity for participants to help each other make meaning and explore ideas. Participants also had more power as a group which balanced their relationship with me and they could also contribute as much or as little as they wished;

- The interviews were more intimate and provided more opportunity for the individual voice. And, although, they were more subject to being influenced by me they were not influenced by other participants as might occur in the focus groups.

According to Shenton (2004) having participants with different characteristic types also contributes to triangulation and, therefore, the strength of credibility in research. In this study, whilst participants shared the challenge of developing a student identity in the context of master's study for continuing professional development, their different characteristics are demonstrated by each owning unique professional and personal identities.

Together, the triangulation of data collection methods and participants contributes to the confirmability of the study which, according to Shenton 2004, reduces my researcher bias.

Kirk and Miller (1986:14) believe objectivity is obtained in two ways firstly by disseminating research in a way that is '… accessible to others.' and secondly by reporting Results that stand up theoretically. Without a fundamentally honest approach within the data reporting the analysis of the research will fall – recognising, understanding and explaining the socially constructed situation of the qualitative research are all part of the researcher's route to this honest approach. An honest approach encompasses not only the standpoint of the participants, but also the researcher. It, therefore, follows that it is incumbent on me to adopt a reflexive stance; the understandings, ideas and expressions of the participants experiences that are revealed within my qualitative data are synthesised into meaning not only for me, but also for the participants and subsequent readers of the research. The potential is for an iterative process of developing meaning which reflects my aspiration to be honest – I believe that the steps I have taken do result in a trustworthy work.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When constructing my Request for Ethical Approval (App 1) I took account of the University's research policy and code of practice (2012, updated 2016 and 2018) and BERA (2011 updated 2018) guidance as well as other literature cited in this section. I followed the procedure for submitting my Request for Ethical Approval (App 1) by discussing my ideas and intentions with my allocated Tutor and submitted the completed document as part of my assessment for Philosophy and Practice of Research module. The Research Ethics Committee approval was confirmed on 2nd July 2013 (App 2).

Pring (2000:142) sees ethical dimensions to educational research as being

> … more concerned with the meaning and justification of moral considerations which underlie research, than it is with making any moral judgements.

This suggests that not only was there a responsibility on me to consider the ethical implications of each part of the research design to assure the strength of rigour of that design (Wellington 2000; Punch 2009); but, in response to Pring (2000), I questioned my own reasons for undertaking the research and undertaking it in a certain manner. Furthermore, I considered the relationships between myself and others involved in the research (Hopf 2004) such as participants and those on whom the outcomes of the research might affect, for example MAEP designers and implementers.

In educational research, key ethical considerations concern issues of voluntary participation, anonymity, confidentiality and informed consent (Wellington 2000; Hopf 2004; Punch 2009).

BERA (2011) provides guidelines about these considerations for researchers in education who are concerned with individual humans in unique contexts from whom personal data is collected. I, therefore, took careful account of these guidelines as well as the guidelines offered by my HEI which mirrors that of BERA and includes a well-developed ethical consent procedure. Some participants may also be required to take account of their organisational ethical guidance, (eg the National Research Ethics Service for the National Health Service), before committing to being involved in research, however, none of my participants fell into this category. In addition to this, there are the legal requirements of the country in which the research takes place, for example, in the case of the United Kingdom, the Data Protection Act 1998 is concerned with the protection of people's privacy and more recently legislation on the keeping of digital data. Regarding qualitative research, as in this case, ethical issues are particularly important (Wellington 2000) and more difficult to solve than when working with quantitative research (Hopf 2004). For example, it was not possible for me to guarantee absolute anonymity or confidentiality for participants in the FGIs since participants were familiar with each other as peers who were attending the same MA module and they certainly knew each other in some detail by the end of the meetings. As Punch (2009:50) maintains qualitative research '… often intrudes more …' into people's lives than quantitative research.

The guidelines and legislation referred to above are designed to protect the interests of all those concerned with any research. Pring (2000) explains that the principles and values from which the guidance derive must be applied to a range of different situations, therefore, the researcher's reflexive questioning lead to different decisions about how the guidance is used. My research posed no unusual ethical considerations and my approach to using the guidance is detailed below Wellington (2000:54 emphasis as in original) believes that '… the MAIN CRITERION for educational research is that it should be ethical.'.

The above two notions seemed to bring a pincer movement to bear on me as, although I could follow the utilitarian guidance provided, I believe that my research, as every other, is unique and resolving its specific ethical dilemmas was a process ultimately based on my own value judgements in applying that guidance ethically (Pring 2000; Drake and Heath 2011). I considered several ethical considerations including the nature of the participants; my relationship with the participants and the implications of these two factors when collecting data – much of this has already been considered above. Also considered were the potential implications and consequences that the outcomes of my research could have arising from any inadvertent or inappropriate revealing of participants contributions in the published research or in discussions with others. This issue was exacerbated in the context of FGIs when each participant is privy to each other's contributions. This was an example of how ethical issues can have impact on the whole study in that whilst individual participants within a FGI can stimulate each other's' ideas, they may also limit the openness of each other and in turn limit the integrity of the data. To go some way in overcoming the confidentiality and anonymity compromise, ground rules (Newby 2010) were drawn up and agreed at the commencement of each FGI. This process, according to Barbour (2007:80) is 'essential'. Similarly, the interview participants were assured of the confidential nature of our conversation and that anonymity would be assured in the writing up of the research. So far as the EMQs were concerned, I advised respondents to use a predetermined formula to create a personal code which I attached to their responses to aid data management. I separated their consent forms which connected their personal code and identity from their data.

As my study was not concerned with illegal activity (BERA 2018:7), nor was it a '… case of social significance which [could] not be uncovered in other ways …' (Economic and Social Welfare Council, 2015) there was no reason to employ covert methods within the research and I was able to present myself exactly as I am. The process of informed consent was employed (BERA 2011) to provide participants with information sufficient for them to understand the study and their place within it. I requested participant consent to use their

data, including direct quotes from their transcript, in the submitted research and possibly in subsequent published work; this was formalised by way of their signatures. It was essential that I was clear about the kind of responses I should make in circumstances where, through the data collection process, knowledge is revealed about situations that could cause harm to others. Whilst the audience for the outcomes of this research is likely to comprise educationalists interested in postgraduate study rather than the public there could be implications for the employing institutions of the participants and the MA provider institution; the participants within their employment or even personal relationships.

Tooley and Darby (1998) details several examples of educational research where the researcher has over interpreted the data, for example, in one case a teacher's observations of children are interpreted unfairly as being racist. I was careful to be mindful and open about my own position and values to avoid the type of pitfall noted in the former example. Opportunities which gave rise to the latter type of disclosure were avoided by using carefully phrased questions; asserting control on the direction of the conversation and my reflexivity during data analysis. The students also seemed mindful of these aspects, which on reflection could have created some barriers to complete openness of discussion; it has to be borne in mind that my questions were designed to generate data about their experiences and 'others' were very influential in these experiences. In the event, nothing was revealed about their peers in study or my colleagues in the programme team which caused me unreasonable concern (or for that matter inflated comfort) beyond those that, as incoming PL, I am alerted to via the normal feedback channels.

Permission to invite the MAESs to participate in the research was, in the first place, obtained from my line manager as gatekeeper to the programme. Maxwell (2005:82) describes a gatekeeper as being able to '… facilitate or interfere with your study …' which reflects another aspect of ethical tension regarding confidentiality and anonymity (Pring 2000). For example, a line manager may become privy to participants' names and thus compromising

anonymity or even confidentiality if data in the final publication is recognised. In addition, negotiation with gatekeepers may modify aspects of the original intentions of the research (Pring 2000); for example, gatekeepers may allow only certain participants known to hold the views favoured by such a gatekeeper (Morris 2015). In the case of this research, there was absolutely no such interference or manipulation, only support. Once permission to contact the potential participants had been granted and the sample group identified informed consent (App 1) was obtained from each participant before they took part in the research. There was no intention to deceive in this research. But the intention of informed consent is to ensure participants have clear information about the research aims and purpose and what they will be invited to do as participants in the research. Details provided included: time required; the audio recording procedure; the anticipated frequency of EMQs; their rights and their responsibilities as participants. All of this should protect all parties to the research by giving participants choice about taking part and their right to withdraw; it also conveys to the participants some responsibility in knowing what they are committing and agreeing to (BERA 2018). Competency of adults should be considered, but I felt safe in my assumption that postgraduate students as participants are capable of understanding and engaging with the process which indeed mirrors what they themselves would be likely to undertake at some stage of their studies. The letter of informed consent also indicated the measures I took to ensure maximum anonymity and the confidentiality of data. This, and participants' responsibilities to each other, were reiterated during the debrief after each of the data collection activities.

All digital and paper-based data derived from communications between myself and the participants have been securely stored and backed up on a secure memory stick. Associated emails can only be accessed using my work place password. The data will be disposed of after the research has ended; the university audio devices used for recording interviews were cleaned and returned immediately after transcription in line with University policy. The transcribed data has been used only for extracting data to inform the research. Whilst anonymity within a FGI does have some limitations, I have mitigated for this by using ground

rules as discussed above and reference codes are used in the Findings and Discussion sections to replace FGI, SSI and EMQ participants' names. However, in the context of the FGIs, participants will naturally know who has provided what data and whilst all participants agreed to the ground rules, I am not able to absolutely guarantee anonymity outside the writing up of my research. I have not discussed participants, in the context of this study, with anyone; their right to privacy is assured though the measures taken during the research in terms of confidentiality, anonymity and informed consent (BERA 2018). Whilst the data being gathered is personal I did not perceive any data gathering process to be harmful to participants. I assured this by, in line with ethical guidance (BERA 2018 and ESRC 2015), informed consent, including right to withdraw, and I aimed to create a non-threatening atmosphere to ensure participants felt relaxed rather than under pressure. I have been mindful not to reveal anything in the submission which could lead the source of any quotations being revealed to others who read the final study. Data collected has been for research purposes only and participants are aware that they may request a copy of the final analysis.

There is no reason for participants to be harmed physically or psychologically, though breach of confidentiality could be harmful as considered above. However, it is acknowledged that there may be circumstances where individual participants may have been at risk of low-level emotional harm. For example, interviews could stimulate participants' reflections on professional or personal pressures which, when combined with study, are causing stress. Steps to overcome this were the informed consent; debriefing; participants' right to withdraw and my willingness to stop face to face interactions should such stress be detected. In the event, no such stress was observed by myself, nor reported by participants. On the other hand, there may be benefits arising for participants as they become self-aware of aspects that may be contributing to any stresses experienced during their studies. Wall (2001) in her study using focus groups with undergraduates found that their chief criticism of the study was the lack of benefits to them. The potential benefits to my participants of increased self-awareness resulting from this study could increase their autonomy within

their learning contexts; opportunity to experience a research process that they may be able to apply and knowledge that they have contributed to programme development for future cohorts. As PL for these participants, I do have additional responsibilities and was mindful that during data collection I may have been alerted to matters associated with this role. As it was, only matters that I was already familiar with arose and I did take time to respond to one participant who asked for programme advice. I felt that this short deviation from the interview focus was justified to reassure the participant and facilitate the continued conversational style that we had established. An unexpected issue that did arise from Wall's (2001) use of focus groups was that students not involved in the study felt left out. There was no indication that this was the case with MAESs, certainly they all were offered the opportunity to be involved.

3.9 REFLECTION ON POWER AND INSIDER-RESEARCH ISSUES

Although power and insider-research issues have been mentioned throughout this Methodology chapter, this section offers a more focussed reflection. Many of the participants were aware of me as an incoming PL to their MAEP; others more recently enrolled to the programme thought of me as an established PL and some knew me, prior to data collection, as a lecturer for one of their modules. At the time of data collection there was no indication that I would be involved in any future assessments for these participants; however, during later academic years I did become responsible for marking an assignment for two participants. My roles, therefore, placed me in a position of power along with which comes responsibility and I have exercised my responsibility in several specific ways as exemplified in this section and commented on throughout this Methodology chapter.

My ethical approach in conducting research is in line with BERA (2011) guidance and expanded on in Section 3.8. All participants volunteered to engage with this research; gave informed consent and have the right to withdraw from the study. I arranged the FGIs to dovetail with lectures anticipating that this would be at a time and in a place most convenient and accessible to participants. I was led by SII participants preferences of time and place to meet, for example I visited a workplace and held evening interviews. EMQ respondents had total freedom about when, where and how to respond. Interestingly, this has brought into focus that subtle aspects of power may have been felt by FGI and SII participants when contrasting the numbers of respondents who opted out of completing all four sets of EMQs to the nil withdrawals from the FGIs and SIIs.

During the data collection I was mindful that participants could have negated their own ideas in favour of what they believed I wanted to hear which could have led me to fulfilling my own predetermined predictions for the study (Mercer 2007). My personal notes from the time of the FGIs do reveal how nervous I felt as so much depended on the data to be collected. It is conceivable that participants sensed this and modified their responses to ensure the event worked for me. To alleviate for this, I used pre-prepared, open questions and worked hard not to become overly conversational during the FGIs and SIIs in case of revealing my own personal views. The transcripts reveal that where aspects of a more conversational style have occurred (for example FG1:124, FG2:70; V3:107-110; V5:115-222) this allowed me to demonstrate empathy and interest and, thereby, encourage participants to articulate their experiences further. Additionally, I allowed participants to answer questions in their own way without pressure or being hurried. The power of the participants themselves as holders of the knowledge and specific experience I required for my research goes some way to balance any perceived power I may have over them (Haughey 2007).

I have been faithful to participants words and the contexts of these words by referring to the transcripts and coding process when presenting and interpreting the Findings. Therefore, whilst acknowledging the inevitable subjectivity in qualitative research, this has gone someway to help me avoid imposing my own personal experience (Mercer 2007) into the interpretations. However, it is interesting to note that Drake (2010) found a significant difference of her interpretation of transcripts after time lapse revealing how researcher positionality does effect interpretation.

I have also been mindful of my insider position as part of the organisation, PL of the MAEP and as someone who has previously and is currently studying part-time for a postgraduate award as part of my CPD. However, as Hanson (2013) found in her role as HE Manager, I am not positioned as expert by participants as only they can be expert in their own experiences. I do acknowledge that the degree of my insider-ness could create implications in the light of my close relationship to the study. For example, I could miss some obvious, but critical aspects in the data and be bias in interpreting data in a way that brings to bear my own personal experiences. This has been a constant consideration leading me into a reflexive approach about managing the data in as neutral a way as possible yet being aware that much of it has applied to my own personal circumstances at some time or another. This leads me to acknowledge that imposing my own personal experience cannot be fully avoided despite employing strategies described in this Chapter. On the other hand, being an insider has enabled me to grasp something of the participants' contexts which may not otherwise have been understood (Mercer 2007), for example the diversity of progression routes through master's credit accumulation. There are challenges as an insider, for example, the question remains about how, as PL, I would have responded to any problematic disclosures about members of my team. Hanson (2013) also reveals that tensions between professional and researcher role can arise. However, I anticipated these roles would be complementary and contribute to my, and other stakeholders, ability to fulfil our professional roles more effectively.

3.10 LIMITATIONS

The unpredictability of interpretative studies and the use of a case study framework create limitations for those who wish to see generalisation as an outcome of research. A further natural limitation of this type of research occurred when analysing the data. I was aware that my understandings, derived from my data, were based upon my interpretation of participants' own interpretations of their understandings. This would have given rise to some subjectivity on my part which may have led to a compromise in terms of my revealing the truth according to the participants' realities as discussed in Section 3.9. However, this is all expected in qualitative research and the quality section of this chapter explores how I have addressed the issues

The participants all volunteered to take part in the research, though Vahasantanen (2016) was concerned that the voluntary nature of her participants may be a limitation in terms of representativeness of the participant group. For this research, there was homogeneity in that participants all studied the same programme as part-time students for purposes of CPD and there was diversity in terms of individual contexts and journeys within the MAEP both these aspects assured full representation of the full cohort of students.

I was alert to the fact that the timing of the FGIs, and SIIs, fell at a time when participants had just completed a core module renowned as being perhaps the most challenging of the programme. This may have given the data a more negative story than might have occurred at another juncture or range of junctures in the programme. But, by the same token, at whatever point in study the data was collected there would be some influence on the data. For the SII participants there was more distance from this module and for the EMQ

respondents this did not arise at all, therefore, a range of circumstances existed. The range of participant experience on the programme is also a feature as, due to the nature of the programme design, very few, if any, students would have studied the same selection of modules up to that point.

The data collected from the EMQs was initially disappointing in terms of quantity as several participants in EMQs dropped out very quickly. The purpose of the EMQs was that of a cross-sectional method, or 'snapshot' (Cohen et al et al 2011:267), to track developing perceptions about experiences at differing points in time during the programme of study i.e. at commencement of study; mid-way through and towards the end of the programme. Nevertheless, the data collected, together with the other data collected from the FGIs and SIIs, had features described by Braun and Clarke (2013:336) as 'thick description' and 'rich data'. This provided me with useful participant experiences when they went below the surface of their experiences with '… detailed, complex and contradictory accounts …', (Braun and Clarke, 2013:336) allowing me to develop a deep understanding of becoming a master's student. I had no concerns about what Gorard (2001) calls gaps in the sample since participants in both the FGIs and SIIs reflected on their experience of the year and together the data items took on a similar profile of responses.

This concurs with the outcomes of a study into the idea of saturation undertaken by Guest, et al (2006). In the abstract to their paper they define saturation as '… the point at which no new information or themes are observed in the data.' thus, taking a more global view of the term than Glaser and Strauss (1999) who view saturation in a more specific way to do with how to analyse data in a purely grounded theory approach. Guest et al (2006) undertook a detailed analysis of their coding and theming of 60 in-depth interviews. They found that having analysed twelve transcripts, further analysis generated only infrequent new themes and analysis of six interview transcripts would have been sufficient to generate '…

meaningful themes and interpretation …' Guest et al (2006:78). Kvale (2007) concurs and claims that fifteen plus or minus 10 interviewees are sufficient.

3.11 CONCLUSIONS

Pring (2000:29) is clear about his assertions that the nature of education is complex and, perhaps because of that complexity, much research into education is '… dismissed as of poor quality.' a statement which strongly reflects the Tooley Report (Tooley and Darby 1998). It has, therefore, been necessary for me to take the steps recounted above to ensure that my research is of the highest quality possible. To answer the questions of this research context an exploration of people's experiences and viewpoints was required. The knowledge derived from the research is, therefore, the outcome of an interpretivist paradigm. This chapter has justified why qualitative data has been appropriate and how ethical considerations have been addressed. A reflection on my own position regarding the research and its participants has been presented in a bid to mitigate issues arising from being an insider-researcher and resulting implications for both myself and others connected with the research. A detailed plan of the process has been presented to justify the proposals and demonstrate my anticipation of any aspects of the plan that could have compromised the ultimate quality or trustworthiness of the outcomes. Ethical considerations were made, based on BERA (2011) guidance; qualitative research literature and examples of research conducted in comparative ways to my research. I recognised that the research process is an iterative one and, therefore, throughout the research each aspect of the planning has been revisited as it developed to ensure that any changes in approach were followed through at each stage.

4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The following research questions of specific relevance to the research have been raised by the literature review:

1. How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university perceive their motivations for becoming a MAES?
2. How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university experience transition in becoming a MAES?
3. What are the implications and consequences of the journey to becoming a part-time MAES undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university?

Table 1 below presents the over-arching themes and sub-themes arising from the findings and provides a summary of how these respond to the above questions.

Table 1: Summary of Findings

OVERARCHING THEMES	**SUB-THEMES**	**OVERLAPS; RELATIONSHIPS; CONTRADICTIONS AND ANOMALIES**
Motivation for becoming a MAES **RQ1**	• Chance or timing? • Satisfying personal needs • Satisfying professional demands • Networking	Motivation naturally prompts enrolment to study for the MA Education. However, motivations are rarely straightforward. One common factor is the lack of participant reporting on wider political aspects that drive education and, therefore, underpin their motivations. This is despite study aspirations always relating to professional ambitions; there is only infrequent reference to intrinsic motivation.
Feelings and emotions **RQ2, RQ3**	• Anticipating becoming a MAES • Experiencing the MAEP • About others • Imposter feelings • Peaks and troughs in self-esteem	Emotions play a contradictory part in the process of becoming an MAES. As study progresses, both negative and positive feelings are expressed. There is a definite tendency for improved self-

Learning **RQ2, RQ3**	• Skills, qualities and strategies • Practicalities • Implications of time • Achieving goals • New understandings	esteem/confidence in the context of postgraduate student and, to a lesser extent, in the personal and professional contexts. MAESs place their personal or professional selves before their postgraduate student self which reduces the opportunity to develop depth of understanding about what it is to be a master's student. This possibly influences the finding that there can be a secretive element to study and that, whilst sometimes desired, communities of practice are absent. Novel time management strategies are adopted as coping mechanisms. Surface learning approaches are often employed to get through study and yet, there is evidence of transformative learning and consequently a degree of postgraduate identity formation.
Others **RQ2 and RQ3**	• Complementing or confounding	
Self **RQ2, RQ3**	• Projections of self as MAES • Reflections on self – Challenge and Growth	

4.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

Summary of participant group members: The participants in this research represented the diversity of the whole cohort in terms of their study pattern and background contexts; they were homogenous in that all were studying part-time for purposes of CPD.

Summary of Data Collection: The construction of the MAEP dictated the characteristics of the participant group composition. Those involved in the FGIs and SIIs were just completing the same module – though they were not in the same group for that module nor had they experienced the same on-programme route to that module. Four sets of email questions (EMQs) were distributed over the period of one academic year to two groups of 10 respondents. Only one respondent completed all sets of questions and one respondent completed three and a detailed summary of responses is available in Appendix 12.

Summary of Data Analysis Strategy: The approach to the qualitative data analysis is based on Braun and Clark's (2006 and 2013) approach to thematic analysis, an approach acknowledged as having no specific rules and open to an evolving and emergent process. The data analysis confirms that saturation of data has been achieved with similar themes emerging sufficient for meaningful interpretation. More directed questions were asked through the EMQs (App 9) which, as expected, revealed some additional and different data that had a more explicit tone, especially around the characteristics of confidence.

Summary of Themes Presented in Findings: Five overarching themes (Motivation, Emotions and Feelings, Self, Others and Learning) have emerged with a varying number of sub-themes relating to each overarching theme (Table 1 P97). As would be expected from an

interpretive case study, the data was dynamic with resulting themes overlapping and being closely interrelated. Whilst maintaining focus on the overarching aspects of becoming a MAES during data collection I had allowed some freedom in the participants answers to encourage breadth of data. Therefore, as numerous themes emerged during analysis, I had to choose the most relevant in response to the research question. The themes chosen reflect the pivotal stages of becoming a MAES and each theme reveals something unique about the part-time student undertaking CPD.

Method of Presenting the Findings: There are two parts to the Presentation of Findings:

1. Part One: The overarching themes derived from the FGIs; SIIs and EMQs qualitative data are presented in the sequence indicated in Table 1 Page 97,
2. Part Two: The data derived from the EMQs provide sufficient findings to chart a one-year MAES journey for two respondents (R3 and R4), though only R4 returned all data requested.

Transcripts from the FGIs, SIIs and EMQs are cited by identifying the type (eg FG2 is Focus Group 2; V3 is Voice 3 and R4 is Respondent 4 as shown in Appendix 3) with the line number from the relevant transcript for example: FG2:28.

4.3 PART 1: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.3.1 Theme 1 - Motivation for Becoming A MAES

A range of motivational factors evident throughout the data reveal the complexity of this theme; it is noticeable that motivation is usually extrinsically biased and prompts enrolment to the programme for a range of reasons. A surprising common factor is the lack of participant reporting on wider political agendas that drive education, but which they are exposed to in their everyday practice – for example the need to meet attainment targets. The four sub-themes of: Chance; Satisfying Personal Needs; Satisfying Professional Needs and Networking are presented below:

Chance or timing?

There were many chance situations that came together to influence the decision to embark on their journey. V2 and V3 were typical; their first encounter with masterly study had been a government stipulation to achieve an award equivalent to a third of a full master's award. At the end of that course of study, V2:11-16 explains that:

> … the guy who ran the Award gave [the group] a flyer … and he was sort of pushing us in the direction of our masters and he told us about the National Scholarship Fund and that kind of piqued my interest then because there's not a cat in hell's chance that I would have been able to afford to pay the whole thing myself. … I thought I'll apply for the scholarship, if I get it I get it, if I don't no harm … it was a case of now or never.

V2:19 went on to emphasize that if they didn't progress immediately from the Award they would be unlikely to follow up on further study; they felt they were 'in that zone' of readiness and timing was right for them. V3:10-11 was informed that there would be 'various benefits' and 'monetary discounts' by progressing to full masters and perceived the MAEP as a means to overcome constraints on growth within their current professional context.

The ideas of natural progression in study, timing and chance also came through very strongly in FG1. Reasons included 'I got hooked [on previous study] and continued' FG1:10; and 'might as well carry on [from previous study]' (FG1:15). R4:1 and R6:5 also mentioned that it was 'the right time' for them. In the interview with V2:12 the availability of funding, 'push[ed]' by their first Level 7 lecturer, is again highlighted as an essential motivator. R6 also mentioned receipt of funding as a contributory factor towards enrolling. A participant from FGI reveals lack of agency in their decision and how a chance remark influenced their decision to enrol when they share their serious dyslexia with the group and go on to say

> And they said I could automatically go on to the masters and I'd never really thought about doing a masters so I thought 'why not' because I kinda scraped through with my degree because I hadn't got the right support, so I thought 'wow I can do a masters' so I decided to do it.
>
> FG1:42-45

Satisfying Personal Needs

There is limited data to suggest that masters study is motivated by any intrinsic ambition. Only for V5 is there deep intrinsic motivation and clarity of purpose for embarking on the master's programme, both in terms of personal and professional goals. V5 researched and chose the programme, the decision did not just fall into place; the content of the

programme enabled them to marry their needs from previous personal aspirations with current needs in an unexpected and very much welcomed way. During their interview V5:246-255 reflected on them self as a young graduate invited to engage with PhD study when they explained.

> … I didn't do [the PhD] then and it has never rankled on me, felt it was the wrong decision for me, however, having said that I know I have got a brain, they must have thought I have got a brain and I was capable and the other thing is, you know when I was at uni all those years ago, the majority of people were public school educated, I was a girl from [a] Comprehensive and I think, you know, we have moved on incredibly now and I think that was a little bit of you know, maybe I am not good enough or bright enough, but I did get one of the best degrees in the year and they invited me to do a PhD and I just feel, I got to the point where I thought you know 'let's see if you're capable of this'; 'what's going to happen? you love learning; we can formalise it so you're not just reading out Robins and them [*participant referring here to basic texts]*, you like it; you're actually active and gaining some sort of furtherance of my own academic skills'.

Despite being acknowledged as academically ready the cultural challenge had been too great for 'a girl from … comprehensive school' V5:249) revealing a deep lack of confidence in their ability to succeed, certainly at that time. There were other intrinsic motivations cited as minor drivers amongst other greater external influences, such as 'doing it for myself' FG1:136; 244; 322, 'a need to develop myself' FG1:298-9) there was also a sense that the MA Education Award (MAEA) offered a natural progression route and V1 hoped to achieve a sense of belonging. The idea of self also arose in FG2:184-188 where it was stated

> I suppose at the end of the day it's about feeling proud about it; it's about having that bit of paper - I'm not going to put letters at the end of my name, the bottom line is that I've done it, I'm purely doing it for my own reasons, not really relating it to work; if it helps me get higher up in my job great, but I'm not sure I want to.

Generally, participants anticipated and welcomed challenge as part of the masterly experience.

Throughout, the Participants, Voices and Respondents focus very much on external drivers from others which suggest some lack of control or agency. Again, V2's (12) transcript is revealing; for them the notion that decisions were driven and controlled by external circumstances, was clear as they reflected on the Lecturer from their previous Level 7 Certificate Award: '… he was sort of pushing us …'. An element of competition with others was often cited as something that underpinned a desire to embark on masterly study. One participant claimed, with some sense of resentment or even fear, that

> The dangerous bit of it for me is that in my particular job, being a teacher, it's almost like unless you have this, you're gonna being blocked from being a head teacher or senior teacher and that means a heck of a lot of people who are, would make cracking head teachers or senior teachers don't get the opportunity of interview because they haven't got the masters and it's just become the next elitist thing that someone, that being in the middle of the masters and just reflecting on the society we are creating – an award and an accreditation that is becoming the norm for a lot of people and that kind of puts everything the next stage up again.

FG2:325-331

It became clear that competition with colleagues (FG2, V3) and siblings (R4:1-3) who already held postgraduate awards were instrumental as motivators. In this regard a sense of being unsettled with their current professional roles and desires to move on are suggested.

An acquisitive picture emerges from (R4:1-2) who claimed that 'letters after [their] name' was appealing, though this may have been tongue in cheek and V2:123-4 remembers her mum asking '… does that mean you'll have letters after your name?' and her own reply was '… well yes. It does, …'. The conversation in FG2 covered the value of being qualified by paper compared to being qualified by demonstrating work place competence and participants interestingly made the point that they were almost certainly masterly in practice, so the qualification would simply affirm that. One participant FG2:226-229 said:

> I thought I would come in and think 'what are they talking about?' and it is, it's achievable and understandable and so it does reiterate that we are experienced professionals aren't we? working at a masterly level and so this is achievable – hopefully? (laughter) – I'll get dreadful marks now.

Satisfying Professional Demands

Job progression, development of specialism and changes in career path (whether current, anticipated or indeterminate) were all cited in the data from FG1 and echoed by FG2 as

reasons for embarking on masterly study. FGI data suggests that participants had agency in these motivations, but at the same time these ambitions use the MAEP as a vehicle towards next level in job rather than an ambition in its own right. FG1 participants wanted to break the mould and find new ideas and to develop their specialist area for application in the work place for example:

> the reason, one of the reasons I decided to continue having done the [previous postgraduate certificate] was that I want to go into lecturing after, as a career progression rather than going into deputy headships I want to go into lecturing and I know I really need to have this en route.
>
> FG1:19-22

Other comments from this focus group include 'the master's element was just … part of it, [it was] the teaching of it [specialism] that I was interested in.' FG1:84-85. V3:88 said that they 'just want to pass so that I can do more with the qualification.'. V3 did not take up their first opportunity to embark on the MAEP as they believed they would not apply the learning in practice. Their final motivation to continue study was largely about using the qualification to realise an aspiration for career change. Unlike most participants, V3(3:80-1) was keen not to engage in a specialism they preferred to choose their own programme. Rather they '… just want to get the masters ... to open other doors … '.

Data suggests that participants lack some confidence in their current levels of professional competence, for example one participant expressed their expectations to achieve credibility for promotion as follows:

> my motivation for doing it would be, was simply to access the knowledge base to give me the opportunity to hopefully move up into a more senior position than I am at the moment I'm a middle leader classed as at the

> moment looking at possible promotion to a senior leadership within school context
>
> FG2:13-15;

Another member of FG2 (192-200) agreed with these comments but was more concerned by convincing clients of their credibility; the said:

> there are two aspects to it for me, one is the meaning it [the MA] gives other people to my role; erm it doesn't necessarily make me feel any sense of growth in my own self-esteem or anything like that, it is just something that means contextually for other people that they accept that what you are doing is at that level. That doesn't mean that I don't already think that what I'm doing is at that level, it's a bit like you've just said [participant name] that there is something in it, the bit that's relevant for me is about being able to have the time to explore my own professional practice and then ensuring what I'm doing is evidence based and that that it will assist with the vulnerable people I work with which is important to me; it's the purpose of doing the research and work not what I get out of it in my own terms of accreditation or whatever it's because it allows me time to explore why

Another participant, FG2:138, said that they wanted to be at 'the cutting edge' of new thinking in the context of their work – they wanted to stand out from others. Views from

Focus Group 2's participant's feelings that they had gaps in their knowledge was echoed by V2:28-32 who said:

> So after lots of thinking and talking and why do I want to do it I decided to go for it and I wanted to, I wanted to better myself, I wanted to be more knowledgeable about, I wanted to take a special needs path with it and I wanted to continue to further my knowledge of that and what it entailed and to make sure that I was best informed to help people and children the best that I could with whatever need and requirement they had of me.

R5:17-8 had 'high expectations of the teaching skills … of [their] future tutors on this course …' as though there was a desire to model and improve their own practice based on these observed skills.

V4 was alone in specifying the implications of Government policy in driving their need to augment high level qualifications and professional experience previously achieved in their native country and to be employed as a qualified practitioner in England. Unlike for some other participants, the chance nature of what had stimulated this participant to join the programme had more urgency to it – this was not primarily about professional nor personal development, it was simply a matter of legislation.

Networking

Anticipation of the MAEP being a pool of positive networking opportunities was an interesting motivator which seemed to hold exciting and far reaching possibilities.

Participants in FG1:277-8 explained how CPD in their workplace was limited in terms of both quality and quantity by saying:

> when you do cpd at the moment in education for one there's not a lot of it, we are supposed to be training each other [murmurs of agreement for others in the group] and if you don't have anyone with expertise all you are doing is bouncing around the same ideas you need to have that higher level looking in, so that's one of the issues.
>
> FG1:276-280

This participant implied that being in touch with like-minded people during their master's experience would help broaden their ideas and improve their practice and, thereby, resolve their workplace CPD concerns. Developing a community of practice (COP) was also anticipated as a positive outcome from the MAEP by FG1 in the light of limited opportunity for learning in the workplace. Respondents to EMQ1 expected to experience: sharing of relevant knowledge; networking with like-minded peers; learning and general development. These expectations of experiences to come during study and insufficient CPD are added to by R5:9-14 who hoped for:

> … sharing ideas and hav[ing] conducive conflict. My role is 'one off' so my peers are outside of my organisation. I don't work alongside anyone who does a similar role. I would also like to realise my potential. I feel I have become a little 'stuck' in my professional and personal development and, in the absence of a mentor, I am seeking personal developing through doing a masters in something I am passionate about.

R5 also anticipates the experience of personal change to be brought about by the opportunity to engage in challenge not available in the workplace.

The data reveals that motivational factors are largely extrinsic and it is only chance that results in individuals making their final commitment to enrol on the MAEP. The data strongly suggests that MAESs have a strong desire to improve their practice, but there is no evidence in the data to suggest they are aware of the wider political contexts that lead them to place themselves as deficient in their practice.

4.3.2 Theme 2 - Feelings and Emotions

Participants expressed a wide range of emotions and feelings which have both negative and positive effects in all three aspects of their personal, professional and postgraduate student lives. The feelings and emotions cited in the data include: fear, danger, resentment, guilt, anger, excitement, pride, joy, satisfaction and surprise and arise in four areas. These four areas are presented in the following sub-themes of feelings and emotions: Anticipating becoming a MAES; Experiencing the MAEP; About others and Imposter feelings.

Anticipating becoming a MAES

Participants expressed a range of both negative and positive feelings and emotions at the thought of commencing their journey to becoming a MAES. Mostly participants focussed on the big picture of study with few specific aspects of study mentioned. This suggests that being an MAES, as understood by the programme team they would soon engage with, was not a consideration.

An example of the big picture focus includes a clear fear of not achieving expressed by saying:

> oh I need to be brainy and everyone knows what they are talking about and they can use these long words in context and I can't and yeh, in that way it's a bit scary and I don't; like you say you've 'done it 3 times before'!, and crikey I've used methodology before and that's been fine and now there's all this other stuff [group vocal smiles/mild supportive laughter throughout seemed to demonstrate shared feeling]
>
> FG1:138-143

For others, anticipating individual sessions was a source of concern, but in recognising others are the same guilt lifted. This participant really conveys their emotions by the following quote:

> when there was a session coming I could feel myself thinking oooo I need to do this, I need to do this, and think about this ooo just have a quick look at what I've done and then afterwards I'd think Ok I've not got a session for 3 weeks that can be put to the back now I'm going to focus on my reports for class or something like that and I do feel that there is that kind of pick it up and put it down pick it up put it down and with that it is quite hard to get the momentum going and I do feel that now that the proposal is kind of looming when we hand that in now I'm thinking ok I really need to get my teeth into it and get started and then once I've got my feedback from that it will probably sit and then it will be a quick build up

> for the assignment it will be very much like you said peak and troughs sort of way (student agreement) which does feel slightly uncomfortable because it is at the back of my mind always thinking oh I've not done that for however long I've not done it, but then at the same time I come to the sessions and on the way here this morning I said oooh I'm going to feel really guilty because I've not done anything, everyone else is going to be saying 'I've done this' but the first person I spoke to said 'I've not done anything' so er I actually felt a lot better, but it is that feeling of 'you are the only person who hasn't done anything' and coming together more often you might realise that ok other people have probably done the same amount to me but it's comparing yourself to others and thinking that they'll have loads and …
>
> FG2:399-415

On the other hand, whilst V2 predicts additional challenges ahead creating a fear of continuing study, participants generally felt enjoyment and a desire to be stimulated by new learning as revealed by the following two quotes:

> … it was never about having the letters after my name, it was about being academic because I enjoy, as [participant name] said, I enjoy studying as [participant name] said I love finding out about things
>
> FG1:249-251

> I enjoy the opportunity to explore and develop and learn and mix with other people from different environments that are exploring and learning in their own roles so

> there's something about growing as a person that's
> always fundamental to your own professional practice
> that's very useful to me
>
> FG2:93-96

Email respondents were invited to explain what they might bring to their study, i.e. where did their confidences lie. Again, feelings and emotions relate to the big picture of study with responses revealing a strong sense of looking forward positively. There was also a sense of readiness to study characterised by enthusiasm, purpose, building on professional experiences and openness to new ideas. Respondents were aiming to build on previous study, and when this had been at the same university as the masters the sense of anticipating a smooth transition came through. Responses to EMQ1 reiterates what other data reveals in that engaging simultaneously with full time employment, family and study creates a fear about 'not being able to meet the demands' R1:17.

There were also specific aspects of concern in anticipating study; for R2 it was a lack of confidence in their ability with technology; R5:26 wonders if they will be able to understand 'how to apply [their] skills, developed in work to academia.'.

Experiencing the MAEP

The focus of application to practice as a prime factor in study was reported almost unanimously and this was exemplified by FG1 who were particularly frustrated by the research methods module which they perceived as having no career value. An extract from the conversation follows:

P1: … I'll be brutally honest, I'm not particularly interested in EBP. … I'm looking forward to other modules in the master's programme where I can erm look at my own subject speciality and learn more and apply more

P2: I have to absolutely agree because that's one of the things I've found, that's why I think this one is the most scary because it doesn't readily lend itself to being of value to me in my career or in my practice as a classroom teacher whereas the maths did and if I went on and did I don't know a module to do with children's learning places or something like that, that again would focus me so this one is really hard, especially when you're balancing time because you tend to balance time in favour of things that are interesting [laughter implying empathy from group] rather than things that aren't necessarily interesting you in the same way. I know that sounds really mean …

FG1:107-122

P4: I agree with [participant name], I don't think it's anything I'm going to use and I don't know if I'll use it again, but also when we've being doing this particular module there's lots of long words and [group laughter] everyone else seems to know what they are and I don't.

FG1:133-135

Participants also experienced 'scary' (FG1:116) modules; increased 'angst' (FG1:334) and 'stress' (FG1:343), on the other hand the notion of enjoyment is apparent throughout. Emotions and feelings were also definitely strong in FG2. Notions of stress, pressure and demand gave rise to the sense of anxiety in fulfilling programme requirements and maintaining 'a lot of extra commitment' FG2:46. One member of FG1 expressed a feeling of isolation which reduced the positive affective emotions they felt had previously contributed to their successful learning during a more homogenous Level 7 experience.

There were contradictions though – one participant (FG2) felt liberated by the tensions experienced and, as a result, felt they might give up their current career. A joy of learning is how this participant perceives being academic. V3 enjoyed the debate and discussion of theoretical learning and being a student in a small, heterogeneous group, this participant found the challenge of the research methods module to be positive. As seen below, they embraced the 'double step up' (V3:64) claiming to experience disappointment when a module is easy.

> this was like a double step up in terms of the, all the concepts that we had to talk about, where I was coming from as a researcher, that kind of thing. I hadn't even thought about that, I'd done research before for my dissertation but at undergrad level it was just kind of get on with it you know, get some research done and write about it.
>
> I also found it was very, very hard work balancing it with my job this term, whereas the other two hadn't been because I'd just had an essay to do. The presentation side of things mean that I had to put a lot of time towards it, practicing it, polishing it and making sure that I'd got all the reading and the content behind it as well.

And then obviously you needed to know what you were doing for your research to be able to do it properly, you couldn't just wing it with any old thing, you had to actually have some substantial content behind it. I don't know, I didn't know then and I still don't know now what it is that I actually want to find out about while doing this Masters so I don't know if what I pick to research is a good enough topic or what I would replace it with because there's all kinds of challenges at my school – why are the girls worse at Maths? Why do the children who come from troubled backgrounds not manage to socialise as well?

You know there's millions of different things I could research but I don't know what it is the direction that I want to take. For me I just want to get the Masters so that I can then open other doors and I wish that I didn't have to do an independent study, I wish I could just do three more modules where I learn more about you know, working at this level.

Interviewer: That's really interesting.

Yeah, I don't … I've read the materials about the Independent Study module and it frightens me, the rigour and the level that's expected and I don't even know if I'd be able to pass it let alone to do a good job of it. So that's why I've put it off for now, also work life balance again, I found it hard enough last year, I've got even more to think about this year. But as I say at the end of the day I just want to pass it so that I can do more with this qualification.

However, the perceived additional challenge created a fear of continuing despite having 'enjoyed' study which provided 'something to do' (V3:158-159); this participant clearly has a strong need for focussed, practical application.

V4 having passed a module has feelings of pride, happiness and renewed motivation, but having to prove themselves by retaking qualifications already achieved in their home country 'makes [them] sometimes feel tired' (V4:116). The participant displays frustration about having to go through, what might be perceived as, unnecessary hoops.

Despite the high levels of confidence being experienced generally by V5:25 there remains a 'scary part of the MA' and although V5:64-70 claims they can time manage study well and has fully prepared for an assignment says

> … that's where the fear kicks in because I know that I want to do the best I can do so it's a bit like the sword of Damocles then, because from that point on I am thinking of it constantly and so there's a lot of reflection going on underneath even when I'm not at the computer. … there's that element of perfectionism in there. It's got to be right …

Overall, a sense of anxiety in study is prevalent and is created by the need for purposeful outcomes in relation to professional practice; conflicting priorities between the personal, professional and postgraduate lives and doubts about ability to achieve.

About others

The term 'others' refers to participants' friends; family; professional colleagues (peers, juniors and seniors) and academic associates (peers in study, previous and current lecturers and those in support roles eg: Librarian). The data reveals how participants' postgraduate student lives are affected by others and how postgraduate study affects others, often tensions arise, but this can be off-set by harmonies. For example, the effects on others in participants' personal lives, such as disruption to their routine, might seem minor but nevertheless have implications which can moderate the extent to which MAESs engage with their learning. Others certainly effect how participants feel about themselves.

There was a lack of understanding from others about V1's and V2's experiences. Despite this V1:9 felt that the experience had enabled them to 'move out of a box'. V2 confirms that they are experiencing real emotional pulls in rationalising commitment to university work (which they have enjoyed and found stimulating). For example, by claiming not to care what their partner thinks they have revealed a defensive attitude with others as the tensions revealed in this quote demonstrate:

> Erm yeah so as I say, had a lovely Christmas, got to spend lots of time with family, friends and at the same time you've got that thing, that little niggle in the back of your head thinking I should be at home making sure that everything is right with my uni work and that I'm ready for Saturday. So yeah getting that balance is really tricky because we're always told to get a work life balance anyway just with our job never mind bringing study in on top of it, so that was tricky and as I say especially with not having someone 100% behind me who is obviously an important person in my life, that was hard. But … it was hard to begin with and then the further into it I got I

> kind of adopted an 'I don't really care what you think'
> frame of mind because I've enjoyed it.
>
> V2:57-64

On balance, though V2 has a real concern about others and the negative effect their MA might have on them. V5:101 explains 'it [i.e. the experience] is a multi-thing', which leads them to compartmentalise the range of aspects they deal with in life, work and study and their strong drive to achieve the focus required for study has resulted in 'tension with other things that are going on' (V5:200).

Email respondents fear other students' possible higher levels of ability and different professional status and context causing them to anticipate failure. One respondent said, 'I may be looked down on by these students.' R3:23. R4 says that they want their spouse to be proud of them. V3 had a sense of disappointment in what others felt about them as a master's student compared to their own feelings of pride.

It is clear that participants depend on the reaction of others for authority to engage with postgraduate study and, in this way, they gain confidence to embrace a postgraduate student identity. The tensions of transitions are strongly felt here.

Imposter feelings

The feelings of being an imposter in the context of postgraduate student were specified in both FGIs and the need to improve their own practice identified in the section on Motivation is also suggestive of this feeling being apparent in practice.

One participant said, 'I don't think it [the masters] feels real' FG2(1:50); V1's experience had not been the struggle encountered in previous more negative situations so, whilst they felt pleased about the potential academic status afforded by the MAEP, the process did not feel like learning. The feeling of the master's experience not being real was echoed with other comments for example:

> I think also although I said that it's quite stressful I think, don't know about everyone else, it's also quite satisfying being able to say to people 'I'm just going to university, I'm doing my masters' people look at you and think oh, well she must be clever … little do they know
>
> FG2:78-80

> I thought it would be really, really hard. I thought I would come in and think what are they talking about and it is, it's achievable and understandable and so it does reiterate that we are experienced professionals aren't we, working at a masterly level and so this is achievable – hopefully?

and one participant FG1:145-6 denied being an expert saying:

> it doesn't mean I'm an expert though, just because people say the long words doesn't mean they know what it means does it?

For Voice 3 the challenge arose from being involved with teaching at primary school seemed to have depleted opportunities to engage with higher level thinking. They explained:

> Well since I've been teaching I've been working solely with 9 and 10 year olds so the writing and the thinking and the day to day work that I do with them is on a totally different level from University life and even from being an undergrad I can't remember doing research and being in the library and having that higher level of thinking. I've just … I've been at key stage 2 level for so long so if for instance I was to do any statistical analysis or anything I wouldn't even be able to get past dividing a number and finding the mean because that's just the level that I've been working at. So, to be able to construct a piece of writing that's decent, that's in the 3rd person, that's appropriately cited and referenced I was just a bit clueless as to whether I would remember how to be … like to work in that style and to almost be more intelligent … I don't know … you know, I don't use that level of criticality in my day to day job so …
>
> V3:178-187

When asked specifically about confidence participants could identify many positive aspects about themselves (these findings are presented mostly within the section Presentation of Findings: Part Two). However, the feeling of being an imposter is a clear indicator of low confidence levels about engaging in master's study and becoming a MAES.

4.3.3 Theme 3 - Learning

In talking about learning, participants discussed several dimensions. They identified the learning skills and qualities they perceived as requirements for masterly study; the learning strategies they used; their attitudes to learning; how they coped with the process and what the experience of learning was like and meant to them.

Learning: Skills, qualities and strategies

The data revealed little conversation between participants about the learning process in either FGI which suggests that the mechanics of learning is not a prime concern. Though the skills of 'being able to argue' (FG1:192) and 'reading' (FG1:214) were mentioned, for V2:65 there are challenges of 'big words'; reading journal articles; research; making session notes and sharing learning. V3:187 claimed that they strived to achieve 'criticality' in their writing. The only other characteristic of the process of learning that comes from the interview is that of reading. V3:181 did not believe they had 'that higher level of thinking', because that would reflect them as 'more intelligent' (V3:186); however, V3 enjoyed debate and discussion of theoretical learning.

V4:145-6 interprets the term academic as being about 'going to the library, using library, develop[ing] your writing skills, reading skills, computer skills'. They don't, however, feel as though they have high levels of these academic skills, especially around the library. V4, whose previous experience of higher-level study is in their home country, cites group work and personal reading as a new experience.

V5:77-8 spends 'hours and hours on drafting'. They have developed a range of organisational strategies to support their assignment writing and have grasped the fundamental skills needed as they mention reading appropriate sources; grasping concepts; being critical and evaluative; avoiding plagiarism and referencing correctly. Of all the participants, V5's motivations lean more towards the intrinsic than extrinsic and they seem

more engaged with deeper learning. However, it is not only academic competence that concerns V5, it is also the techniques and strategies needed for managing their learning. Furthermore, despite their intrinsic motivations for study working towards achievement of module learning outcomes seems to take priority. V5:226 does pay a price for this claiming that the experience is at times '… too hot to handle …'. The extract below reveals notes of anxiety as V5 reflects:

> The reading sometimes been difficult, and you know some of the concepts have been hard but it has taught me about persistence and being persistent and determined and focused and I have had to think on what to pass in each module, made a plan, focused, read and so that's all been great. The assignments is the other aspect which I have found a little bit more tricky not in themselves necessarily but some of it I have found that when I have done the reading it is getting that tight.
>
> Interviewer: Drawing it back in?
>
> Bring it in, get it tight all the academic referencing making sure they are critically enough that I can see I have made progress, particularly in some [tutor name] comments; you know 'you're writing moved on such a lot from this time last year' and that's really encouraging, made me think I have achieved things that it's difficult to notice yourself so that's helped me think well in that sense I have made progress so academic writing wise, become more critical and evaluative and all that sort of thing and have found that as the assessments got nearer I have done the reading and planning. I have put notes together sometimes copious, I mean thousands of words, and then got to about six weeks before the assignment and that's me, inside of me, I know that, but that's where

the fear kicks in because I know that I want to do the best I can do so it's bit like sword of Damocles then because from that point on I am thinking of it constantly and so there's a lot of reflection going on underneath even then

Panic's the wrong word, I think it's the element of I want to get this right, that element of perfectionism in there. It's got to be right and sometimes it's been working through my own understanding of what the learning outcomes

Yes, so I have had to spend quite a lot of time with them [learning outcomes] on the wall in front of me as a focus and this is what you know I need to, I need to be concentrating on in terms of my writing and so as the deadline draws nearer, it has been as you know every student will do, been hours and hours of drafting, redrafting – draft 15 – I think I'm getting clear, but I have started getting systems in place, colour coding stuff that I have written that is my stuff keeping in black stuff I have got from books and refer to it without plagiarising it.

Interviewer: Terrible fear?

Yes, so that's all going on, when it comes to actually writing the assignment or doing the poster or doing the presentation whatever it might be, it's been thinking about the format of the thing and then thinking about the referencing, citations getting in all the reading in that I've done, but I can't possibly do that and that frustrates me a lot and but I know there are things I have to leave out and cut and then you know as I say as it gets nearer,

> those sort of middle to final stages of writing its quite nerve racking for me.
>
> Interviewer: Why do you think that is, because you don't think are you going to achieve or not get it in on time or misunderstood it all?
>
> I think it's, sometimes, I can't see wood for trees, because of I've got so much stuff that I am actually honing down and then what do I leave in and leave out and have I got enough for in there so I am being quite hard on myself because I am sort of all the time yet I know it's going to be marked but all the time I am judging myself against my expectations of what I want to do, right so I would say although it's making it sound as if it is a negative experience which it isn't I do enjoy writing I love writing but I think it's getting the assignment into that coherent, clear, logical sequence and again I think that's what I have learnt my own thinking processes go from the very wide when it gets down to the detail, the fine the sequencing on that quite tricky.
>
> V5:50-97

The depth of study experienced impresses R3:29-31 they believe that 'masterly study involves analysis and criticality … synthesis for greater understanding.'. R8:1-2 also mentions analysis and criticality, but adds 'at a higher level'. R3:37-8 finds that their 'developing cognitive ability' is directly applied by really helping to 'create a better learning environment for [their] students.'. In terms of offering key words to describe learning R3 extends the understandings of their experiences to date by identifying the complexity of

study; R3(2:46) claims to be becoming 'increasingly experimental and experiential' and they can learn from personal reflections on that process.

There was no discussion in FG2 about learning skills and qualities or learning strategies. FG2 recognised that the masters experience was not the same as the undergraduate experience and when the idea of being academic was discussed the group perceived this term to be associated with achievement of the qualification rather than a process or the development of masterly skills and qualities, or research. Individually, participants seemed more aware of surface learning concepts than deep learning concepts and overall there is a sense of level 7 being an unfamiliar or unclear concept.

Learning: Practicalities

This sub-theme is about participants' attitudes towards learning and how they coped with and came to terms with the commitment to study. There are particularly close links between this sub-them and the theme of Feelings and Emotions.

Data from FG1 included words like: competition; adapting; becoming flexible and balancing which all reinforced the notion that students experienced struggle during their period of study. Whilst for many students the expectation of joining a COP had been part of their motivation to join the MAEP, this had not always come to realisation. But for one participant in FG2, absence of COP had the positive effect of pushing them towards being a more independent learner.

Strategies to overcome life challenges and tensions were revealed frequently. FG2 participants emphasised the notion of 'doing' a masters, but were torn by priorities in their personal and professional lives. This was strongly exemplified by two comments:

> so, working full time obviously that is my bread and butter and I have to do what I have to do and I know I'm on an MA and I say to people – oh, yeh, I'm doing a masters – but I haven't actually applied myself to - I read, somewhere you have to do a 120 hours or 130 hours [laughs] of private study and I've got to the point where I think I've got to take a week off work to do 10 hours a day to even get in 70 hours of study, so it doesn't feel, I don't feel I'm giving it the level of commitment I should be giving it. It very much feels as though it's on the back burner and I'll have to give a last-minute surge to get to where I should be.
>
> FG2:50-56

and

> [MA]'s the least important thing I'm doing, my parenting, being a mum, is the most important thing I do, then my job and this is like the add on and in that sense will never have the motivation behind it that the other two things have ones my children and one pays the bills and this is not life as it was 20 years ago when I was a student so it's not every going to have that value
>
> FG2:104-108

Although determination and resilience show through, juggling what is important and allowing the postgraduate student life to interfere with their professional role and personal life is clearly stressful for V2 as can be seen from this section:

> It's been difficult at times to try and - I had such a lovely Christmas so last week leading up to the [module] presentation was my manic 'right is this right? 'Have I got it done?' 'Is it finished?' 'Am I happy with it?' and my other half broke a bone in her foot on New Year's Day so I'd got all of that going on; trying to maintain things at home, being back at work every day, it was a little bit of a crazy week last week but then once Saturday morning [lecture] was done I was back…
>
> So, it's been hard, fitting it all in is the biggest thing. Working full time and finding the time to do things for it and research and read and that's the thing I struggle with the most is finding the time to do the reading side of it. I have to really, really push myself to make it a priority and it isn't because I don't care about it, it's because I care about my job and I don't want to drop any balls at work and not do something for a child in my class or an SEN child because I sat reading a textbook the night before instead of doing something for them that they needed me to do for them.
>
> V2:34-45

Tensions were also experienced by V3 in a variety of ways – sometimes due to lack of interest in a module; lack of clear purpose regarding the qualification; attending when tired and when feeling time should be given to professional and personal tasks. These challenges were so extreme that this participant resorted to secret study in their work place as expressed here:

> … when it came to preparing for the presentation, I had to put a lot more time in, in the evenings and I was even taking time out of school time to do uni work; I was; you know, on my laptop doing the wrong thing at the wrong time and hoping nobody would notice.
>
> V3:125-128

For V3 there is a need to prioritise study time over family time, but the prospect of a better future career mitigates this tension. V3:173 was certainly at a crossroads with the masters which they saw as a path to achieve new ambitions, but they were determined to complete their study; they want to 'just to plough through.'.

V4:151 seems to embrace the idea that they are 'still learning' a new language and new ideas about the process of learning. For example, they compare current learning strategies to the vessel filling approach they previously experienced and, despite the hoop jumping they are forced into, finds the challenge of new experiences gives rise to a sense of being liberated by 'an interesting new experience' (V4:33). This participant stated 'you know what I notice? I like it because I needed to put my theory from books into practice' (V4:44-5). V5:226 strives to prioritise study over significant personal demands, but this has been detrimental to personal life, at times the experience has been 'too hot to handle' when they recognised their need to prioritise too late.

> I was just totally overwhelmed so talking to my sister and she kind of sorted it out - said 'look you have got two big things going on, your MA and [the other] thing' - so she has done this with me before actually in my first year of my MA and I went up to see her and she said right what's your immediate focus, I said 'my MA assignments' and she said 'right get that done' and we went through the

> same process more or less; so much going on it was just too hot to handle for me and I just thought right ok I have got to focus so get focused.
>
> V5:221-227

R4:71 would like their work to 'be better' but recognises that self-imposed constraints on their study are necessary when studying part-time and working full-time. This is echoed by R3:32-3 who recognises 'Study in a self-controlled way, utilising [my] developing cognitive ability' as aspects of being a student. Whereas, V5 has a desire to get it right; their comments are suggestive of imposter feelings presented earlier in Theme 2 Feelings and Emotions. This participant immerses themselves into assignments which become all consuming; there is a sense of being driven to want more from themselves. V5 had a need for reassurance about going in the right direction so well constructed feedback has been particularly welcome. V5:92-3 claims they are 'quite hard on myself … I know it's going to be marked, all the time I am judging myself against my expectations of what I want to do.' Implied here is the fear of others' judgements, V5 knows what they want to do, but perhaps not what the markers of the assignment expect.

The research methods module, assignments and application to practice were the only 3 aspects of the curriculum to be specified. Regarding assignments, R3:59 explained how they 'steer[ed] assignments into' their professional practice and they talked about how they manage scoping the content to keep the work manageable and appropriate for assessment. R3:63-4 said

> I try not to expand research too widely which may lead to confusion within my assignment and the main argument being lost in a plethora of sub-arguments.

R8:17; 54 finds that the assignments are 'captivating' and study allows them 'to see the perspective of their [own] students better.'. Whilst V2:58 finds things difficult during study and finds that university work is a 'niggle in the back of your head'; they are unsure about

whether their assignments are 'finished' (V2:35); 'right' (V2:59) or are 'done' (V2:134), but has a feeling of 'genius' (V2:72) after grasping concepts 'never understood before.' (V2:70). Only V3 seemed to have no light at the end of the assignment tunnel; for them the demands of the research module assessment strategy generated tensions between practice and study – V3:68 found study to be 'very, very hard work balancing it with my job' and this was becoming increasingly so.

Tensions between personal, professional and postgraduate study come to the fore strongly in dealing with the practicalities of learning. Coping strategies are used to keep work manageable with self-imposed limits to what and how much is studied giving a clear indication that hoops to success are sought and jumped. A focus on study for professional practice is imperative and in the background a lack of confidence is generated by the imposter feelings.

Learning: Implications of Time

The data on time emerges throughout and this aspect of coping with the practicalities of learning has consequences for participants in all three aspects of their lives as well as for others with whom participants are connected in those three aspects. Although the data reveals that time is a significant consideration to participants and their 'others', it is noticeable that discussions on this theme were comparatively limited. This could be due to the taken-for-granted nature that time exists and must be managed.

There were time constraints on study imposed by both family and career demands; balancing and juggling of time were both mentioned; time to read was limited on the one hand, but on the other time was released through committing to the MAEP which 'made me have to take time away from work' (FG1:340). Time for detailed consideration of topics

during modules was appreciated, but competition with deadlines outside study demanded a 'just-in-time' approach to study (FG1:402). Deadlines were viewed in this way:

> I think that part of the teaching profession and lots of other professions meeting deadlines is something that we're very good at so when I'm given a deadline – the deadline current is week commencing the 20th, it's in my head, I know exactly when it is and I will meet the deadline; have I done anything up until now? Not a great deal – I have to be honest! Because I've had other deadlines to meet, so it's that just in time process but when I started the masters I originally I thought I had to do everything as it came along and I got it, because it was against the way I was used to working though I stopped that because it became chaotic, I found I was doing too much at once and I went back to know when it's ready and then do it and so it will, you do meet it that's something I've learned through my job, that's helped me and if I try and fight it, it goes seriously wrong, I'm not fighting it – it will be done in time; just in time.
>
> FG1:392-402

The structure of the programme of study was not always convenient and the term 'peaks and troughs' was embraced by FG2:423. The term peaks and troughs applied to levels of motivation, stress and opportunities to engage with study. The 'just-in-time' notion identified in FG1 was echoed when one participant said 'bang, bang, bang … your assignment should be in – job's a good 'n – get back on with your life now.' FG2:379; 382-3. Another participant, FG2:400 explained their experience of time like this:

> When a session was coming I could feel myself thinking oooo I need to do this, I need to do this and think about this oooo, I'll just have a quick look … session not for 3 weeks … I'll focus on my [work] reports … there is that - pick it up and put it down, pick it up, put it down … hard to get momentum going … Feels slightly uncomfortable, because it's at the back of my mind; … ooooo I'm going to feel really guilty because I've not done anything

Then, finding that others are the same their guilt lifted, the idea of others as benchmark is confirmed by this participant's statement 'it's comparing yourself to others and thinking they've done loads' FG2:416.

The data reveals that V2:160-1; 169-70 also adopts a just-in-time approach to handing in their assignments, but explains this by saying

> I'm not leaving it to the last minute, the last minute is the only minute I've got to do it … I leave it for when I've got time to do it.

V2:181-184 says: '… it comes down to time …'. It's what do I need to find out to pass this, not how can that influence work.'

These following quotes illustrate how time can play tricks by expanding or contracting: '[the MAEP] gives me time to explore professional practice' (FG2:197); 'days aren't long enough' (FG2:116) and 'time out to study gives you space' (FG2:302). The idea of time as an investment into learning came through on several occasions. V3:106 wants to 'put enough time in to it', but also states they 'want to make it worthwhile' – it isn't clear whether 'it' is the time investment or the qualification. V5 is noticeably more reflexive about the concept of time compared to participants who think about time as something which enables study

and which must be managed. V5 talked about time passing when considering possible progressing to PhD; they recognised the constraint of age; their need to make time for reflection; to make decisions when time is passing and to invest in time for study. R8:21 also thought about time as an investment and claimed to have

> invested a large proportion of [their] 'free' time because [they] find learning engaging, fascinating and challenging. [They] thoroughly enjoy participating in lectures and with [their] fellow master colleagues as well as the application to [their] profession.
>
> R8:21-23, (respondent's own emphasis of 'free')

R4:63 believed in commitment to study and stated: 'you only get out what you put in' and that 'time' in study is essential even though this 'caused awkward moments at home.' (R4:67). R8:18 had not been able to adopt R4's philosophy as they found a distinct lack of time for study due to 'heavy workload at school and promotion'. R4:67 goes further by saying that 'Balancing study, work and family life is never easy and the more time you want to give something the bigger impact this has '. R4's:67-71 commitment of time to and consequent tensions are clear from these statements:

> …this has caused awkward moments at home. Balancing study, work and family life is never easy … the more time … the bigger the impact … there comes a point … that enough is enough.'

As with the participant in FG1 the learning process led R4 to spend time reflecting on their role, but without the same consequence of considering leaving their job altogether.

Unsurprisingly, time is a constraint to study with the two main consequences of constraining deep learning and, in turn, comprising the MAES' ambition to apply theory to practice. The factor of time also brings to the foreground the realisation that others' priorities take precedent over study. There is heightened anxiety caused by time pressures, but this is abated when comparing the self to others and recognising they are in the same boat. Of specific interest is that time can seem to expand during process of becoming a MAES to create time for study. In this respect time is not managed using methods traditionally expected of students, such as taking control of diaries and plotting sophisticated, or simple, gant charts. Rather MAESs adopt strategies which alert them to any opportunity when time can be pinched, seemingly from nowhere and used to complete sufficient study.

New understandings

Significant in the expectations of outcome from study for participants, as identified in the theme of motivation, was a need to develop and bring some new learning to their professional lives. Achievement of this transformation through learning is also key to developing a postgraduate identity. The data reveals a range of new understandings or outcomes achieved because of engaging with learning during the process of becoming a MAES and these have consequences for personal, professional and postgraduate study contexts.

Participants in FG2:171-5 held a positive view about being 'masters in action' and their application of learning to professional practice was clear. This was expressed excitedly and passionately by one participant as they discussed their learning experience:

> we're actually using it [the learning] on a day to day basis; we are masters in action; every piece of reading, every conversation is channelled back into [our job]; … I read about this and it moved onto that and realised that;

> I'm implementing learning and handling situations differently. (FG2:169-178)

This participant was inspired about being able to apply learning in practice and spoke on behalf of another group member's changes to practice resulting from learning.

Another participant in FG2 had been enabled to apply for a senior role and for others, in the group, there were more personal outcomes such as becoming a role model for children in raising their aspirations. A very practical knock on effect from the MAEP, and one which seemed to justify the personal sacrifices, for one participant was the benefit for their children 'down the line' (FG2:102) due to the job security anticipated by being better qualified. The participant said:

> I try and justify it to myself in that somewhere down the line my children - in that me being employed in a reasonably salaried job with a roof over their head - their opportunities will be higher than they would be if I end up unemployed and couldn't feed them – whether that's just a guilt-ridden justification I'm not really sure.
>
> FG2:549-552

Meaningful learning about self was declared by V1:11, who felt that they had their 'head around learning in a different way now'. The participant reflected that this had helped overcome current barriers; that the current study had presented at the right time to break their own patterns of learning which derived from previous life experiences. This individual had certainly developed a degree of independence and autonomy in their approach to learning. R4:63 is clear that MAESs must 'understand the need to be committed' and that the 'cliché 'you only get out what you put in' is definitely true.'.

R4:40-2, keeping to the request for one-word responses identified learning to be 'challenging' in the context of study; 'rewarding' in the context of professional life and 'frustrating' in the context of their personal life.

When asked what important messages they would give to others contemplating a duplicate of their learning journey' R3 was very practical and offered advice around study skills and engaging with a community of practice and R8:24 used terms like 'enjoy'; 'try'; 'engage'. R4 is clear that MA students must 'understand the need to be committed' and that the 'cliché 'you only get out what you put in' is definitely true.' There was no indication that any respondent would not to repeat their journeys so far.

The data suggests some surprising outcomes of study with new understandings arising which gave participants great satisfaction. Deep learning does not seem to have been necessary to achieve transformative learning at some level and there is evidence of postgraduate student identity emerging.

4.3.4 Theme 4 - Self

The Theme of Self captures data in two aspects: firstly, about participants' projection of ideas about their anticipated selves and secondly, their reflections about the challenges they encounter and personal growth they've experienced as developing MAESs.

Projections of self as MAES

Email respondents offered more focussed data about how they saw themselves as MAESs than the Voices from the SIIs or the Participants from the FGIs. They were specifically asked how they perceived a typical MAES and their responses provided some insight into their projections of how they saw their possible future self. They reported an eclectic range of characteristics including: intelligent; passionate; independent; change agent; organised; a professional and hard working. There was an acknowledgement that a typical MAES would be 'very focussed and dedicated to the subject being studied' (R3:16). The idea that an MAES would be someone who possessed 'self-control and self-discipline in order to fulfil assignment deadlines' (R3:17) and apply 'a precise attention to detail in order that assignments and outcomes are fully met.' (R3:18) suggests an acknowledgement that strategic approaches would be helpful when navigating the route to a successful assignment.

The positive outlook on becoming an MAES as presented by Respondents to EMQs is contrasted by V2's imposter feelings. The notion of achieving an MAEA is important to this participant; they think it will make them 'feel clever' (V2:123), but they seemed to give an apologetic or embarrassed tone by suggesting that they will appear to be 'slightly more intelligent' (V2:125) and, at the same time, there is a sense of diminishing the value of their potential achievement with the words 'if I can do it anybody can do it' (V2:138). Self-doubt was also expressed by (V3:25-26)

> I wasn't really sure you know, what standard I was
> writing at and how academic I was actually going to be.

Their perception was of other students at a higher level than them; they doubted that their topic choices were 'good enough' (V3:76) and anticipated the of assignment requirements with fear.

> I've read the materials about the Independent Study
> module and it frightens me, the rigour and the level

> that's expected and I don't even know if I'd be able to
> pass it let alone to do a good job of it.
>
> V3:84-86

As with V2 there was a sense that V3 diminished themselves, this time, by basing module choices on a topic list representing their school's challenges rather than their own needs. There is much self-doubt and little, if any, positive projection about their future possible self in terms of the postgraduate student context.

It is noticeable where participants had not been specifically directed to think about their possible selves, their data reveals much less self-confidence and draws attention to strong suggestions of imposter feelings. The contradiction between messages of self-doubt yet continuing to embark on the programme could suggest that there is a need to prove self through the MAEA.

Reflections on self – Challenge and Growth

It can be assumed that MAES self-doubts gave rise to many challenges as the Participants, Voices and Respondents progressed towards becoming a MAES. Yet, despite the many concerns and doubts expressed the data reveals MAES, on balance, perceive themselves as having grown in their personal, professional and postgraduate lives.

V1:2 felt positive at the time of their interview and perceived the experience of becoming a MAES as a 'process'. They had become more confident and, whilst they did not specify in what ways, the conversation strongly suggested that this feeling had been generated by the learning process which had also positively affected their personal and, particularly, professional aspects of their life. It was noticeable that V1:8 deemed professional practice and postgraduate study to be 'integral' implying that confidence in one meant confidence in

the other; though in this case it was the postgraduate study influencing the practice. V2 was equally enthusiastic about their growth as an MAES and, but in line with their self-doubt reported above V2 is amazed about this positive change which they enthusiastically describe as follows:

> I ran the staff meeting last night and it was obviously SEN based and a member of staff sent me a message later that night to say that she was in awe of me and the knowledge and how I came across and the support that I offered and how I said and explained things and suggested things and … she said it was just … 'you came across so well'. And I do think that because I've carried on at uni and my studies that it has impacted me personally, just as a person and then obviously within my role in school you know, I've spoken with the head about things that I'm doing and she's aware of what my ideas are for my IS and rolling out you know strategies and ways of doing things depending on what I find out. Doing all of that and so yeah it's definitely changed me for the better, definitely.
>
> V2:86-94

Despite this success the self-doubt continues to show through later on in the interview when they recount a conversation with their Head Teacher after having spoken to a concerned parent:

> I went to see the head about something and I think I was late to her and I said I'm sorry I've just been speaking to so and so about this that and the other and I went, I amazed myself in what I knew and what I was able to say without having to think about it and she just laughs at me. And I know that isn't wholly down to doing my MA

> but it's a part of it and it's because if I am lucky enough to walk away from a class and I've understood it and everything that's been said then that is a confidence boost for me because I do doubt myself a lot and I do question my … you know, am I doing a good job? Are the children learning in my class? Am I doing my role as SENCO correctly? Where am I failing? I'm very much aware of my failing I'm not aware of my succeeding.
>
> V2:104-112

V4:121 gives a sense of measuring themselves negatively against another student they perceived as knowing 'a lot of things' and who 'answered all the questions', but seemed determined to overcome this challenge by doing their best demonstrating confidence when they claim themselves to be 'clever enough.' (V4:128). V4(4:140-1) believes their raised self-esteem is due to working towards the MA giving them a 'better chance to get a better job' and claims 'maybe it's my confidence.'.

In addition to meeting challenges and feeling growth in the context of becoming a MAES there are other positive outcomes. R3 finds that their developing skills of criticality have positive effects within both their personal and professional lives. R8:13-4 offers that they are 'thoroughly enjoying' their experience and explains that it enables insights into 'connections in professional and educational development'. V1 also comments on a growth in self-esteem in both their professional and personal lives which they feel is, in part at least, due to successful learning and potential accreditation of the MAEA. However, V3 has realised that they can achieve more than they previously thought possible and their motivation levels have dropped, probably under pressure of personal priorities revealed later in the interview, they explain:

> Erm, I think I've proven to myself that I can do studying and full time work which 5 years ago I would have thought no chance. But I think I'm probably still the same person and I've almost gone full circle because this time last year I was so eager to get started on it, so eager to go to the lectures and go and do research and now I'm the opposite – I'm like I just need a break from it. Yeah I've changed but I've come back round if you see what I mean.

V5 explains that through their learning (they refer particularly to now being able to access appropriate sources) they have experienced a professional actualisation which is closely connected/integrated with actualisation as a student. They have been deeply reflective in their interview. I paraphrase their comments as follows

> Right so the change bit it has been that you feel more comfortable with yourself and your own knowledge which allows you to take an approach which is more effective in facilitating the people that you are working with. Have I paraphrased that reasonably well?
>
> Interviewer:176-178

V5 responds as follows:

> Yes, yeah, it's that what I have read and what I now understand from what I have read has enabled me to feel more confident that I can be my authentic self in terms of how I coach …
>
> V5:179-180

R5 felt that they now understood how they learn best and committed to taking on their responsibility for learning.

Personal pride is specified by R4:19), (who now reflects that the masters, which 'has always been a personal ambition', is a positive experience) and by R8 for whom pride is the inspiration that is already stimulating doctoral aspiration. R4:74 indicates that taking part in the MAEP is 'empowering'; gives a feeling of authority when working with colleagues which, in turn, develops a sense of 'belonging' (R4:76) and 'definitely helps to increase confidence' (R4:76). The experience has 'made a difference' (R4:78-80), but states

> It is difficult to measure these changes [which R4 characterises with both practical and more emotional language] as it is more to do with self-belief and the feeling which comes from participation and knowledge acquisition.

Interestingly, R4:87 does not think that their personal life identity has changed because of study; rather they acknowledge the normal pattern of life development over years as being more influential in effecting their 'attitude and behaviours' in that context. R4 believes that 'involvement in the programme has definitely altered [their] openness to change.' (R4:91) positively.

Participants have strong feelings of self-doubt and this seems to be their greatest challenge as they progress towards becoming a MAES. There is a tendency to assume that others are more capable and this seems to further debilitate confidence levels. Despite this, intending MAESs do recognise experiences during their study and the potential of becoming a MAES

as factors in raising their confidence and self-esteem. There are indications that growth as a MAES also has positive effects on both their professional and personal lives.

4.3.5 Theme 5 - Others: Complementing or Confounding

The data on 'others' has potential implications for participants' identity formations and overall self-esteem and, in turn both factors will relate directly to the success of their becoming a MAES. This section begins with a review of data relating Participants', Voices and Respondents' experiences of Communities of Practice (COP) whilst studying and continues to present data on how support is generally experienced during the time of study.

In FG2 COP was identified as providing a welcome opportunity for the exploration and sharing of learning. In FG1 the positive benefits of COP had been a significant part of a previous learning experience and motivation to progress to the MAEP, but not been experienced within the route to becoming a MAES. The missing opportunity to meet up with other students; discuss experiences; learn from each other and share ideas was perceived as a loss. However, because of this, one participant felt they had put more effort into becoming an independent learner. V4 also revealed their independent approach to learning by claiming to have no real interest in COPs; their cultural perspective may have resulted in a different perception of the value that is generally placed on COPs.

When questioned V1:10 agreed that developing a COP 'would be useful', but that they were not a fan of social media to achieve this and this medium would be necessary for part-time students to keep in touch outside of taught sessions.

Accompanying their clarity of purpose for study V5 is a self-confident person who embraces being a student**;** they see value in developing COP as it provides

> … a lovely feeling of belonging to a group of people who are doing the same thing and just chatting to them, you know, not necessarily about academic things.
>
> V5:277-279

COP is not just to enhance their learning**;** though there is a sense of benchmarking themselves with others within the interview.

The notion of COP was mostly viewed in the context of networking with other students in some way, though V4 is atypical. They hint at developing peer relationships that have helped them make more sense of reading/learning issues, but doesn't regard this in the same way as a developing COP. This was unlike R4 who understood COP as having a broader application than simply within the study body. At the time of data collection workplace COP was significant in terms of R4's engagement with a module applicable to a work project coincidentally occurring at the time. Interestingly, V4 preferred to elicit support from responsive MAEP staff who they perceived as expert, rather than other students, but again did not necessarily view this in terms of a potential COP. Support from lecturers who were 'helpful', 'approachable' 'knowledgeable' and prepared to be responsive were mentioned by EMQ respondents. R4:58 stated 'Feeling that there is genuinely someone at the end of an e-mail who will respond quickly and personally is vital.'. R3:51-2 wanted lecturers to 'ensure the module is understood and the learning outcomes and requirements for submissions are explained properly.'.

Outside the notion of COP, the data reveals a mixed picture of how others view and support the MAEA. For example, V5 has strong support from family members who aim to balance V5's perceived tendency to over-commit to study; colleagues of V4:78 are supportive and

recognise that the 'masters is very helpful for [their practice]'. R3 experienced invaluable support from other students, but not all of them and this did give rise to some difficulty as revealed in this comment:

> I have benefitted from meeting other students also involved in my specific area of education. Speaking to them and asking advice/comparing professional experiences and situations has enabled my learning journey to progress and develop immensely, and I find the majority of students helpful. What has hampered/disabled my learning experience is blinkered attitudes from a few other students involved in areas of education unfamiliar to me who refuse to share experiences to broaden their outlook. This I find is especially a problem when asked to team up for an activity.
>
> R3:53-58

V2 demonstrates strength in adversity as their enjoyment of learning enables them to adopt a not-caring attitude to overcome their partner's negativity. Interestingly, V2 has a real concern about others and the effect their MA might have on them. This demonstrates the emotional vacillations experienced in relationships, just as with the 'peaks and troughs' of the learning experience presented in Theme 3 Learning section earlier. R4 highlights the importance of family members and describes a spouse able to manage the demands of children whilst study takes place; who can give academic support and be generally motivating. He says:

> Having the support of family members (my wife!) at home has definitely helped my learning so far. There are times when she realises that I need some time to complete reading or at times of producing an assignment/poster where she will ensure the children are

> kept busy and I have the house to myself which is essential. Due to her educational background, there have also been times when having her around has provided me with someone to discuss ideas with or read through my work. She is really important in helping me to stay on task and she also motivates me as I want her to see what I am doing and be proud of me.
>
> R4:43-49

V3 echoes R4, by explaining the symbiotic nature of study and work patterns which avoid having to make a choice between study and their partner. However, having to prioritise is a common tension for example FG1 participants mention a family wedding, a child's birthday and many other similar conflicts. R4 talks about the tensions between their professional and student lives and reveals the kind of peaks and troughs approach to study mentioned by participants in the FGIs.

Whilst V2 experiences difficulties in their personal life they do, however, experience support and affirmation of their professional growth from work colleagues, both peer and senior; and believes that colleagues are increasingly confident in their practice. For R4 the workplace consists of more than colleagues and when considering support includes pupils and parents as 'generally positive'; R4's colleagues can empathise with the demands of study due to having had similar experiences. Positive recognition from the workplace is not universal and this is exemplified by V3:154-5 who claims that '… people at school don't seem particularly interested' in their new knowledge and that their new learning 'doesn't make much difference in day to day school life'. V3:157 quotes one colleague as saying the masters 'is a waste of time'. V3:191-3 goes on:

> They [colleagues] see it [the masters] as quite self-indulgent for me and not really a practical help on the school level.

This, understandably, seems to leave V3 with insufficient confidence to take initiative to share their learning with colleagues.

Throughout there are contradictions about the place of others in the journey to becoming a MAES. There is recognition that COPs can be supportive, however, there is limited reporting in the data of such support, this is likely to relate to the part-time nature of the programme. Where COPs are considered it is largely in the context of receiving support from peers in study both emotionally and practically, or from work colleagues when applying learning into practice. The latter of these contexts seems to be the more beneficial for students and emphasises the status they give their professional identity. The attitude of friends and family provides an important emotional factor of support; their actions to clear barriers to study by being absent at certain times is a welcome display of approval for study. The tugs between the personal, professional and postgraduate lives are exemplified by the continual choices about if, and when, to prioritise others over study. Lecturers are highlighted as support mechanisms for basic, often administrative type, requirements rather than sounding boards for new ideas and are not seen as part of COP.

4.4 PART 2: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This section charts the journeys of two EMQ respondents, R3 and R4. Only R4 responded to all EMQs (apart from requests for any other reflections). However, it is believed there is sufficient data to demonstrate some key aspects of two individual's journeys towards becoming an MAES over the period of approximately one academic year. EMQs 1, 2, 3 and 4 were distributed over the period of approximately one year and demonstrated changes and developments during this time.

4.4.1 Respondent R3's Journey to Becoming A MA Education Student

There were five main motivators feeding R3's decision to embark on the programme with the four (items 2-5) centred around their application of learning to practice:

1. As a response to employment requirements
2. To facilitate career progression
3. Further their knowledge of the sector of employment
4. To enable them to address challenges being faced in classroom practice
5. To 'apply and integrate my subject to the modules chosen'.

R3's journey seems to have been successful in terms of achieving their purpose 5 at the point at which they stopped responding to the EMQs and the other purposes were more long term and could only be evaluated after study. Their responses suggest that their first year of study focussed on orientation to the programme. Initially R3's:16-18 perception of a typical MAES' characteristics was that of someone who was 'very focussed and dedicated' to their subject and who possessed 'self-control and self-discipline in order to fulfil assignment deadlines'; someone who would 'apply a precise attention to detail in order that

assignments and outcomes are fully met.'. By the time the second email EMQs were responded to, R3:29 felt that their thinking about a typical MA student had 'developed somewhat … Masterly study involves analysis and criticality.'. R3 seems impressed by the depth of analysis they have been encouraged to engage with and has gradually become less gript by the process of managing their assignments. At the outset of becoming a MAES the result is much in the forefront of R3s thinking; the fear of the unknown and anticipating what the experience of assessment might be like prevails. Those who practice in teaching and learning contexts model the expectations they have of their own students.

An initial fear of 'unfamiliar ground' R3:21 seems to disappear as they progress and the anxiety of being 'looked down' (R3:23) upon by other students is replaced by the belief that 'level 7 students command a great deal of respect from fellow master's students … ' (R3:34). This fear of being 'looked down' upon was, at least in part, fuelled by a lack of self-respect in their employment status revealed by the comment 'I only teach part-time on a sessional basis' (R3:22). There is a sense that this feeling of inadequacy is something of an internal motivator to engage with, what is undoubtedly, a demanding, personal 3-year commitment to study; the lack of confidence certainly seems to be replaced as study continues. Their response to EMQ2 reveals a feeling of pride has been generated through engagement in masterly study which has led to 'developing cognitive ability' (R3:34) and 'greater understanding' (R3:34) of their subject. In EMQ3 a stronger indication of overcoming the feelings of being 'only' and of being 'looked down' upon comes to light when R3 talks about the 'blinkered attitudes from a few students … who refuse to share experiences' (R3:56-7); R3 complains that this has had a detrimental effect on their learning. It seems that R3's rising confidence levels lead to frustration about those peers who are not developing at the same pace.

At around three-quarters of the way along their first year, there is a growing strategic approach to study caused by prioritising demanding work over study although this was balanced when one module harmonised with a work project and created time to reflect on their role. R3:61 aims to 'not scope a subject too widely' in order to 'revisit it for another

module.'. They are also conscious of keeping their work focused to avoid 'the main argument being lost in a plethora of sub-arguments.' (R3:64). It does seem that this respondent is learning how to deal with the requirements of the assignments as well as maintaining a handle on their overall purpose of study. There seems to be attempts to achieve a balance between the hoop jumping identified in previous findings and the purpose of study. The preoccupation with being strategic is also revealing in the advice they would now give about embarking on the master's journey. R3's suggestions are all about managing study and study skills, for example: remain focused on the subject; use a wide range of articles and publications; if in doubt ask. These are all valid suggestions and indicate that R3 is becoming a MAES and indicate a developing student identity.

One piece of advice R3:72-4 offers is 'Keeping in touch with fellow students … has been exceptionally interesting and helpful'. This suggestion that others have great importance to R3 is noted throughout their responses for example: the feeling that they may be 'looked down' on by other students; the belief that being a level 7 student would command respect from others; the recognition of helpful lecturers and the benefits found from meeting other students, discussions with whom have 'enabled [their] journey to progress and develop immensely and who contrast with those who 'refuse to share'.

Key aspects in this journey have been:

- Developing pride
- Developing ability to navigate being a student
- Sharing with others
- Overcoming fears and anxieties
- Maintenance of key personal purpose for embarking on the programme
- These contribute to increase in confidence

4.4.2 Respondent R4's Journey to Becoming A MA Education Student

There was an impressive list of motivators for R4's (EMQ1) decision to embark on the programme and in terms of purposes developing communities of practice is noticeable (i.e. items 5, 6 and 8 below):

1. The time was right
2. Sibling rivalry
3. To have a new sign outside their school with more letters after their name
4. To meet like-minded people
5. To share experiences and insights into education
6. Successful completion of the course
7. Develop useful work relationships with others.

Unlike, most other participants R4 did not cite career progression, improvement, change or security as motivators, although there is a hint of 'status' in item 3 above. Though I believe this was a light-hearted claim on R4's part, it is likely there is an element of truth when taken into consideration with item 4. Items 1 and 2 are suggestive of the chance nature of deciding to become a MAES noted in Part 1 of Presentation of Findings. Mostly there is a sense of needing to expand self and a desire to share own previous experiences which suggests a starting point with confidence in their own professional competence. On the other hand, item 6 reveals a sense that R4 is experiencing some self-doubt about their ability, or maybe opportunity to complete. This self-doubt could also arise to some extent from the competitive aspect which is hinted to when R4:3 cites 'sibling rivalry' as a motivator. There is a suggestion here that siblings are already ahead of R4 in terms of higher qualifications.

R4:7; 1:9 anticipates that the master's journey will be demanding 'at the end of a working day'; challenge their thinking and include 'lots of reading'. Their fears and anxieties reflect their anticipated tensions between study, work and family lives and the possibility that these could prevent them attending sessions. R4 has an expectation of a higher level of learning and anticipates the need for study outside module sessions. R4:14 is also concerned about the 'unknown demands of each module'. This confirms an element of self-doubt in their own ability as a postgraduate student; on the other hand, they are confident in their quality of a positive, willing and determined mindset to study. At the three-quarters point of the year R4's fears are confirmed when they reveal lengthy periods of time having to pass without attention to study because of demands from work – though this is balanced by the harmony experienced between one module and a work-based project which had 'gave me/made me spend time reflecting on my role' (R4:55). This view of study as a vehicle to generate time is experienced by other contributors to the research and reported in Part 1 of the Presentation of Findings.

As R4's (EMQ2) journey progresses feelings of pride emerge. At the half way point of this survey, studying part-time is a positive experience which R4 shares with others in their personal life and despite friends questioning R4's motives, R4 seems to embrace being a student. Item 4 and 5 of the motivation list are already being achieved as R4 reveals 'I have met some very interesting people … they are able to share different experiences.' (R4:25-7). Application to practice became particularly relevant to R4 when making connections between the module being studied, other students' practical experiences of that module and their own work-based project. Item 6 on their list is also being addressed by sharing their learning and reading experiences with colleagues (who are more supportive than friends). R4 finds this sharing process important and useful with both pupils and their parents. R4:30 is keen that others see the MAEP as 'a positive' indeed it is important to R4 that their spouse is involved and can be proud of R4's process of becoming a MAES. This searching for positive feedback to affirm their actions is suggestive of being uncertain of their developing postgraduate identity.

When asked to characterise learning around the third quarter of the year, R4 (EMQ3) uses 'challenging' (R42:40) to describe their professional life; their personal life is 'rewarding' (R4:41) and their student life to be 'frustrating' (R4:42). This is interesting as being frustrated by the experience is only hinted at elsewhere when R4 alludes to tensions between their personal, professional and postgraduate student lives; at other times harmony between practise and study is highlighted. At this point of study, 'others' are very prominent for R4, for example R4's spouse is helpful in keeping children busy so that R4 can 'have the house to myself which is essential.' (R4:46). There is a suggestion here that study can, at times, completely take over the personal life. Unsurprisingly, support from personal life and tutors who respond quickly to queries contribute as an enabling factor in learning. This is significant for R4:61 who '… can feel quite isolated without this contact.'. However, R4 is growing as a postgraduate with, for example, more confidence in using appropriate sources. R4:63-4 is clear that MAESs 'understand the need to be committed' and that the 'cliché 'you only get out what you put in' is definitely true.'. The demands of study as anticipated earlier come into play at this three-quarters point and managing tensions with the personal life by drawing a line on the postgraduate life are clear from these statements:

> this has caused awkward moments at home.
> Balancing study, work and family life is never easy …
> the more time … the bigger the impact … there comes
> a point … that enough is enough. (R4:67-71).

It seems that tensions grow at the juncture of learning where competence as a postgraduate student develops and the resulting increased ability facilitates more successful study which, in turn, creates stronger motivation to spend time in study. The resulting tensions create a moderating effect on the amount of effort available for study even though the module being studied, in this case, is in harmony with work practice.

After the end of the year R4 (EMQ4) feels that their confidence levels have improved and explains how taking part in the programme is 'empowering' (R4:74); gives a feeling of authority when working with colleagues and develops a sense of 'belonging' (R4:76) which

'definitely helps to increase confidence' (R4:76). The experience has 'made a difference' (R4:78), but finds

> It is difficult to measure these changes as it is more to do with self-belief and the feeling which comes from participation and knowledge acquisition. (R4:79-80)

It is interesting that R4 characterises changes with both practical and more emotional language. In the workplace R4 indicates their raised confidence and increased self-esteem when working with others by being able to enter discussion in an academically authoritative manner and by 'becoming more resilient to change.' (R4.89).

Interestingly, R4 does not think that their personal life identity has changed because of study, rather they acknowledge the normal pattern of life development over years as having affected their attitude and behaviours. However, according to R4's spouse they are 'more stubborn' (R4:91), which may indicate a change in personal characteristics not yet obvious to R4 though they do recognise this trait in their professional life. R4 believes that 'involvement in the programme has definitely altered [their] openness to change.' (R4:90-1). This could suggest a growth in resilience for someone embedded in a profession perceived to experience constant change. R4 recommends that 'anyone involved in educating young people' (R4:92) would find benefits in undertaking masterly study to understand what learning, and the associated demands, is like for their students (EMQ4). This overall experience of learning suggests a narrow outcome; which may mean that the experience is recognised largely as a means to an end and is kept confined and compartmentalised. However, in terms of original purpose already 4,5 and 7 are being achieved.

Key aspects in this journey have been;

- Others' support
- Recognising and balancing the work, life, study tensions
- Being able to apply learning from a module directly into practice

- Need for others to value their journey
- Sharing learning with others
- Growth in confidence and self-esteem professionally
- Development of study skills
- Resistance/resilience to change in both professional and personal life's
- Except for item 4, all others contribute to increase in confidence

Both R3 and R4 journeys convey much of what was experienced by participants in the FGIs and voices in the interviews.

4.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings demonstrate the complex and indirect path of becoming a part-time MAES as CPD. Ten significant messages (Table 2 below) shed light on this specific group of part-time students as they navigate their learning commitment in a potentially hostile environment. The next chapter discusses these key messages in the light of the literature review and wider reading to illuminate their experiences and, although, their commitment pays dividends there is much for interested parties to learn which may enable more effective learning.

Table 2: Key Messages Deriving from the Findings

Themes and sub-themes	Key Messages	Research Questions
Motivations for becoming a MAES	1. The chance nature of factors behind the decision to enrol for the MAEP reveals that degrees of amotivation and ambivalence are at the heart of MAES initial decision making. **2.** MAESs want to improve their practice but there is no evidence that they recognise the wider external drivers that suggest they are not good enough.	RQ1
Experiencing learning – emotions and feelings	3. The process of developing a postgraduate student identity is overwhelmed by their professional identity and perceived need to improve. 4. This may contribute to the MAESs' imposter feelings and emotional tensions. 5. There is evidence of increasing self-esteem with more modules studied and increasing years of professional experience.	RQ2 and 3
Experiencing learning – skills and qualities/being academic/masterly	6. MAESs articulate few learner skills and qualities and these mostly apply to surface and strategic learning competences which suggests an undergraduate rather than postgraduate engagement with learning.	RQ2 and 3
Experiencing learning – strategies for coping	7. Demands and challenges of priorities in personal and professional contexts are often countered by compromise in the form of hoop jumping strategies, including novel approaches to time management.	RQ 2 and 3
Experiencing learning – new understanding and transformation	8. Transformative learning is revealed despite hoop jumping and strategic and surface learning approaches. And yet there is contradictory evidence regarding gains in self-esteem	RQ4
Others	9. Community of Practice is a loose term and whilst others are important anchors for continuing study, they are not essential, nor always wanted. Community of support is a more appropriate concept.	RQ2 and 3
Self	10. Students have insufficient confidence to perceive their possible MAES self. Although the tendency is for confidence (i.e. self-esteem) levels to rise as study progresses; postgraduate study alone is not an incubator for this.	RQ 2 and 3

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The aims of this research are based on an exploration of the experiences of becoming a MAES whilst studying part-time for continuing professional development (CPD). The ultimate purpose of this exploration was to better inform the MA Education programme (MAEP) team's discussions about the nature of their students and enable effective programme development. This has been achieved by developing insights and ideas about MAESs which will have relevance to other similar programmes within my own and other institutions. The literature review gave rise to the following research questions:

1. How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university perceive their motivations for becoming a MAES?
2. How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university experience transition in becoming a MAES?
3. What are the implications and consequences of the journey to becoming a part-time MAES undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university?

The themes of Motivation, Learning, Others and Self as presented in the Findings Chapter offer ten key messages in response to the research questions mentioned above (Table 2). These have been further refined into eight key messages (Table 3 below) to form the framework of this Discussion.

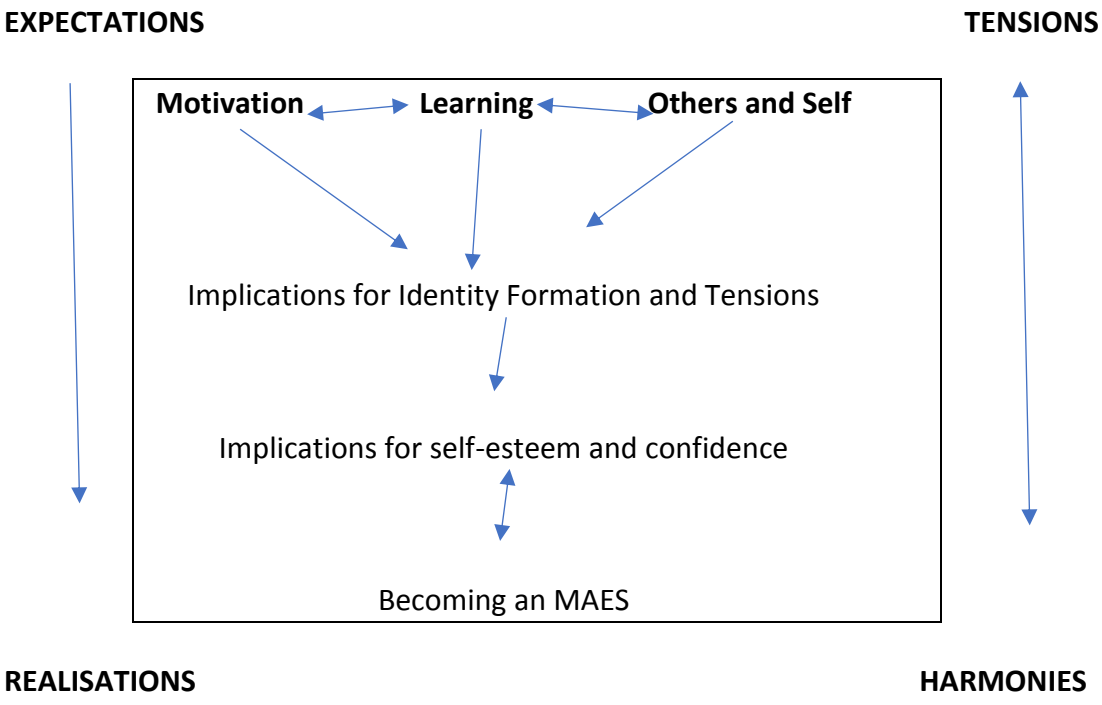
TABLE 3: KEY MESSAGES FORMING FRAMEWORK FOR DISCUSSION

Research Question	**Key message**
How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university perceive their motivations for becoming a MAES?	1. The chance nature of factors behind the decision to enrol for the MAEP reveals that degrees of amotivation and ambivalence are at the heart of MAES initial decision making.
	2. MAESs' goal is to improve professionally through master's study; organisation based CPD is insufficient for their needs. There is no evidence that they recognise wider external drivers which contribute to their feelings of deficit in practice.
How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university experience transition in becoming a MAES?	3. Emotional tensions and harmonies are experienced as peaks and troughs impinge on learning experiences; confidence and self-esteem rise and fall across all three identities and imposter feelings within the postgraduate context seem permanent
	4. Communities of practice were initially identified by participant groups as motivators for study. This aspiration was not fully realised which lessened opportunity for postgraduate identity formation. Support networks did, however, develop and became important motivators for continuing study and maintaining self-esteem.
	5. Tensions between personal, professional and postgraduate contexts are countered by compromising coping strategies and novel approaches to time management leading to hoop-jumping.
What are the implications and consequences of the journey to becoming a part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992?	6. MAESs adopt surface and strategic approaches to learning; their articulation of learner skills suggests undergraduate rather than postgraduate engagement
	7. The process of developing a postgraduate identity is overwhelmed by demands of professional identity and loyalty to the personal identity. The concept of master-in-practice outweighs the master-in-study and the MAES is unable to perceive a possible self as successful postgraduate (self).
	8. Transformative learning is evidenced by: successful application of learning into practice; demonstration of postgraduate qualities; steps towards postgraduate identity formation and an indication of rising self-esteem

Model 1 of Becoming a part-time MAES undertaking COPD suggested by the Presentation of Findings section portrays the unique nature of each MAES. The model demonstrates how transition to becoming a MAES is influenced by four aspects of experience: motivation, learning, others and the self. These are underpinned by a triangle of the MAES' shifting and shaping identities between personal; professional and student lives. These shifts create a continuum between tensions and harmonies within each identity as changes occur in the opposing continuum between expectations for and realisations from study. The four aspects of experience influence and are influenced by the two opposing continua.

The Discussion leads to a refinement of Model 1 into Model 2 - Becoming a part-time MAES 2 undertaking CPD to demonstrate the dynamic nature of becoming a MAES and the role of self-esteem in this process.

MODEL 1: Becoming a part-time MAES undertaking CPD



Summary of study and approach to the discussion:

Qualitative data has been collected from:

- two focus group interviews (FG1 and FG2) each with five participants;
- voices in five individual, semi-structured interviews (SIIs)
- two groups of five respondents each receiving four sets of email questions (EMQs)

Collectively the participants (P), voices (V) and respondents (R) are referred to as participant group members within the discussion.

Based on Braun and Clarke's (2006, 2013) approach thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data analysis. The transcript data was analysed and coded to enable ideas and patterns to emerge and this led to the themes presented in Table 1 and further refined for this discussion as summarised in Table 3 (page 159).

This chapter discusses and illuminates knowledge gathered from the findings by comparing to, contrasting with and extending the literature review. Additional sources have been useful in further understanding aspects of motivation (Deci and Ryan 2000a, 2000b, 2000c and Eccles and Wigfield 2002). Deci and Ryan's (2000c) self-determination theory and Eccles and Wigfield's (2002) expectancy value theory are both useful in the discussion to understand the MAESs motivation. However, it is acknowledged that there is criticism of both perspectives. For example, Deci and Ryan's research methodology was experimental and undertaken with school children and there was no account taken of subjects' motivational levels before the experiments took place (Mawhinney 1990). It is clear that Deci and Ryan's work was not concerned with the real-life experiences of mature professionals such as the MAESs in my research. Furthermore, Cameron and Pierce (1996) undertook a review of around 100 studies spanning 20 years of research which, despite Deci

and Ryan's claims, reveals that rewards do not decrease intrinsic motivation. However, it is shown in Part 2 of the Discussion that Deci and Ryan's (2000c) self-determination theory can be applied in this research and it does go some way to explain how MAESs sustain motivation throughout the period study.

Further additional sources have also been introduced to discuss issues of time (Baharudin, Murad and Mat, 2013), communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and imposter feelings (Clance and Imes, 1978 and Carroll et al 2009).

Many references within the discussion apply specifically to compulsory education, but these do have influence on the culture of the broader education landscape such as the NHS. It is, therefore, acknowledged that although school teachers represent the greater proportion of MA Education Students (MAESs), other contexts of education are also present. These include professionals in HE, Further Education (FE), Early Years, NHS, Local Authorities and private mentors or trainers who have constructed shared reflections of their experiences.

This Discussion Chapter is in three parts, each relevant to one of the three research questions as indicated in Table 3 (page 159).

5.2 DISCUSSION PART 1 - ON MOTIVATION TO STUDY THE MAEP PART-TIME FOR CPD

5.2.1 Introduction

In response to Research Question 1, 'How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university perceive their motivations for becoming a MAES?' the following two key messages arise:

1. The chance nature of factors behind the decision to enrol for the MAEP reveals that degrees of amotivation and ambivalence are at the heart of MAES initial decision making.
2. MAESs' goal is to improve professionally through master's study; organisation based CPD is insufficient for their needs. There is no evidence that they recognise wider external drivers which contribute to their feelings of deficit in practice.

The complex nature of MAESs' motivation has two distinct features emerging through the data. Firstly, the MAESs' decision to enrol was puzzling as it seemed contingent on several chance factors coalescing and apparently taken with limited personal conviction. Overall motivations were extrinsic; some individuals sought growth, self-acknowledgement or self-approval and one participant (V5) also needed to nurture their enjoyment of being a student. It was clear that fulfilling professional demands and ambitions prevailed over other motivators and yet there was no comment in the data about organisational improvement or of policy drivers. The desire to become better in practice; to compete with others and insecurities about their potential academic ability revealed self-doubt. The second feature concerned how motivation was sustained throughout the course of study despite the tensions arising so frequently along the way.

5.2.2 Discussion Part 1: Key Message 1

The chance factors behind the decision to enrol for the MAEP included funds becoming available for study and others' encouragement to take advantage of enticing discounts. Others' belief in individual's ability was sufficient to quell self-doubts about progressing through the qualification ladder which possibly chimed with habits of qualification seeking fundamental in their worlds of education and training. Chance drivers occurred to a lesser or greater extent for all participants which, together with their lack of purposeful intentions to enrol, suggest or demonstrate their amotivation as defined by Deci and Ryan (2000a). According to Deci and Ryan (2000a), in addition to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation there is a third dimension known as amotivation which occurs where individuals experience self-doubt about their ability or competence, for example when there are constant demands to improve performance, such as might be experienced by MAESs. Deci and Ryan (2000b:61) also point out how amotivation arises when a '… lack of personal causation …' is felt as suggested by the chance factors mentioned above.

Furthermore, amotivation is represented by a '… lack of intention to behave …' (Deci and Ryan 2000a:237) which is illustrated by the comments such as 'why not' (FG1:43) and 'might as well' (FG1:216) when used to describe decision-making process influenced by others. In the light of their self-doubts, there is a sense that this chance effect may be perceived by MAESs as a release from responsibility for potential failure. This is not to say students were forced into study, more that the intention to do so was weak. Illeris (2017:158) seems to capture how these students feel when he describes ambivalence as

> … concern[ing] the fact that at one and the same time, the individual both wants and does not want to become engaged in a course of learning.

Both amotivation and ambivalence have a negative effect on learning with Deci and Ryan (2000a) finding that amotivation leads to surface learning and Illeris (2017) explaining ambivalence as a key barrier to learning. Neither amotivation nor ambivalence are, therefore, recognised in the literature as states of motivation, although this is how the participant groups explained their motivations to enrol. Nevertheless, the chance conditions which characterise student amotivation and ambivalence have come together to create a moment when the decision to apply for and enrol on the programme of study is galvanised. Interestingly, without these chance factors becoming a catalyst for enrolment, the energy to commence study could be lost and the desire to study would dissipate.

It is clear that Deci and Ryan's (2000b) theory is insufficient to explain just why the students enrol since amotivation would result in no action at all. However, expectancy value theory (Eccles and Wigfield 2002) seems to hold the key to what initiates potential MAESs' decision to enrol. Eccles and Wigfield (2002) explain that expectancy value theory has four factors that influence motivation. Firstly, the motivation to undertake a task such as a programme of study depends on how useful it is to that individual. It is clear from the data that there is great perceived usefulness in acquiring the MAEA as a vehicle to promotion; career change and/or improved performance in practice. Secondly, the importance of doing well is a factor not only relating to achievement of the award itself, i.e. its usefulness, but is also about being held in higher esteem by professional and social groups and consolidation of professional identity. Certainly, the data reveals that meeting other like-minded people; sharing ideas and developing a community of practice are all perceived expectations of the programme. Thirdly, and in line with Deci and Ryan (2000b), intrinsic value of study is acknowledged as a value which contributes towards motivation. However, this aspect of motivation is not prevalent in the data, though it is apparent that participants have previously enjoyed learning their priorities are located with their professional aspirations. The final factor to influence motivation as seen through the lens of expectancy value theory is the consideration of cost associated with the task. Cost in the context of potential MAESs includes financial aspects, time commitments, emotional stresses and consequences of

effects on other life priorities. It is impossible for potential students to fully appreciate these costs when making the decision to enrol and, therefore, these costs do not negate the perceived usefulness and importance of enrolment.

5.2.3 Discussion Part 1: Key Message 2

Participant group members' desires to improve professionally suggest that their self-perception of deficit is the underpinning extrinsic drive to master's study. However, there is no evidence in the data that they recognise the wider external drivers which contribute to these feelings. The prevailing purpose for study centres on becoming better in practice; more knowledgeable and to achieve job progression; in short to achieve recognition in practice was the pivotal motivation. Relevance to and application in practice as strong motivators to engage in study are well-recognised in the literature (eg: Clapham 2016; McMillan, McConnell and O'Sullivan 2016; Scott et al 2014) and form the basis for the first of Knowles et al (2015) andragogical assumptions about the adult learner's need to know. In this respect, participants were typical of those lifelong learners who are keenly aware of the need to improve themselves within their professional context, but they rejected unaccredited CPD as unfulfilling. The findings of this study also bring attention to unfulfilling CPD (FG1:277-280 and 296-305)

> … when you do cpd at the moment in education for one there's not a lot of it, we are supposed to be training each other [murmurs of agreement for others in the group] and if you don't have anyone with expertise all you are doing is bouncing around the same ideas you need to have that higher level …
>
> … it's almost passive learning – you just sit there, you might do a bit, you're not doing much it's really useful just taking it in, it's often, not always, … it's just used in

> your class, in your area and then maybe tell others about it as well and that's it you move on almost and once you get your little certificate that sometimes you have to write your own name on the front you put it in your drawer in your desk … they're not really interested that you spent half a day doing some dance thing in particular.

This reveals that non-accredited, in-house CPD does not meet participant group members needs in the way they anticipate from the MAEP. The MA Education Award (MAEA) represents a programme of high level accredited CPD, unlike, as Jones (2015) found, the preferred CPD model in schools based on a deficit model that does not take full account of what it is to be a professional. Jones (2015) explained that the model used by schools offers a technician approach to CPD with the purpose of developing skills to get a job done rather than an approach which enables professionals to flourish and develop their intellectual capacities.

Confirmation that postgraduate study will be of benefit comes from Cordingley's (2014) research on behalf of British Education Research Association (BERA) which upholds that accredited CPD, such as an MA Education (MAE), is important in affording teachers with necessary, deeper understanding of practice. However, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) (2014) only ten percent of teachers in England engage in degree like qualifications as part of their professional development. This is clear evidence that a MAE Award (MAEA) has not been a common route for school teachers who want to improve practice. It further suggests that the desire to improve practice by achieving a full master's qualification has not been typical of education professionals outside HE.

There is a sense throughout the Findings that employers, other than HE, did not expect, nor require, participants to undertake an MA. This suggests that few participant group members' organisations recognise the potential benefits of a staff fully qualified in Education at masterly level. Rather the Findings are clear that many organisations are unprepared to support their staff, through funding or time allowance, to study for a full master's qualification. One organisation was openly hostile about the value of such study when exemplified by a colleague's claim that the MAEP was 'a waste of time' (V3:191).

Certainly, the Standards for Teachers Professional Development (DfE 2016) do not encourage accredited higher-level degrees as CPD, though they do pay lip service to the importance of scholarship in teacher development. This failure of authorities to support a programme such as the MAE must affect how such study is viewed and contribute to the ambivalent and amotivational nature of decision making discussed earlier. Even the most recent development to encourage teachers across education sectors to demonstrate their masterly practice, i.e. the Chartered College of Teachers, is not interested in university accredited awards. Rather they invite portfolios of evidence from practice to be assessed at master's level.

MAESs desire to use theoretical understandings gleaned from higher level study for improving practice. This can be interpreted as a need to prove themselves as competent and/or be better than they were and/or better than others are. One participant placed a huge responsibility on expected outcomes of study by saying that they needed to develop confidence in learning and be at 'the cutting edge' of new thinking in the context of their work – they wanted to stand out from others (FG2:138); for another participant, the opportunity for master's study would affirm how well they perceived their competence in practice. This confirms their feelings of deficit in their ability in practice which is understandable when considering the educational landscape of constant change, performativity and accountability as explored by Clapham (2016).

The ambition to improve professionally might be achieved without the MAEA, but participants see the programme as a vehicle for progression and response to change. Their wish for fulfilment and challenge, could suggest motivation to engage in the deep learning required to become a MAES. But this interpretation is challenged by those for whom the only tangible anticipated outcome was the qualification itself, for example V3:88 was clear that they 'just want[ed] to pass'. This need for extrinsic reward is further evidence of a mindset derived from performativity culture throughout the education sector (Clapham 2016). Since 2010 the shifts towards master's credits in teaching qualifications may have exacerbated a desire for qualifications, thus generating a sense of competition in those with pre-2010 qualifications and contribute to the unrecognised external motivators.

There were expressions of more intrinsic motivation from the participant group members such as 'an innate desire to learn' (FG1:228) and 'my own personal development' (FG2:9-10), but these were always modified by more extrinsic reasons to study and, therefore, never in the sense of intrinsic motivation according to Deci and Ryan's (2000b:56) definition that

> Intrinsic motivation is defined as the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence. When intrinsically motivated a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external prods, pressures, or rewards.

It must be remembered that the MAESs are part of their organisational pressures for improvement of the type familiar in education and training such as school improvement policies and professional development reviews. Education, as all areas of commerce and industry, operates in a climate which requires professionals in the field to keep up with the

pace of continual change; it is also a climate where success is never achieved when performativity continually pushes for better and more. In turn, this conveys a deficit image of professional competence which can never be addressed, but which places the burden of continual improvement on those professionals. At the same time as government policy is clear and determined to develop practitioner professional identity; it is equally clear and determined not to support professional development through postgraduate accreditation beyond initial teacher qualifications. This is contradictory in the light of government demands for ongoing, quality CPD to enhance not only individuals, but to improve learning and organisational standing. Beauchamp and Thomas (2010) claim that a strong practitioner identity may lead to stronger sense of agency is not evident in these Findings. Rather, the sense of urgency to improve is subliminally being conveyed through the external drivers of performativity. This creates uncertainty and feelings of deficiency within practice by reducing perception of self-competence and, when viewed through Deci and Ryan's (2000c) self-determination theory, this reduces intrinsic motivation. There is nothing in the findings to suggest that participants recognise these external drivers nor, despite their personal sacrifices in terms of time, money and emotional resources, do they recognise how the returns on their investment in study are likely to have high benefit for their organisations.

The divide between postgraduate study (where learning for critical consciousness is encouraged by the HEI) and learning for a competency-based model of CPD (favoured by the employer) creates tension regarding decisions about levels of commitment required in the process of masterly learning. This also calls into question Knowles et al (2015) andragogical assumption about adult learners' need to know. The students enrol with clear ambition to enhance their professional practice which is directly related to the enhancement of their organisations, but masterly study also entails personal growth and generates the critical thinking that might not be in line with the aims of that organisation. These tensions generate 'agitation-related emotions such as fear and threat.' (Chan 2014:24) which in turn effect self-esteem and effective learning thereby bringing tension to bear on postgraduate student identity formation.

5.3 DISCUSSION PART 2 – ON EXPERIENCES OF TRANSITION IN BECOMING A MAES

5.3.1 Introduction

In response to Research Question 2, How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university perceive their experiences of transition in becoming a MAES? the following three key messages arise:

3. Emotional tensions and harmonies, experienced as peaks and troughs, impinge on learning experiences; confidence and self-esteem rise and fall across all three identities and imposter feelings within the postgraduate context seem permanent
4. Communities of practice were initially identified by participant groups as motivators for study. This aspiration was not fully realised which lessened opportunity for postgraduate identity formation. Support networks did, however, develop and became important motivators for continuing study and maintaining self-esteem.
5. Tensions between personal, professional and postgraduate contexts are countered by compromising coping strategies and novel approaches to time management leading to hoop-jumping.

Part Two of the discussion explores how those in the process of becoming a MAES cope with learning as they transition towards a postgraduate identity. The Discussion gives insight into the challenges of engaging with study whilst in a state of anticipating positive outcomes and yet experiencing self-doubt. Tensions expressed by participant group members around competing priorities from professional and personal lives means study is never the MAES' first choice; tensions between professional and personal lives were never mentioned. The

effects of study on others generates a range of emotions and feelings for the MAESs, but most, though not all, 'others' were supportive. Despite initial and ongoing hopes to use study for professional improvement, coping strategies which may compromise these potential outcomes are employed.

5.3.2 Discussion Part 2: Key Message 3

Students expressed positive and negative emotions when anticipating aspects including: enrolment; unprepared for sessions; assessment and receiving feedback (eg: FG1:100, 251; FG2:599, 406; V4:51-2; V5:64). Martin, Spolander, Ali and Maas (2014:202) comment that

> Becoming a learner is a transitional process for all students, requiring them to leave the comfort and safety of what they know in order to enter an environment which emphasises that they do not yet know enough.

shows the vulnerability of all students. For MAESs who return to study having already proved themselves as undergraduates, there is potential for a deficit label to threaten their confidence and self-esteem in study. Scott et al (2014), in their longitudinal research into master's students from a range of different programme types, identified that emotional challenges would be likely during the process of identity construction and, therefore, these emotions and feelings are to be expected as individuals' experience becoming MAESs.

Self-doubts provide early hints of imposter feelings, for example when anticipating others as better than self (V3; R3) and R7:8 who didn't 'feel confident in any particular area'. Branden (1994) associates self-confidence with an individual's ability to manage change. The Findings show that levels of self-confidence and, therefore, self-esteem are undermined by their lack of self-belief. For one participant (R7) the anticipated level of challenge from

study creates a fear of continuing to study and R1 and R5 are fearful of not being able to demonstrate masterly academic skills. The range of negative feelings identified in the Findings suggest that, as the transition into becoming a MAES developed, the initial suggestion of confidence arising when deciding to enrol generally dropped. Even for a participant with high levels of confidence the MAEP has a 'scary' aspect (V5:25), this time generated by a sense of being consumed by engagement with study to the exclusion of other priorities.

Scott et al (2014) explain that much student anxiety stems from their position within unknown cultural expectations including the norms expected by institutions and lecturers around learning and assessment protocols. Students do need support for successful transitions (Schlossberg 1998); to achieve the necessary level of competence (Tobbell and O'Donnell 2013) and postgraduate identity formation (Illeris 2014). In this study, the need to maintain 'a lot of extra commitment' to learning (FG2:45-6) emerged and revealed a tension between anxiety caused by guilt at not having done the pre-set tasks and relief caused by an assumption that others in the group would also not have completed the task.

Assessment is significant to students; it is how they will be measured and it will determine the outcome of their efforts. This source of anxiety has two dimensions: firstly, the motivator to use the learning opportunities for enhanced professional practice and secondly the requirement to adhere to assignment learning outcomes necessary to achieve the external stamp of approval. There is insight here about the significance to students of getting 'it right' as dictated by the programme demands. The Findings suggest a sense of students fearing the module learning outcomes and being dependent on others to provide the answer, rather than the question as would be expected in postgraduate study. It seems that the programme purpose for assessment does not necessarily sit comfortably with the students' purpose for learning. Therefore, the module learning outcomes, understood by MAESs and their lecturers as the assignment requirements, are at risk of constraining the learning needs of students thus creating tensions between the needs of professional and

postgraduate identities. And, yet the learning outcomes are validated and accredited by the university within QAA (2015) guidelines for meeting master's characteristics. Participants in this study describe the assessment process as peaks and troughs of self-esteem. Assessment causes anxiety in anticipation but is followed by surges of satisfaction with achievement. This is mirrored by Scott et al's (2104) participants who refer to this as a roller-coaster. There are tensions between learning for assessments and what the HEI team demands from a level 7 assignment and how fit for purpose the learning is for application in practice. This highlights the questions raised by Barnett (2007) about the constraints on learning arising from the mechanistic nature, and use of, learning outcomes.

It is well documented in the literature that learning is an emotional process (Knowles et al 2015; Mezirow 2000; Illeris 2011 and Illeris 2014). Barnett (2007:33) states that 'being a student is to be in a state of anxiety' and goes further to claim (2007:36) that 'through anxiety, the student may eventually emerge into a responsible mode of being'. In other words, a state of anxiety would seem to be essential in the journey to becoming. In line with the literature, negative emotions and feelings, such as fear, resentment, guilt and anger, often created potential and actual barriers to learning for the MAES. Their anxieties about study and being judged were usually suppressed, eventually, by positive feelings such as joy and pride resulting from success and leading to a determination and resilience to carry on. The sense of a rollercoaster experience, articulated as 'peaks and troughs' in FG2:422, reflect the fall and rise of emotions and feelings.

Coopersmith (2002) is concerned that anxiety induced by threat of failure attacks the self-esteem and direct undermining of learning occurs when anxiety, according to Lawrence (2000) reduces the ability to think clearly. Closely related to this is Deci and Ryan's (2000a) explanation that the emotions arising in a learning context will result in surface learning and of course the programme aim is for students to strive for the deep learning associated with a master's degree.

When anticipating learning participants have doubts about their ability (R1:17-20) and a particularly striking example included a claim that the masters didn't 'feel real' (FG2:80). This participant thought that 'people look at you and think oh, she must be clever, little do they know'; another denied being an expert (FG1). One student's guilty feeling was apparent when they claimed, 'my sense of pride is misplaced, because I'm not doing enough.' (FG2:87) and another believed they did not have the necessary 'higher level thinking' (V3:181). There is also evidence in the Findings that many students assume others are better than them and self-denial is apparent for some who reject the desire to celebrate success. To be sure of achieving, those who experience imposter feelings put additional pressures on themselves, but the anxiety, caused by their anticipating commencement and engagement in study with low-level self-belief, limits deep learning. The depth of 'imposter feeling' was not an anticipated outcome of this study, but the Findings strongly suggest that it is a prevalent feeling. The term imposter syndrome arises in Clance and Imes (1978) study of professional women, some undertaking higher degrees. Clance and Imes (1978:242) study finds that imposter syndrome is characterised by individuals who assume their 'abilities have been overestimated' and that success is by 'luck or effort' rather than 'internal, stable factor of ability'. The prevalence of this imposter feeling when anticipating becoming a MAES could, in some part, be attributable to the widening participation characteristics which Scott (2014) discusses.

The Findings reveal that several students in this study were alumni of a post 1992, widening participation (WP) university. Scott et al (2014) discuss how the widening participation agenda was not aligned to postgraduate study as there was an assumption that once a person had graduated from their first degree they were no longer part of that WP category. Scott et al (2014) go on to explain how a widening participation route may create a degree of student-dependency resulting from support mechanisms which have enabled students without the educational, social or cultural capital typically acquired by non-widening participation students. This may explain what O'Donnell et al (2009) refer to as lack of readiness for the hard work of study. If they, and other literature, (eg Tobbell et al 2008

and 2010; Scott et al, 2014 and McPherson et al 2017), are correct about HEI staff assuming postgraduate students do not require support and Scott et al (2014) are correct that the widening participation agenda creates students who depend on support, the gap between student expectation and HEI provision will be problematic and contribute greatly to any imposter feelings. Furthermore, Knowles et al's (2015) assumption about adult learner's readiness to learn is also called into question for these postgraduate students. Self-esteem, therefore, may be lacking or reduced by study if students do not perceive themselves as effective (Eraut 2004; Bandura 1977; Seifert 2004) either as a student or as a practitioner.

Tensions generated by the needs to become successfully involved with study whilst at the same time manage the pulls of professional and personal lives, led to a range of emotions and feelings. Conflict arising from desires to become a better professional informed by a postgraduate education and what government demands from that same role generate tension between the professional and student identities. The tensions enduring whilst becoming a MAES and derived from the demands of the professional and personal contexts erode the strength of will to engage in study (Barnett, 2007).

5.3.3 Discussion Part 2: Key Message 4

In the many discussions which focus on children's transition through school phases there is a strong emphasis on the support that is required from others to ease, what is claimed by Ecclestone et al (2010:5), to be 'inherently unsettling, daunting and risky.' experiences. Whilst professionals experiencing transition into postgraduate study are not children I argue that the implications of engaging with masterly study is no less an unsettling and daunting experience. Additionally, the process is certainly risky when considering the costs in terms of time, finance and potential effects on personal and professional relationships. It is clear,

therefore, that support from others will be of great benefit throughout the process of becoming a MAES. Indeed, the notion of networking with other professionals was an aspiration of study for some participant group members and the perceived and actual influence of others in facilitating the process of becoming a MAES is evident in the Findings, but in varying degrees. The range of 'others' mentioned by participant group members in the context of their learning generally includes: professional colleagues; peers in study; the MAEP team; the HEI support team; family and friends. For R4 the range of others also included stakeholders in the learning they, themselves, facilitated, for example their pupil's parents.

The characteristics of an MAES (QAA 2015) demand autonomy and independence and it is interesting, therefore, to consider what role others do play in becoming an MAES. The literature review reveals that others influence the development of strong self-esteem; identity formation and the associated links to effective learning. Key literature (Knowles et al (2015); Wenger (1998) and Illeris (2011, 2017) emphasises that adults learn best when that learning is connected to the learner's social role. Deci and Ryan (2000a; 2000b) would see support from others in terms of relatedness an essential contributory factor of self-determination and ongoing motivation. For professionals, sharing the context of the MAEP in one form or another provides a potential catalyst for developing a postgraduate student identity within a community of practice. However, Communities of Practice (COP) as defined by Wenger (1998) are mentioned by the participant groups only as study aspirations, not as experiences during study. Wenger's (1998) COP theory of social learning assumes that social practice, learning and becoming are integral and, therefore, pivotal to identity formation Tobbell et al (2010). However, the three aspects for competent membership of a COP, as defined by Wenger (1998) are not achievable with the MAEP as discussed below

Firstly, there is a need for 'Mutuality of Engagement'. This requires a well-defined joint enterprise which could arise in one of two contexts during study of the MAEP. One context

could be through the development of knowledge and understanding of module subject matter; this is unlikely to emerge within the MAEP as each student's '… knowledge … will be highly situational …' (Cottle 2016:4) because students contextualise their study focus according to their own professional needs. A second context could be through the development of academic skills and qualities as a potential joint enterprise, but opportunity for generating COP within a module is limited by time and access to others outside lectures. Mutuality of engagement is, therefore, not readily available. Students could facilitate their own communities of practice outside the constraints of modules, through social media for example, but this practice was not evident in the Findings. For Wenger (1988), a truly effective COP includes students more experienced and competent in their academic skills and qualities; or more familiar with the content of a new module and its assignment strategy as well as new and inexperienced members. Without a real opportunity for mutuality of engagement as defined by Wenger (1988), this kind of master-apprenticeship relationships will not operate. Certainly, the second aspect for competent membership of a COP - 'Accountability to the Enterprise' - cannot be realised since the 'enterprise' of the COP would be difficult to pin down without mutuality of engagement and there would, therefore, be no need to be accountable. The third aspect of Negotiability of the Repertoire then is automatically redundant. Barnett (2007:36) confirms that ultimately this lack of COP is to be expected when he states:

> Being a student is necessarily a lonely affair, no matter how extensive group project work may be or how much encouragement there may be to establish a 'community of practice' among the students. The student, in any circumstance, has to haul himself out of himself and come into a new space that he himself creates.

Barnett's (2007) reference to loneliness was echoed by some participants who missed the sense of belonging engendered through previous COP experience which had been a prime motivator for continuing study. Isolation as a by-product of loneliness was picked up by Tobbell et al (2008) and McPherson et al (2017) as a factor caused by engaging with postgraduate study within environments unsupportive of student needs. There was a sense

that this loss of support from a COP, challenged their confidence to acquire qualities of independent and autonomous learning required to become masterly (QAA 2011, 2015).

Some members of the participant groups see lack of COP in a positive light believing it pushes them towards behaving more independently. There is the sense that their learning is consolidated through their practice, after all it is application of learning in practice that is a key motivator for engaging with the MAEP and it is within practice that they belong to strong COP. Wenger (1998) does acknowledge that individuals will belong to more than one COP, but here the Findings reveal that relationships within the programme of learning cannot be labelled COP as he would have defined it. This is not to say that peers in the MAEP are unimportant, indeed they clearly do influence how the journey to becoming a MAES progresses, for example V4 was specific about classroom discussion benefitting their development.

The Findings reveal some elements of needing and using others, but in communities, or networks, of support rather than sophisticated COPs. However, even this level of support was minimal; talking through experiences during module discussions or through personal contact outside of university were mentioned by (R4, R7, V3, V4). Lecturer support was mentioned by V3; V4 and V5 perhaps reflecting the need to engage with and learn from the 'old-timer' (Lave and Wenger 1991). The need for 'a sense of community' Morris and Whisker (2010:4-5) and a supportive environment, in whatever form, to boost student confidence helps students with the challenges and complexities of postgraduate study (Tobbell et al 2010). For these students this is more likely to arise within the professional and personal contexts than the student context. R3 explained a positive scaffolding effect on their journey of becoming a MAES when, having previously actively sought, and gained, support from others, their own self-confidence in study grew. In this case the community of support provided a sort of benchmarking mechanism against which to measure their own ability, but once they had achieved that benchmark they rejected further support speaking about others' 'blinkered attitudes' (R3:56). This situation could be likened to Wenger's

(1989) new comer becoming an old timer, but unlike Wenger's (1989) proposition, the participant did not seem inclined to position themselves as supportive of other newcomers preferring to become more autonomous and leave the network.

A particularly strong outcome in McPherson et al's (2017) research into support for postgraduate full-time students found that communication with lecturers and other members of support teams with students was significant to successful transition and development of student identity. R4 certainly echoes this as lecturers who respond quickly to technical questions are valued and resources such as the librarian, if used, are celebrated. This finding provides a welcome note of improvement in the postgraduate experience when compared to Tobbell et al's (2010:276) participants who had focussed '… on [the] difficulties they had negotiated alone in the face of silence from academic staff.'. Unlike McPherson et al's (2017) work the Findings of this research do not suggest that MAES use or seek ongoing or sophisticated university support systems. However, this seems ambiguous when considering literature which reveals a picture of postgraduate students struggling to find their way around academic milieu and who need ongoing academic support (Hallett 2010) from basic grammatical conventions to aspects of critical analysis and evaluation. It also belies the observations that I have made which suggest students do need more academic support to achieve standards demanded. It may be that participant group members have not revealed their support needs, this could arise for a number of reasons including: lack of self-knowledge; desire to get through study without additional time investment and reluctance to invest additional cognitive effort. Or, it may be that the support mechanisms are a taken-for-granted and, therefore, left unrecognised and unmentioned.

It was not only experience within the programme where practical support was appreciated, R4's spouse managed the children during study times and offered academic comment. However, V2, as with V3, received ambiguous messages when their partner's initial encouragement to study diminished, perhaps as the demands of study took hold. V2 was concerned about the effect their study had on their partner which resonates with Ball's

(2003:216) comment about the tensions between professional and performative identities being '… often internalized and set the care of the self against duty to others.'. Within the professional context others were also influential in valuing or devaluing the MAEP. Professional colleagues were reported as both supportive and, although never overtly obstructive, they were also non-supportive. V3 had negative messages when their new learning was rejected as not relevant, but V4 found support because their master's study would bring organisational benefit as a tick in their Ofsted's box. This reference to an outcome for organisational benefit was unique within the Findings and although not identified as an intentional initial goal, may indicate the changing perspective of MAESs as study progresses. Participants seem to persevere in the face of no support and even overt negative attitude outside the university.

Rosenberg (1965) saw the nature of self-esteem as being rooted in a social or cultural base and this implies that others who may, or may not, support the MAES have a direct effect on their self-esteem level. Brandon (1994) and Coopersmith (2002) associate self-esteem with success and feeling worthy. The Findings suggest that others can support the growth of these feelings and the resulting positive self-esteem, or confidence, enables their continuing aspiration to study. This highlights the importance of others in enabling effective learning to take place and contribute to a strengthening postgraduate identity formation. Postgraduate identity formation, in turn, is tempered by personal and professional contexts; self-esteem in any one of the student, personal or professional perspectives will influence identity formation in the other two contexts and, therefore, has increased importance in the development of that identity. The strongest influence on developing a specific identity is emergence within the associated culture, but this will have minimal affect without Wenger's (1998) COPs forming, as demonstrated above. This is further borne out by Illeris (2014) who deems that a strong personal engagement is necessary for identity formation. However, all participants reported that their focus for study is the application of learning into their professional contexts – it is there that the opportunity for COP; cultural emergence and, therefore, identity formation or reinforcement is most likely.

To summarise, the Findings suggest that others support MAESs' transition through study in many ways including subtle background support, such as emotional encouragement and recognition of professional development that makes a difference to practice. There is also more overt practical support for study, such as access to a librarian and sharing tasks to create time for study. It is these communities, or networks, of support, rather than sophisticated communities of practice, that make important contributions to the journey to becoming a MAES and are sufficient to overcome others who choose to view the MAES' journey more negatively.

There is a need for reciprocation with others for transition of identity to be effective Tobbell and al (2010). The limited evidence of COP forming within the peer groups and the emphasis on the contextualisation of theory into individual practice denies the fertile ground required for the complete transition to postgraduate student identity. It should also be borne in mind that other MAESs who are party to the establishment of an identity come from their own perspectives of professional or personal associates thus further diminishing the potential for postgraduate identity formation.

5.3.4 Discussion Part 2: Key Message 5

There is no doubt that the demands of being a student interfere with the professional and personal contexts and compromise is required. Voice 2 (183) coped by pushing themselves '… to make [my assignment] a priority', V3:173 'plough[ed] through' and V2:42-3 allowed study to encroach on practice 'I care about my job … I read a text book instead of doing something for, that they [the school children] needed' and 'I don't want to drop any balls at work'. On the other hand, MAESs place their roles and responsibilities of the home and professional lives as priorities. Participant group members explained this with comments including: the MA is '… least important in life – parenting first, then job' (fg2:105) and: 'I'm buying a house, so I haven't done anything for a month and … I've just been promoted … '

(FG1:349-40). These comments explain the emotional and practical tensions between the MAESs' three identities and the issue of how time is central to the hoop-jumping approaches uncovered in the findings.

Participant group members viewed strategies for coping with learning mostly in the context of assignment preparation. They used focussed reading (eg: V2, V4) and drafting essays and working to the learning outcomes (V4) but ultimately there was a sense of needing to bypass learning to get the qualification. V3:88 said '… I just want to pass it …' and FG1:206 said '… now it's all about qualifications …' and FG1 associated the term 'academic' with achievement of the qualification rather than a process of developing specific skills and qualities, or research. The general impatience and eagerness for the award reflected their extrinsic motivations and suggested a hoop jumping approach for coping with becoming a MAES. This was further reinforced when participant group members articulated challenges in the context of getting the work done rather than engagement with the complexity of the concepts being studied. Disappointingly, this approach compromised initial enthusiasm for applying theory to practice; according to V2:184 'It's what do I need to find out to pass this, not how can that influence work.'. However, to achieve their desire for learning at masterly level where they can synthesise theory with practice they need to commit to deep learning and engage with a postgraduate student identity.

The way time is mentioned in the data provides interesting clues about how the tensions between shifting identities are coped with, especially hoop-jumping strategies. Time is a complex concept for the participant groups who viewed it as a major constraint and limiter throughout their masterly experience and yet saw the master's programme as a vehicle to enhance time for study. Baharudin et al's (2012) study of postgraduate learners in Malaysia, many of whom were part-time, revealed time as the second greatest barrier to learning. The infiltration of study time took over their lives and their loss of personal time, as with the MAESs in this study, was significant. However, Scott et al (2014) note that their research participants experience expansion as well as contraction of time. This is mirrored

by the participant groups in this study as they reveal how time can expand when taking the step to enrol on the MAEP creates time for study '… you've got to find [time] from somewhere …' (FG2:509).

In the MAES context there is an obvious expansion of time when students use it to attend lectures, read and write for their assignments and figure out how to apply their learning into practice. Nevertheless, within a programme that adopts an andragogical approach, students are required to be active learners which puts demands on study time and personal energy. Time contracts at pinch points of tension, when other priorities from personal and professional lives take precedent. Interestingly, the Findings demonstrate that transitioning MAES do manage contracting time because of their commitment to gain the qualification. The idea of commitment is taken up by Barnett (2007:16) who sees it as a two-sided concept where the individual commits to themselves to engage with study, that is to 'being a student' and commits to making time for study. The 'making time' relates to how time can expand when used differently; it almost certainly means reprioritising time normally spent on self; family; friends and work.

When participant group members discuss time, the hoop-jumping attitudes to learning and meeting assessment deadlines are revealed. This 'just-in-time' approach to coping with study (FG1:396, 402) was an interesting phenomenon in that this was not necessarily about planning an intended just-in-time approach. Rather, it was about learning to take advantage of opportunity for study between points when participants planned study and when the unpredictable nature of personal and professional lives allowed study to take place. This requires compromise, flexibility and readiness which suggests that participants felt in control of being out of control, i.e. they were learning to accept and bend with changing circumstances. On the other hand, when one participant said 'bang, bang, bang … your assignment should be in – job's a good 'n … get back on with your life now.' (FG2:378, 381-2) the just-in-time approach is revealed as a close relation to hoop-jumping. The term 'peaks and troughs' (FG2:422) was also used to explain how opportunities for study were

positive periods of becoming a MAES, but that for much of the time study and enthusiasm for it took a backseat. Time, then, is both a facilitator and barrier to becoming a MAES. Time as a barrier reflects the demands of developing the skills, qualities, characteristics and dispositions related to becoming a MAES and managing the tensions between personal, professional and student lives within a time bound period.

Overall, external pressures converge to drive individuals towards becoming an MAES, but in the context of other priorities they balance personal aspirations with professional and personal commitments. This leads to a reality where pragmatic use of time and apparent hoop-jumping leads to sufficient learning to pass assignments. The space (articulated as time/pressure/priority) that life affords for study creates tension between the desire to fully embrace the opportunity for learning and the need to jump through the hoops.

5.4 DISCUSSION PART 3 - ON IMPLICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE TRANSITION TOWARDS BECOMING A MAES

5.4.1 Introduction

In response to Research Question 3, 'What are the implications and consequences of the journey to becoming a part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992?' the following three key messages arise:

6. MAESs adopt surface and strategic approaches to learning; their articulation of learner skills suggests undergraduate rather than postgraduate engagement
7. The process of developing a postgraduate identity is overwhelmed by demands of professional identity and loyalty to the personal identity. The master-in-practice

outweighs the master-in-study; the MAES is unable to perceive a possible self as successful postgraduate (self).

8. Transformative learning is evidenced by: successful application of learning into practice; demonstration of postgraduate qualities; steps towards postgraduate identity formation and a trend for rising self-esteem

Part Three of the discussion considers participant group members responses to questions about what it meant to them to be academic and how they described their process of study. When answering direct questions, they used terminology associated with the undergraduate and, therefore, did not project a possible self as postgraduate. However, on deeper analysis they do demonstrate personal qualities demanded of a postgraduate student, and professional. Their focus on professional identity prevails for all participant group members and they feel more confident to use the term masterly in this context than their postgraduate identity. Despite their postgraduate identity being subdued by their professional and personal identities, evidence of transformative learning (Illeris 2014) as a MAES suggests growth in that domain.

5.4.2 Discussion Part 3: Key Message 6

Becoming masterly and being academic was described by participant group members in procedural learning terms for example, reading, going to the library and being critical (only V3 mentioned all these); organised and flexible. This reflects that MAESs in this study do not transition to postgraduate study in the accepted timeframe of progressing from one educational phase to the next. The resulting time gap can lead to lack of currency of skill levels and unfamiliarity with current practices as found by O'Donnell et al (2009). Furthermore, Knowles et al's (2015) assumptions that learners bring their prior experiences and an autonomous approach to facilitate their learning is not borne out in this context. Taking this into account together with: their postgraduate identity taking least priority; their

contingent and extrinsically biased motivations; rejection of COP within the study framework and compromising study strategies, there are strong indicators that part-time MAESs undertaking CPD will employ surface and strategic approaches to learning. For example, one student (V3) said 'I just want to pass' and it was notable, but perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that the skills and qualities identified in the data reflect this.

These characteristics are certainly required for deep learning, (Blackley and Sheffield 2015), but there is much missing from participant group members' vocabulary of masterly qualities such as independence; autonomy; creativity; and originality. These gaps suggest a naivety about their image of higher-level study and their possible self as a MAES and that engagement with study will be superficial. This is further emphasised by V2:65 who found 'big words' challenging; V4 for whom using the library, group work and personal reading were new experiences and even V5:297-8 who had previously been encouraged to take on a PhD said, 'I know it's really hard but just crack on.'. This confirms Tobbell et al's (2009) finding that the transition from undergraduate study really is steep for many, though not for all as revealed by (R3:46) who talked about having to synthesise concepts; becoming 'increasingly experimental and experiential' and being reflective. The general underestimation of what is required to be masterly compared to some of the comments about the surprising ease of the learning, may explain why students experienced 'peaks and troughs' (FG2).

The MAEP encourages students to reflect on and evaluate both their practice and their study to support their aim to engage with their practice in an academically informed manner; OECD (2014) finds that there is a great deal of complexity and challenge for practitioners in doing this. The aspiration to apply learning to practice continued to be an important aspect throughout the learning experiences and emotions reflected this importance. For example, where application was achieved learning was enhanced and positivity experienced (eg FG2; V2; V5; R4) and where it did not frustration occurred (EG FG1). There are two important perspectives to consider here. Firstly, relevance to practice

for these students is a strong motivator to engage in learning and this forms the basis for Knowles et al's (2015) third assumption in the andragogical model of learning. Relevance to practice as an underpinning characteristic required for deep learning is also supported by Deci and Ryan (2000a). Secondly, however, whilst the professional identity must be valued, engaging with academic study often challenges professional identity which can lead to feelings of being rejected (eg: V3; FG2) as a professional (Knowles et al 2015).

The authority to which an HEI will go for guidance on what it is to be masterly is Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA). The QAA (2011 and 2015) documents have narratives about standards for being masterly which, among others, include the following characteristics: being evaluative; critical; independent; autonomous; original; creative; communicative and able to problem solve; take initiative and make decisions. In addition to this, Barnett (2007:102) identifies dispositions which an HE experience should develop such as: 'a will to learn' and 'a determination to keep going forward'. He also lists some qualities such as integrity, courage and openness. Scott et al (2014) express masterly level in terms more aligned to the QAA (2015) terminology; for example: the ability to write using a wider range of genre and an enhanced ability to use abstractive powers. For Scott et al (2014) outcomes are about a deeper understanding of the concept rather than extension of knowledge and it has already been shown that the issue surrounding depth in learning is a contentious issue for these learners. The lack of precision in Scott et al's characteristics of masterliness reveal the subjective nature of becoming masterly.

It is the HEI'S responsibility to demonstrate that masterly skills and qualities are achieved by students through their assessment quality procedures. These skills and qualities are necessary for engaging with deep learning, and enhancement of practice so important for these students. The participant groups' poor articulation of higher level academic skills and qualities could represent their misinterpretation of the question or a confirmation that deep learning is not understood and, therefore, will not occur. However, for an HEI, the measure of being masterly is whether students pass their assessments and it is, therefore,

unsurprising that the Findings suggest much of the learning experience is about passing assessments in as resourceful and practical manner as possible. Pew (2007:22) talks about 'taking the line of least resistance' and it seems that MAESs find themselves doing this where assessment is concerned, which again suggests that deep learning is difficult to access. Since the process of assessment is recognised as an important learning strategy the focus on the assessment deadlines (FG2; V3; V5; R3); the learning outcomes (V5; R3) and the achievement of the qualification as a way of coping with study is again indicative of a surface or strategic learning approach, in other words hoop jumping. The MAESs' strategic approach limits their opportunity to engage with challenging concepts and risk taking so necessary to affect real change in practice. This is an example of MAESs extending rather than deepening their knowledge as a postgraduate - the latter being an indicator of masterliness as proposed by Scott et al (2014).

However, Findings suggest that the opportunities to dovetail practice and learning (eg: FG2, V2, V5) were available and frustration occurred (FG1) when relevance of learning was unclear. Where students can apply their learning in practice there is a process of reinforcement, meaning making and synthesis which are all factors of deep learning. In this respect students are behaving as would be expected of self-directed adults according to Knowles et al (2015) second assumption about andragogical learning, and once again their self-concept as professionals is apparent. This may not be evident within the programme of study itself as the learning within the programme is assessed according to the degree of masterliness evident in essays, reports and presentations not in observations of practice or monitoring of professional distance travelled (though students are encouraged to reflect on this). MAESs seem to bypass deep learning within the MAEP by using strategic and surface learning coping mechanisms and apparent lack of understanding about what it is to study at master's level. Forrest III and Peterson (2006:116) are clear in their statement: 'The student or learner parts of their [adult students] identities are not primary.'.

Inevitably, students must prioritise and take the least line of resistance (Pew 2007) when devising strategies to achieve their qualification and, for MAESs, this is apparent in their pragmatic decisions, such as hoop jumping. This potential for lowering of '… the standards of their possible selves in the face of threats and fall of expectations.' Carroll, Shepperd and Arkin (2009:26), or not having a clear view of possible self, will explain and associated confidence levels at various points in their study. This hoop jumping inevitably tempers the programme implementers' and students' desires for in-depth engagement with learning opportunities. In turn, this reduces capacity for developing student identity.

Perhaps most challenging for those studying to become MAESs, in terms of investing in deep learning, is that they are products of a specific education system. Forrest III and Peterson (2006:117) claim that

> Adult learners have often faced years of pedagogical schooling that has placed them in dependent roles that would threaten an adult's self-directing self-concept.'.

For many MAESs it is not just years of compulsory learning and CPD learning that have this effect, but also their own practice mirrors this type of pedagogy. These past experiences generate an understanding of what it is to be a student which may influence their idea of possible student-self – Knowles et al (2015) assumptions about prior experience are borne out here, but perhaps not as they originally intended. The Findings confirm that students embrace the idea of study and aim to rise to its demands, but their experiences as learners who have been taught in a certain way and as professionals who teach in a certain way creates a certain mind set in them which expects the same certain approaches even within the postgraduate context. They expect a learning experience aligned to what Freire (1970) sees as a banking model, but will be confronted with an andragogical model which emulates the goal of developing critical consciousness that Freire (1974) championed. Barnett (2007) also emphasises how HE students are called to be critical; i.e. 'to be their own agents'. Knowles et al (2015) apply these ideas in their assumption that learners believe they are responsible for their own decisions and they need to be seen as, and treated as, capable of

self-direction. Those MAESs who practice within, what Jones (2015) sees as a competency-based model of the teaching profession, are drawn into critical consciousness through postgraduate study. Feelings of fear and uncertainty can arise from this about the learning experience they hope will equip them for their aspirational job rather than the job they are expected to do. In their state of anxiety and doubt, Pew's (2007) least line of resistance translates into resisting deep study in preference of a surface learning, hoop jumping approach. Engaging with critical consciousness would inevitably lead to tensions between their postgraduate and professional lives as evidenced by FG2:62's comment 'more I learn the more I don't want to be involved in [education]'. It is worth bearing in mind that for many the strength of their professional identity, born out of the cultural norms of their professional context, drives a surface approach to learning Scott et al (2014).

However, whilst hoop-jumping is justifiably associated with surface-learning, Barnett (2007) has coined the term 'fast learning' as a factor in being a student and which resonates with hoop jumping considered above. Barnett (2007:38) rationalises fast learning by reference to the kind of world in which the part-time MAESs undertaking CPD find themselves; he states that

> On the one hand, a world that is increasingly complex, requiring an ever more complex and nuanced form of student being; on the other hand, a world so speeded up and so insistent in its demands for rapid responses, that the student being is being robbed of its interior resources with which to form any kind of secure hold on the world.

Seen through the view of Barnett's (2007) concept of 'fast learning' hoop jumping can be considered as a necessary and focussed pragmatic approach to learning, within which there are positive skills such as quick thinking and the ability to access and draw from helpful resources.

The MAESs' overall experience of learning suggests that their original expectations for study are modified along the way, leading to realisations of a narrower outcome. There is the sense that they treat their MAE experience largely as a means to an end and the process of becoming a MAES with its associated postgraduate identity is, by necessity, kept confined or compartmentalised (V2, V3, R4). This strategy is recognised by Deci and Ryan (2000a) as consistent with extrinsic motivations and, therefore, increases the argument that surface learning is prevalent for part-time MAES undertaking CPD, but that deep learning is prevalent within their practice.

5.4.3 Discussion Part 3: Key Message 7

Formation of the MAESs' postgraduate identity is threatened by several factors, especially the deeply embedded professional identity. Branden's (1994), warning about the danger of being over attached to the familiar, in this case the professional identity, resonates with the potential for individuals to be so entrenched in their professional identity, that developing a student identity will be resisted. Other threats include: difficulties in imagining their possible self as a MAES resulting from imposter feelings; poor understanding of master's characteristics and the influence of others' perceptions of them as a MAES. An embedded professional identity is unsurprising in most MAESs, especially school teachers who are exposed to an initial teacher education strategy determined to develop and establish this. Although the population of the MAEP is not solely comprised of school practitioners, others in the cohort do work in professions, such as the NHS, with similar pressures or are closely connected with the school culture and, therefore, share that culture. The chance nature of the final decision to enrol confirms that becoming an MAES was not the priority for participants nor for others with whom they were connected – rather the priority was for an enhanced professional identity, the MA just came about as a convenient vehicle to facilitate this. Certainly, participant group members' desires to be challenged and learn something new was about their practise over and above any desire to become a MAES; they have high expectations that study will feed their professional identity. Forrest III and Peterson (2006)

draw attention to the variety of identities that an adult has and that as a student what is learned needs to feed these identities.

MAESs strivings to achieve a masterly qualification for reassurance that they can do their job (discussed in Part 1 of this chapter) suggests their need to bolster a professional identity. This was confirmed by Jones (2015:25) whose research into the impact of CPD on teachers and the damage being done by Government CPD policy found that for teachers there were '… underlying fears of losing certainty and stability through the change process …'. This tension between a need to bolster self-esteem within practice and a need to create a stepping stone in career advancement through academic achievement is expressed by the comment that '… unless you have this you're gonna be blocked from being a head or senior teacher.' (FG2:326). Tensions arising from this are understandable, for example, where a MAES holds a high status professional role which could be undermined if they do not perform well academically in assessed work.

It is striking that the professional identity overwhelms the learner identity for participants in this study leading to tensions between the established and newly forming identities. At the commencement of becoming an MAES the tensions, converge to create an unstable state in terms of identity formation, however, this releases opportunity for other identities, such as the postgraduate, to form. Opportunities which will enable a shift towards the MAES' identity include the two key underlying motivators which are keeping pace with policy changes and demands of the job. These types of motivators, will, according to Davies (2013:52) '… cause a teacher's self-concept of their professionalism [to] change.'. Such change could cause an unstable or vulnerable professional identity by reducing agency normally associated with a strong sense of professional identity (Beauchamp and Thomas 2010). This threat to the stability of the professional identity creates tension within an individual's self-concept in that context. Scott et al (2014:34) states that 'Identity construction is an emotional process and developing learner identities is no different.'. It is,

therefore, unsurprising that the participant groups in this study expressed a wide range of emotions and feelings about their journey.

This brings to bear the reality of engaging with learning, at least sufficiently to pass, and raises demanding questions for MAESs about their levels of commitment and time spent on study necessary for postgraduate identity formation. Without a self-directing self-concept (Forrest III and Peterson, 2006), the important characteristics of autonomy and independence (QAA 2011, 2015) leave their MAES identity lacking.

MAESs join the programme to enhance their professional identity through improved practice, but the experience of learning can unsettle their professional identity (FG2) and negatively affect self-esteem in that context.

Issues around self-confidence have serious implications for identity formation; student fears and imposter feelings suggest that, in some way, they do not believe sufficiently in themselves to aspire towards becoming what they perceive to be a MAES and the associated development of a new student identity. In addition, poor self-determination brought about by unseen, external influences and lack of consciousness about the need to develop a postgraduate identity have implications for their anticipated commitment to study. Without the desire or opportunity to fully develop a student identity it is problematic for MAESS to attain the deep learning necessary to fulfil their study goals. Illeris (2014) associates reduced learning with reduced self-esteem and for him, therefore, postgraduate identity formation is consequently reduced for these MAESs.

In the early stages of study professional identity is so embedded that the possible self of student is a missing or, at best, a distant imagining. Furthermore, the notions of imposter

feelings experienced by participant group members suggest disbelief that a postgraduate identity is possible. The MAES possible self and its associated identity is, therefore, limited, threatened or overwhelmed by the strength of professional identity; masterly self-doubt and determination not to neglect personal life. Chan (2014) explains that there should be a '... gap between the current self and the possible sel[f] …' for the behaviour of the possible self to develop. There is opportunity for this as the process of becoming a MAES takes place, but that opportunity must be grasped by the MAES. Focus on the professional identity reduces postgraduate identity emergence whilst immersion with the postgraduate identity can create vulnerability for the professional identity. The dichotomy is that engagement with the postgraduate identity can lead to professional improvement and further embed professional identity.

Embarking on any transition, such as becoming an MAES, is associated with a change in identity (Illeris 2014) and inevitably, there is a move towards postgraduate identity formation during the process of becoming a MAES. This move derives from engagement, at some level. with being a student and working towards masterly characteristics.

It must be remembered that some participant group members additionally have ambitions for personal growth through their desire to do something 'for me'. Therefore, personal identity is also in a state of adjustment alongside that of the postgraduate and professional identities for example V2 became more decisive when eventually having to prioritise study which seemed to shift the balance of a relationship. However, motivations largely ignore goals related to the personal identity and this apparent omission may be explained by Gorodetsky and Barak's (2016:85) study who claimed that teaching involves:

> … not just teachers' knowledge but also their soul and heart that are intertwined into the integrated self.

which again reiterates the significance of the professional identity.

For the possible self to come into view MAESs need to have a picture of what it is to be a postgraduate student. For the students in this study the term 'academic' is associated with award of qualification rather than a process of becoming or being a MAES. Although their aim for study is certainly central to their professional practice, it services, rather than replaces, professional practice. For example, the professional identity prevailed when students showed a pragmatic optimism in recognising the notion of 'master in practice' as a concept that mitigated for any weakness in being a master in academic terms and suggests the lack of understanding about the demands of a master's programme as revealed in Key Message 6 above.

Lave and Wenger (1991) claim that learning and identity are part of the same phenomenon and if developing a MAES identity is concerned with being a student, then knowing what it is to be a student is necessary. However, Quinn (2010) found that individuals may not want to let go of already formed identities, her participants were confused about the role and purpose of HE, reflecting barriers to transition which may apply to intending MAESs. Certainly, in view of hoop jumping strategies previously discussed, participants have not taken up the challenge of Tobbell and O'Donnell's (2013) conclusions that to become, participation in the practices of being is necessary. The desire for and action with engagement in learning as a MAES is necessary to achieve a shift towards postgraduate identity.

Tobbell and O'Donnell's (2013:127) claim that:

> … the work of transition is in the participation of the practices of the new community. The individual develops or changes in response to her/his action with and upon the new educational context.

This consideration of transition to postgraduate study, in the light of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model, reinforces that there is much to threaten the MAESs' developing student identity. The 'participation of the practices of the new community' mentioned by Tobbell and O'Donnell (2013) is limited for those for whom community is firmly embedded in practice. Unquestionably, the MAESs in this study have more exposure to professional colleagues and personal social groups than peers in study and even those peers in study are firmly seated within their own professional and personal contexts.

Denzin (2001) talks about epiphanies, turning points in a life and intersections of different lives such as the professional, personal and student lives as experienced by the participant groups of this study. The intersections between participant group members lives and their others are generally positive from the postgraduate student perspective. The importance of this is reflected by James and Beedell (2010:45) who reveal how others are affected and must change alongside the MAES's transition to postgraduate identity when they conclude that 'One person's transition is simultaneously and subsequently, a generative part of the context for another person's transition.'. This conclusion resonates with the tensions within and between identities proposed by this study as significant factors of becoming a MAES. Here choice and readiness are essential for successful transition to postgraduate identity as one person's choice can only be fulfilled when others effected are engaged in that choice too. Where others, such as professional colleagues; employers or personal associates, reject the goal of becoming a MAES as unworthy, self-esteem is reduced and, therefore, learning will become less effective. Those unrecognised drivers influencing perceived free choice will eventually reduce the sense of self-determination. This, according to Deci and Ryan (2000a), will negatively affect ongoing motivation, performance and well-being in the context of learning. Together with the potential for low self-esteem, this puts the postgraduate identity in danger of being undermined from an early stage in the process of becoming a MAES.

Tensions frequently derive from all aspects of the learning process as the developing student identity interacts and adjusts with the personal and professional identities. The HE environment demands development of a student identity, but for most, if not all, who embark on the MAEP, the professional identity is overwhelmingly in the foreground. Furthermore, any ambition to assume a postgraduate identity is easily quashed by the demands of their other identities. There is potential for harmony between the professional and student identities if the student engages with the process of becoming a MAES. Conversely tension will arise if the deep learning required in becoming is rejected due to the pressures arising from priorities in the professional and personal identities. Challenging experiences in study lead to negative and positive emotions and feelings which contribute to tensions associated with the relationships between postgraduate and professional lives and postgraduate and personal lives. Conflict arising from desires to become a better and autonomous professional informed by a postgraduate education and what government demands from that same role will also generate tension within and between the three identity contexts. Unfortunately, tensions, endured whilst becoming a MAES and derived from the demands of professional priorities, personal obligations and postgraduate aspirations, at times erode the strength of will to engage in study (Barnett, 2007).

5.4.4 Discussion Part 3: Key Message 8

This section discusses how MAESs' experience a degree of transformative learning as evidenced by three specific factors. Firstly, their successful application of learning into practice and secondly their demonstration of postgraduate qualities. The third factor, arising from the first two, concerns their progression towards postgraduate identity formation. All three factors are underpinned by their rising self-esteem. Illeris (2014:38) thinks of identity as the '… term for what transformative learning is related to and transforms.' and states that:

> The concept of transformative learning comprises all learning that implies change in the identity of the learner

The Findings do show that new understandings lead to transformative learning for many MAESs, at least at a subtle level, within the contexts of the personal, professional and postgraduate identities. For example, FG2 participants revealed a range of study outcomes including benefits for their children, feeling better in their role and being moved to challenge the values underpinning their job. This latter outcome resonates with Freire's (1974) learning goal of transformation through critical consciousness but does increase the strain on the established professional identity. Application of learning in practice; feelings of being more authoritative and, especially, more confident in all three identities (personal, professional and postgraduate) demonstrated both the practical and subtle changes that study brought about.

From Knowles et al's (2015) perspective there is a presumption that learning, for adults, creates a stronger professional identity through becoming better at the job when there is a direct link between organisational goals and learning goals. The Findings reveal that MAESs do wish to be challenged by their study and in turn the MAEP seeks to challenge them. The process of transformation in becoming an MAES causes risky situations in their personal, professional and postgraduate identities and, although transformation may not be valued by others (Lawrence 2000), there is evidence that MAESs take on these risks. Examples of this include V2's ideas for new organisational strategies and a participant in FG2 who was close to achieving Freire's (1974) conscientisation. This student when reflecting about their experience claimed that it had been

> … quite eye opening and scary because I; - the reasons for wanting to learn more about education and about leadership and schools and things like that, the more I learn the more I don't want to be involved in it. (FG2:60-2)

This suggests that the professional identity is weakened in the light of new learning and developing postgraduate identity to the extent that leaving the profession is being considered. Such a transformation, if it came to fruition, is what (Illeris 2014:5) describes as '… a qualitatively new structure of other capacity within the learner.'.

The postgraduate identity is formed as the individual embeds with the culture and practices expected of that role and is demonstrated through engagement with academic performance. Insights about self-esteem are important predictors of academic performance according to Gebka (2014) who found a direct causal path between self-esteem and performance in that the stronger the self-esteem the better the perceived competencies, abilities and effects on academic performance. Therefore, the links between improved confidence (or self-esteem) within a specific context has a direct relationship with how successful the development of that identity, in this case the postgraduate.

The fluctuations in self-esteem mirror the peaks and troughs in study and this has been discussed earlier. The peaks relate to periods of success and transformative learning and when the postgraduate identity is likely to strengthen. The evidence for growth in self-esteem is apparent in the findings when considering participant group members initial low levels revealed by their amotivation and ambivalence. Despite this, participants displayed a readiness to take a risk and embark on their journey and after an initial fall in the early stages of study, the trend is for a rise in self-esteem. Several factors took them beyond their initial low levels. Their motivation to improve practice and gain greater recognition from colleagues and seniors is described by Branden (1994) as aspirational which suggests positive self-esteem, at least within their professional identities. Furthermore, whilst they have some doubt about their academic ability, they express no sense of doubt about their potential ability to achieve their goals, which for one participant ironically included a wish to improve their confidence levels (FG2). Some participants in FG2 believe their own professional practice is masterly, but this is tempered by the need for the master's qualification to affirm this. As study progressed participant group members revealed

confidence in study (R3) and that masters study was all about 'common sense' (FG2:182, 210), but this reduced for others in terms of specific abilities of being a student, such as technology (R2).

The initial levels of self-esteem displayed are sufficient to energise readiness to study and aspirations for success, but I would argue that these are undermined by the influences of external drivers and rivalry with others. For example, the unrecognised external drivers could be interpreted as diminishing their own decision-making agency and, therefore, self-concept. Furthermore, the motivational factor of sibling and colleague rivalry suggests an aspiration to be like others or, looked at another way, a desire to be better than or different to the currently perceived self. Such a motivational state suggests low self-esteem when considered in professional and personal contexts through Branden's (1994) claim that self-esteem is neither comparative not competitive. Aspiring to be like others suggests an internal desire to be better than the self as currently perceived – again an indicator for a low self-esteem. Comparing self to others negatively reveals a perception that others view self negatively and it is well established in the literature that self-esteem is about how a person perceives others to perceive them. This reciprocal interaction also plays its part in the development and establishment of identity; the lower self-esteem is a threat to a stable identity and MAESs' motivations suggest potential for low self-esteem. This places them in a vulnerable state when taking account of Knowles et al's (2015) andragogical model which claims that a positive self-concept is required for successful adult learning.

Potential students focus on professional improvement rather than personal or academic growth when aiming to become a MAES. This leads to the possibility that study will present more challenges than anticipated and, therefore, contribute to further weakening of the self-esteem. The Findings show that, as the MAESs' study continues, situations arise creating negative emotions and feelings which lead to anxiety, for example the struggle with imposter feelings and fear of assessment. Coopersmith (2002) explains that anxiety and self-esteem are closely related and that threat, such as failure in a new environment,

releases anxiety by attacking the self-esteem. In the case of this study, those in the process of becoming a MAES experience the potential for both success and failure. Throughout their study negative emotions and feelings represent the anticipation of unknown outcomes especially assessment, this coupled with their imposter feelings do reveal that they anticipate failure. Lawrence (2000) in his research around self-esteem comments on the significance of anxiety when he explains that the over-anxious person cannot think clearly; for MAESs the implications of not thinking clearly are directly concerned with not being able to learn effectively. An inability to learn effectively and a need to just get through the MAEP, inevitably contributes to the surface-learning approach.

However, higher level learning strategies such as debate, discussion, experimentation, reflection, evaluation and synthesis were mentioned in the Findings (Findings p11). These skills considered with their personal qualities of tenacity, commitment and flexibility, etc could be interpreted as positive characteristics as the MAESs pursue their masterly qualification. Skills such as quick thinking may be effective in a fast-changing working life in providing an edge when faced with increasingly competitive outcomes. Paradoxically, such coping effort could be interpreted in terms of determination, perseverance and/or resilience and these are qualities important in maintaining and improving the self-esteem; are necessary for successful learning (Dweck 2000; Branden 1994; Coopersmith 2002; Ellis 2005) and resonate with Barnett's (2007) dispositions and qualities for learning in Higher Education (HE). Furthermore, evidence of Barnett's (2007) masterly qualities referred to previously come through in how students articulate their growth for example in terms of self-discipline and openness. These dispositions and qualities are not identified in the QAA (2015) and, therefore, are not part of the decision when assessing and giving feedback on assignments. However, they contribute to successfully engaging with learning, so far as is possible for MAESs, and realising some positive outcomes, especially in application to practice.

Illeris (2013) recognises that much depends on the role of the individual in being able to apply theory to practice when he suggests that in HE there is an expectation that any transformative learning which might affect identity formation will take place where there is strong personal engagement generated by a supportive environment. Scott et al (2104) uphold that a key feature of learning is about identity transformation which in turn is strongly influenced by others. This is reinforced repeatedly in literature about identity formation and learning. For example, Wenger (1989:4) maintains that COP is a theory of learning based on the assumption that '… engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we learn and so become who we are.'. Furthermore, Tobbell et al's (2008) report is predicated on postgraduate need for support within HE, a situation that has not been resolved in later research by Goredetsky and Barak (2016) and McPherson et al (2017). Although, participant group members in this study feel supported by the HEI, their engagement with other students in the context of the postgraduate identity is under-developed and employers are rarely supportive in practical terms. Transformative learning when viewed from this perspective will be weakened and is again a reminder of the hold of the professional identity.

Positive learning achievements were apparent despite the hoop jumping discussed earlier. This seems to suggest that whilst they perceived themselves as imposters and, therefore, as deficit in their master's work (Findings P10), they were achieving postgraduate competence and, therefore, identity. Ultimately, however, Barnett's (2007:102) disposition of 'a determination to keep going forward' and his qualities of 'resilience'; 'self-discipline' and, perhaps, 'courage', as required for student success in HE, are present in these students and must be contributors to their successes. These successes generate very positive emotions and feelings; the consequences on practice reinforce their postgraduate learning and build confidence in both work and study environments. These contributions to the evolving/developing postgraduate identity can be understood in the light of Branden's (1994) and Coopersmith's (2002) claims that positive self-esteem is associated with success, aspiration, worthiness and self-evaluation. Furthermore, these qualities resonate with the

independence and autonomy demanded of the postgraduate student providing further evidence of a developing postgraduate identity.

The discussion about achieving transformative learning and shifting towards a postgraduate identity reveals how expectations of the MAEP are applied, developed and come to fruition. There are implications and consequences along the way which affect postgraduates, professional and personal lives; but ultimately, as with other literature on the postgraduate, this study has found, these are generally positive. MAESs experience a contrast between initial optimism, doubts and negativity, but finally realise positive outcomes when, through the learning experience, the possible self as postgraduate student comes closer to reality in the light of transformative learning.

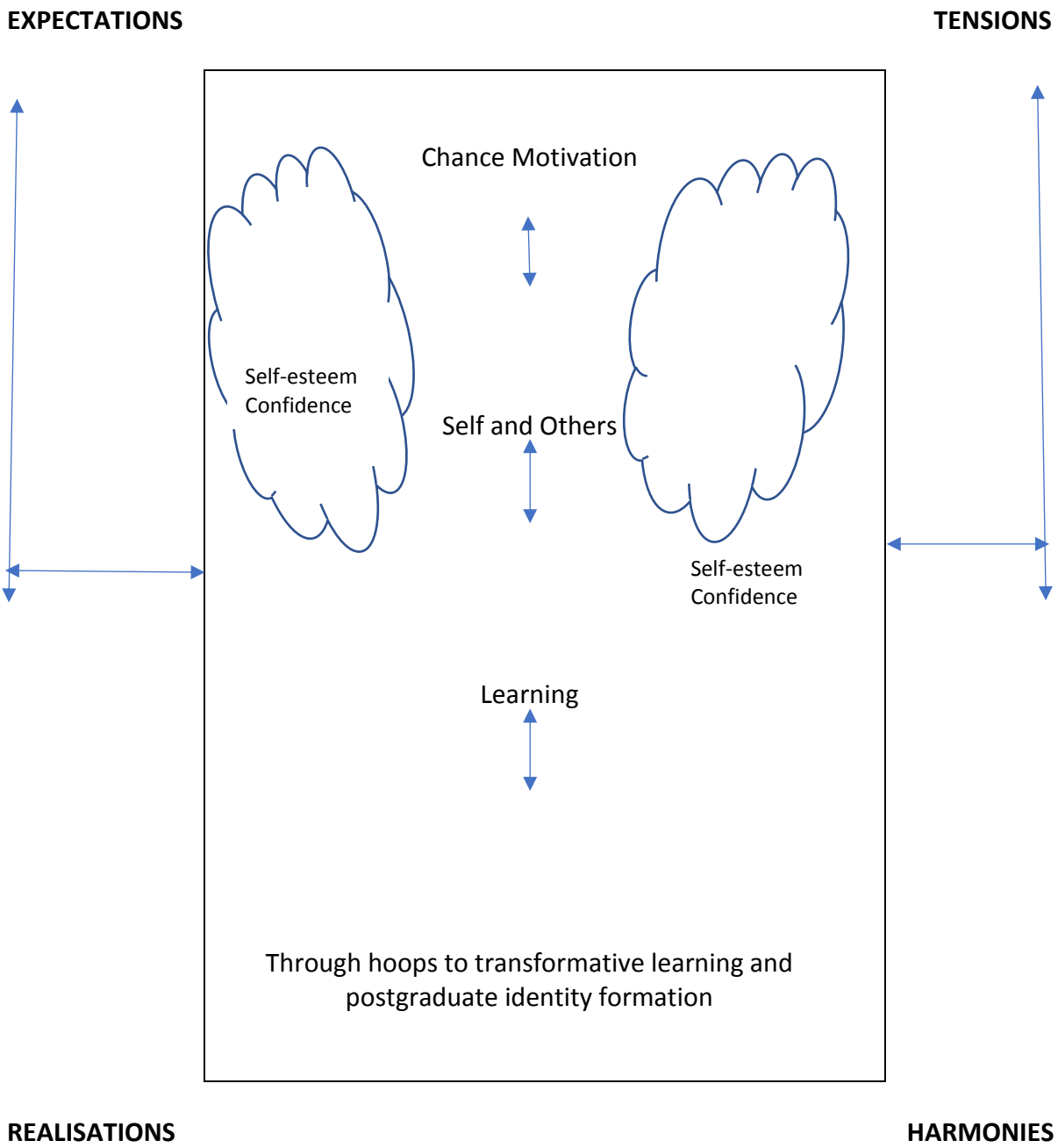
5.5 DISCUSSION CONCLUSION

The commonality between the participant group members is that they are in a process of transition between professional and postgraduate contexts mirrored by transition between training and academic learning content. These transitions are underpinned by individual, personal motivations, professional aspirations (Burchell, Dyson and Rees 2002) and constraints (Davis and Preston 2002). Their experiences are heightened because the qualification they aspire to achieve, as a vehicle for progression and response to change, goes beyond the explicitly practical, into the realms of more formal, theoretical situations bound by academic conventions. This contrasts with the CPD they are accustomed to. Anticipating the demands of study is underpinned by self-doubt and imposter feelings likely stimulated by ingrained professional identity and apparent lack of practical support from employers.

As study progresses MAESs confidence in their competence grows and their relationships strengthen, both of which sustain their motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (2000b) self-perceptions of strong competence, relationships and autonomy are required to progress through levels of extrinsic motivational states towards a more effective intrinsic state. It is only the level of their autonomy that remains questionable for MAESs which is unsurprising in the light of literature which increasingly challenges the concept (Bandura 1986 and Ryan and Deci 2006). Deci and Ryan's (2000c) self-determination theory goes some way to explain why the data reveals little room for deep learning in the part-time master's student busy life. However, effort is still expended to achieve even the surface learning that occurs.

The discussion gives rise to a revised Model of Becoming a MAES (Model 2) set within the processes of transition and identity re-formation and where self-esteem is shown to underpin the experience for part-time MAESs undertaking CPD. Their peaks and troughs are indicators of the self-esteem levels experienced during their learning and caused by the shifts in tensions and harmonies within and between the personal, professional and postgraduate identities. To combat tensions between identities initial expectations for study are modified. This is done by employing coping strategies, such as hoop-jumping, and bending to the constraints on developing COPs which weaken initial commitments for deep engagement with learning. Nevertheless, personal qualities come to the fore and harmony between identities arises when positive outcomes are realised. The priority for application of learning to practice consolidates their professional identity, but despite this they demonstrate many characteristics associated with the postgraduate. Transformative learning is achieved to a greater or lesser degree for all participant group members demonstrating positive realisations of much of their original expectations.

Model 2: Becoming a part-time MAESs undertaking CPD



Model 2: Becoming a part-time MAESs undertaking CPD

6 STUDY CONCLUSIONS

The discussion chapter of this study aimed to address the following research questions:

1. How do part-time MA Education Students (MAESs) undertaking Continuing Professional Development (CPD) at one post-1992 university perceive their motivations for becoming a MAES?
2. How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university experience transition in becoming a MAES?
3. What are the implications and consequences of the journey to becoming a part-time MAES undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university?

The nature of the Findings enabled a more in-depth exploration and discussion to answer Question 1 in a way which not only reveals student motivations, but also interprets and proposes what is behind the motivations of part-time MAESs who undertake CPD at a post-1992 university. With this revised Research Question 1 in mind, this conclusion addresses each research question in turn.

What is behind the motivations of part-time MA Education Students (MAESs) who undertake continuing professional development (CPD) at a post-1992 university?

It has become clear that the motivations of MAESs are largely extrinsic and their decisions are taken in an atmosphere that is often not supportive. I have argued that conditions come together accidentally to create the impetus for taking on the masterly journey. Despite this, and anticipating a challenging journey, these chance circumstances provide an early injection of confidence which allows the first step on the journey to be taken in a state of positive self-esteem. From Deci and Ryan's (2000b) perspective, with the responsibility for decision making outside the direct control of the individual, there are indications that choices are made with some degrees of amotivation and ambivalence. From Wigfield and

Eccle's (2002) perspective the value and importance of the award together with some intrinsic motivation and no perception of reals costs explains why individuals are motivated to enrol.

Participant group members' early confidence to embark on study is contrasted by low self-confidence in practice revealed by their motivation to improve professional practice. This has led to my argument that they do not recognise the external drivers emanating from a political culture which has contributed to their feelings of deficit in practice and consequent decisions to study. The contradictory aspect of confidence levels as they take on board study yet doubt themselves as a MAES and professional is a predictor of the tensions to be experienced throughout their journey of becoming a MAES. This goes some way to explaining imposter feelings experienced before and during study. Despite the largely extrinsic motivators, there are also personal needs to satisfy, and some participant group members claim to be intrinsically motived by a joy of learning. Interestingly, motivation for ongoing study is sustained by joy of achievement and the satisfaction of application to practice.

How do part-time MAESs undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university experience transition in becoming a MAES?

Barnett (2007) explains that tensions endured whilst becoming derive from the demands of professional and personal contexts. These demands erode the strength of that original will to commence their journey and may explain why, once participants find themselves within the context of study, confidence levels are lowered, but do rise overall as the journey progresses. The findings reveal contradictions where positive feelings and emotions suggest growing confidence tempered by self-doubts throughout the journey. In line with the peaks and troughs of anxiety and joy before assignments and after achievement, self-esteem in the postgraduate context also dips and rises. It can, therefore, be projected that self-esteem in the postgraduate identity will similarly rise when study concludes and success

is finally realised. Here there is a continuum between expectations to realisations which run parallel to the tensions and harmonies experience as shown in Model 2.

Managing self-belief to overcome imposter feelings seemed to be one of the biggest challenges for these students. For these students there is always a tension between striving to achieve a possible self, (i.e. successful student; ability to apply theory in practice; become a MAES) and having sufficient self-belief and vision that this could ultimately happen. For participant group members this is revealed in several ways, for example: their levels of self-belief are predicated on negative assumptions about self as compared with others; their internal dialogue reflects risk-taking avoidance thereby diluting the competency profile of a MA Education Award (MAEA) or, they have insufficient confidence to embrace their own ability or success. As adults who experience many external and few internal drivers to engage in accredited CPD at masterly level and who experience imposter feelings throughout, participant group members adopt coping strategies, such as hoop jumping which leads towards a surface learning approach to get through their studies. However, their efforts to achieve their goal of application to practice, despite hoop-jumping, shows that they can use a self-directed learning approach.

The potential for weak self-esteem is reinforced when considering these students' ambivalence and amotivation; reduced agency due to unrecognised factors; deficit feelings and rivalry with others. Weak self-esteem has a negative effect on learning and yet, a key factor in the drive towards the MAEA is to use the learning process as a vehicle by which to respond to and facilitate change in practice. However, to be successful in coping with and adapting to change, individuals need to be in possession of sufficient positive self-esteem. If the low levels of self-esteem suggested above are not addressed expectations for change will not be achieved and goals not realised, again lowering self-esteem. Their desire for change is a personal investment which affects others, but needs to be facilitated by others, through feedback and resources, particularly time. Whilst there is no guarantee that the HEI, with its 'reified practices' (Tobbell and O'Donnell 2013:128), nor the personal and

practitioner structures surrounding the individual will anticipate and respond to MAESs' needs, raised awareness for all parties will move towards a more appropriate and fulfilling journey.

MAESs' hoop jumping inevitably tempers their initial desires for in-depth engagement with learning opportunities and, in turn, this reduces capacity for developing student identity. If Coopersmith's (2002) contention that self-esteem 'provides a mental set that prepares the person to respond according to expectations of success, acceptance and personal strength' the self-esteem mind set of an MAES as they experience transition is significant to their levels of confidence and, therefore, approach to learning readiness. For MAESs, commitment to study has implications for both the development of their professional and personal identities. Stakes, then, are amplified and tensions heightened and self-esteem is threatened in these contexts and their postgraduate identity.

What are the implications and consequences of the journey to becoming a part-time MAES undertaking CPD at one post-1992 university?

The Discussion has revealed a lack of postgraduate identity in MAESs who study part-time for CPD. This is a challenge for programme implementers who may wish for the student identity to be better portrayed through the characteristics of masterly skills and competencies. These characteristics are expected to be evidenced in the presentation of assignment work, not the application of learning into practice wherein the heart of the developing MAES lies. But an appropriate measure of the depth of learning is probably not possible through the ongoing assessment regimes applied within the MA Education Programme (MAEP) as students embed their learning into practice beyond the time line of the programme of study. It is then that their competencies in reflection, evaluation and

resilience etc will come to fruition in a deepening of learning during the process of application in practice. However, in harmony with becoming a MAES, the Findings reveal participant groups having many personal qualities required for masterliness and for managing rich and productive personal and professional lives. If Barnett's (2007) and Scott et al's (2014) claims about masterly and HE qualities respectively are accepted, and it would seem reasonable to do so, questions are raised around the validity and reliability of criteria used for developing curricula and assessment strategies for an MAEP.

Ultimately, the learning experiences were usually recognised as positive and celebrated by the MAESs – it was just that becoming a MAES was never a priority, much rather a burden in view of the challenges of managing study with work and home life. Study for its own sake was also not a priority despite the strength of the original and ongoing motivations to take something from the MAEP. Certainly, the idea of being academic was associated with achievement of the qualification rather than a process or the development of specific skills and qualities, or research.

To summarise, overall this study illuminates the nature of part-time MAESs undertaking CPD as they navigate their challenges and successes. Their decisions to embark on higher level study for three to five years, whilst in full time professional employment, is a commitment with demanding and challenging personal, professional and study implications. The programme of study is largely used by students as a channel through which to address low professional self-concept caused by a performativity culture within their practice. The investment in terms of finance, time, energy and reprioritisation of lifestyle is made without guarantee of a return on their investment. The expectation of improved practice and career security may or may not be realised. They are daunted by their self-perceptions of inadequate ability and having to become autonomous and independent learners, but they put themselves into a position of risk taking by investing time, money and cognitive effort into something aspirational, yet with unknown consequences.

7 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY TO PRACTICE AND POLICY

Overall, then this study has made several specific contributions to practice and policy at both personal, programme and university levels with potential for national and international interest.

7.1 Explanation of Contributions

Contributions to my personal practice

My personal practice has been much enhanced in terms of my own confidence and writing. The process of research in this study has contributed to my knowledge and understanding module leader and Independent Study Supervisor. During the period of this study I have published two book chapters; co-edited a book aimed at postgraduate students and presented at one internal and three external conferences. By understanding the masters' student experience, as encapsulated within the Model of the MAES (Figure 2), my realisation that all students bring such determination and commitment to study has intensified. This has helped me reframe my approach to providing feedback. I believe I am inclined to be more empathetic to what students have achieved in practice and more inclined to appreciate their masterly personal and professional qualities as part of their level 7 characteristics.

Contributions to programme design across the faculty, this university, the sector and internationally

The process of gaining more insight about MAESs brings into focus their diverse and complex nature which demands a curriculum to meet individual needs. This study has provided a strong rationale to address these needs, for example, through the ongoing

development of two distinguishing features of the MA Education programme. These have been embedded into the programme and more recently adopted by five other MAs as they have been validated.

The first of these features is a core module designed to facilitate transition into the programme. The module has both a taught and online element. The taught element is designed to put students at the centre of the module, to give them the opportunity to reflect about their motivations and experiences and how these can be enhanced. Through this process they can draw on a range of theoretical lenses relevant not just to themselves, but also applicable to their own learners. One of my published chapters provides a key text for the module. The online element of the module enables students to progress in their own time through a choice of academic competence and confidence building work. They are assessed by the means of a reflexive portfolio, the content of which is negotiated and aims to encourage students to take risk and challenge themselves. Their work should chart their growing masterliness and help them create a picture of their possible masterly self, both academically and professionally.

The second distinguishing feature of the programme to which this study contributes is the Progression, Assessment and Academic Record, (or PAAR Form) used for a dialogic feedback between the student and the lecturer. This provides an opportunity through which students can engage with their lecturers in dialogue about aspects of their work. For example, some particularly challenging or pleasing work on which they would welcome specific comment. There is also a section within the form for the marker's advice on how to progress areas of weakness or strength.

This study has also revisited and extended Knowles' (2015) androgogical assumptions in order to provide a theoretical base for discussing part time students who study for continuing professional development.

Internationally, our collaborative partners in Greece have adopted the programme core module and our approach to dialogic feedback. There is every reason to be confident that these contributions could be applied within other faculties of this university and other universities nationally and internationally.

As the programme now moves forward into revalidation, lessons learned from this study can be encapsulated by the three concepts of: recognition; negotiation and differentiation.

Contributions for wider policy

In wider terms, this study contributes a rationale from which to encourage policy makers to understand the need for educators to be valued and appreciated as individual professionals.

At university level, the findings will help distinguish the characteristics of these postgraduate students, including personal and professional qualities. The study highlights the tension between learning for continuing professional development and academic competence at level 7 as well as tensions between their three identities. By recognising these characteristics and tensions grading descriptors can be devised to create assessment approaches which better meet the needs of those for whom a key aim of study is application to practice. The issue of module learning outcomes should be considered carefully so that they are devised without becoming a strait jacket for students, rather these should be a means of liberating students and facilitating learning.

For government policy, the findings call for strategies which demonstrate a commitment to a masterly profession. Such strategies should encourage educational contexts to embrace

practitioner aspirations for accredited masterly status and celebrate their successes in doing so. This would make a positive difference to students' levels of self-esteem and self-belief and consequently lead to more effective learning and fruitful application in practice. This study suggests two means by which this could be achieved. Firstly, offering loans to all potential master's students would make the award more accessible and government would. Loans should be available to all potential students including those who have previously achieved a postgraduate certificate and wish to complete a full masters award. Secondly, by encouraging leaders of educational institutions, through policy articulated within professional standards, to support staff in practical and emotional ways. This could be achieved by strategies such as study leave; funding if loans are not available and demonstrating the value of the masters award through verbal encouragement and interest in their study.

Contributions for other researchers

Beyond the contributions of this research for myself, practice and policy other national and international researchers will be interested in my discussions of self-esteem, motivation, identity, andragogy and my challenge about the benefits of using email to collect data.

It is of particular satisfaction for me that the currency of the study remains strong. This is evidenced by the following: three of my own students, inspired by the programme core module, have chosen to continue this research for their own masters Independent Studies; innovative contributions to practice are especially important in the light of the Teaching Excellence Framework and renewed interest in master's study is significant in the light of postgraduate loans and the formation of the Chartered College of Teachers.

7.2 Statement of Recommendations

Recommendations for practice

1. Plan the MA Education curriculum in a way that meets student professional and practitioner needs as well as Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) QAA bench marks and HEI policies. This can be achieved through design of content; practices of module delivery and construction of assessment strategy. This latter point is of current interest for the University of focus. Marking and grading should take account of the revision to Knowles et al (2015) andragogical assumptions recommended below.
2. Students need to appreciate how their strong professional identities can conflict with a developing student identity. This could be achieved by implementing induction programmes as well as ongoing transition and feedback strategies. These should be designed to encourage students to envision their possible self as student, but without overly conflicting with or damaging the self as professional. Such strategies would also help to build confidence and self-esteem by encouraging students to view their own developments, rather than compare these to others' progress.
3. Programme teams to implement a plan of recognition, negotiation and differentiation throughout all aspects of curriculum development.
4. Disseminate outcomes of this research to HEI programme delivery and development teams, both at this institution and other similar ones, so that the purpose of study for part-time students and the factors which constrain deep learning are fully understood.

Recommendations for Theory

1. Knowles et al (2015) andragogical assumptions be reviewed and understood in the light of this research to more appropriately accommodate this category of student as suggested in Table 4 below:

TABLE 4: Review of Knowles et al's (2015) andragogical assumptions for MAESs

Assumptions	**Relationship to MAES**	**Comment/Amend/Action**
Learners have a need to know; they want to know why they are learning something and to gain benefits from it	MAES must determine the answer to this for themselves. They choose a programme of study that is broadly relevant to themselves as professionals, but they cannot guarantee each aspect of every module will be specific to their own context. The longevity of the programme, parallel to changing professional and personal circumstances, exacerbate this. Benefits are perceived only by learners themselves as their employers and others in their lives do not always value the award	Differentiation must be at the forefront of programme designers and deliverers Strategies to help MAES mature sufficiently to make their own meanings and apply to their own practice – for example, to develop deep critical reflection. More overt engagement between the HEI and employers of part-time MAES to generate their support and better understanding of the benefits for professional improvement.
Learners' self-concept is that they are responsible for their own decisions and they need to be seen as, and treated	This relates to MAESs' self-doubts, peaks and troughs in self-esteem and imposter feelings. All of which diminish deep learning approaches, but which are often caused by time constraints and related hoop-	Flexibility in assignments and associated learning outcomes sufficient to ensure applicability to professional needs for each student may go some way to engender positive self-concept. Ipsative, feedback strategies

as, capable of self-direction	jumping strategies to get study completed, especially for assessment. Self-direction may be constrained by constant changes in local and national policy concerning professional practice in the context of education.	associated with how assignments dovetail into professional improvements as well as focus on masterly competence should be developed. This could be taken even further with a dialogic approach.
Role of learners' experience is of value in the classroom and learners become a resource in the learning context, even though prior experience can be negative. However, if a learner's professional experiences are ignored or rejected this can result in feeling rejected as a professional.	Many MAESs prior experiences as a student require development, but they do draw on their professional experiences much of which they perceive as masterly. For some, there were preconceived ideas about learning based on prior experience and current models of their own practice.	There is a balance to be achieved between content delivery through a typical lecture/seminar approach and using strategies that recognise learners, and their experiences, as resources, for example experiential learning. At the same time development of masterly competence is essential. Valuing all experience is essential to maintain confidence in learners. This leads to a need for lecturer flexibility in module design and delivery – andragogy is appropriate for content, but

		pedagogical approaches may be needed for skills developments
Readiness to learn about the things needed to help cope with and improve professional life. However, it is important that learning occurs at an appropriate time.	Change may or may not occur, but when it does transformative learning will occur. Transformative learning and consequent identity formation may be stifled without challenging previous experience. Moreover, if transformative learning does arise it is likely to have more benefits for the professional identity as the locus of change manifests within the professional identity. However, the postgraduate identity will have gone through transformation to facilitate change in the professional context.	Programme implementers must take account of the significant effect masters study can have on students and have ways to value not just growth in masterly competence and qualities, but also within the MAESs' professional contexts.
Orientation to learning requires contextualisation of content for professional application	MAESs' motivation is about the perception that learning will lead to improvement in dealing with their own professional activity. Each MAES is unique in their context and needs for contextualisation. However, the	Programme developers and implementers must ensure they maintain ongoing understanding of each MAES' unique context and learning maturity. On-programme time is needed to discuss with

	andragogical approach assumes that learners are self-directed and this may be a challenge for those less mature in their learning experiences or those entrenched in more pedagogical approaches associated with competence based CPD or their own teaching style.	learners how module content might require amendment to accommodate this. Ideally, modules need to be designed to facilitate differentiation and teaching strategies require a student-centred approach which enables critical consideration to develop in line with growing learning maturity.
Motivation	The chance factors which give rise to enrolment suggest that MAESs often do not taken full responsibility for their own decisions. They are extrinsically motivated; however, they have a broad direction for their studies to improve their professional practice. Along the way there are barriers to motivation such as low self-esteem and lack of time. On the other hand, as students, they have maintained motivation and not been overly dependent on support mechanisms.	The above strategies should contribute to improving and maintaining motivation.

Missing assumptions needed for andragogical model of MAESs

1. MAESs – want to apply learning to improve professionally
2. MAESs – are embedded in their professional identity and will resist a postgraduate identity

Recommendations for Policy

1. Facilitate resourcing of employing organisations sufficient to provide practical and financial support, and thereby encouragement, to study for full education master's award
2. Recognition of value in multi-professional type MA Education Programme (MAEP) where all involved in education come together in study, rather than education-sector specific routes
3. Extend loans to enable those who have achieved prior master's credits to complete a full masters award

Recommendations for Further Research

1. Replicate study with other institutions
2. Replicate study with other masters' awards
3. Research into HEI's focus on employability and how this effects the philosophy and depth of postgraduate study
4. Research into a comparison study with full time students at the focus university
5. Research into a comparison study with part-time international MAESs who study with the focus university
6. Research of a longitudinal nature to consider the full 3 years of part-time study
7. Evaluation study of impact of MAEP on student professional practice
8. Research into compatibility of university grade descriptors for part-students who study for cpd

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – REQUEST FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Request for ethical approval for students on taught programmes

Please complete this form and return it to your supervisor as advised in your module handbook. Feedback on your application will be via your supervisor or co-ordinator.

Your Name:	**Vanessa Cottle**
Student ID:	**100059537**
Unimail address:	
Other contact information	**v.cottle@derby.ac.uk**
Programme name and code	**Ed D**
Module name and code	**Philosophy and Practice of Research**
Name of supervisor	**Codra Spencer**
Name of co-ordinator	

Title of proposed research study
Becoming a Master's Student

Supervisor Comments

Are the ethical implications of the proposed research adequately described in this application?	Yes ❑ / No ❑
Does the overall study have low, moderate or high risk in terms of ethical implications?	Low ❑ / Moderate ❑ High ❑
Does the study method describe a process of research that is ethically sound?	Yes ❑ / No ❑

Signatures

The information supplied is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I clearly understand my obligations and the rights of the participants. I agree to act at all times in accordance with University of Derby Policy and Code of Practice on Research Ethics:
http://www.derby.ac.uk/research/ethics-and-governance/research-ethics-and-governance

Signature of applicant	

Date of submission by applicant	
Signature of supervisor	
Date of signature by supervisor	

For Committee Use Reference Number (Subject area initials/year/ID number).....

Date received..... Date approved ..... Signed.....

Comments

1. What is the aim of your study? What are the objectives for your study?

AIM: to explore the tensions and transitions experienced by in-service MA Education students

OBJECTIVES:

To identify the process of development towards level 7 competence experienced by in-service MA Education students

To determine the extent to which pressures from their different professional or workplace learning contexts and personal lives limit/enhance engagement and 'success' for the in-service MA Education student

To discover the extent to which in-service MA Education students adapt to different academic approaches and strategies as they progress through their course

2. Explain the rationale for this study (refer to relevant research literature in your response).

RATIONALE FOR RESEARCH

There are a number of perspectives from which this study can be justified. Firstly, the suggested issues of transition experienced by the subjects of this study arise partly as a result of current government agendas which create an imperative for continuing professional development to address ongoing changes of working practices as well demands for teachers to become qualified at masterly level. Secondly, my own position in terms of my work with a range of in-service practitioners engaged with higher level study in contexts of both training and development and education has stimulated my original interest in the potential for tension for in-service practitioners as they strive to accommodate different learning contexts.. Thirdly, academic research acknowledges that paving the way for student transition is relevant to the quality of the outcome of their study (Tobbell, O'Donnell & Zammit (2008).

MY OWN POSITION

I have been involved with a range of students in contexts including Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Manager; programme coordinator; independent study supervisor and lecturer. Many of my students were returning to formal study at level 6 having already graduated in their subject specialism, but often they were new to Higher Education (HE) level study. Students included Further Education (FE) practitioners from vocational backgrounds who were required to study at level 4 and 5 for their Certificate in Education; in-service Teaching Assistants progressing from a Foundation Degree (FD) to the third year top up of an honours degree and, more recently, in-service teachers studying for an MA Education. All of these practitioners were also, by the nature of their work, involved in on-the-job informal learning and learning through competency training; a stark example of the latter being assessors of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs).

This study is, therefore, a response to my own informal observations of the pressures experienced by in-service practitioners from diverse educational contexts, as they study across a range of HE levels for the purposes of formal CPD. This study is placed within the context of lifelong learning and CPD.

ISSUES OF TRANSITION

The term transition is often used in the context of children and young people managing the changes encountered when moving between one level of education to another. For example a child's move from primary to secondary education can, according to Slater and McKeowan (2004) be a stressful experience which impacts negatively on their learning and achievement. Evans and Waite (2010:164) discuss transitions experienced by adults in the context of their '… aims of maintaining employment, changing employment, balancing work and family life and finding personal fulfilment.' and explain that the activities that are undertaken in these contexts '… may be considered transitional where they involve changes in the adult's orientations to learning and career.' It is the adult's orientations to learning as demanded by the different contexts in which they learn and the different levels of confidence that these engender within the students which is of particular interest to my research.

My personal reflections suggest that these students have to manage a range of personal learning transitions. These transitions that take them from their personal professional practice (which often includes a focus on developing the learning of *their* students rarely beyond level 3), through their employers' demands for targets, to meeting the academic skills demanded by the Level 7 requirements. The latter often not recognised as used or needed in practice as reflected by the DfE (2010) which interprets courses external to the school environment as passive preferring classroom observation and performance management as a route to the quality teacher.

What I have seen as the commonality between these groups of students is that they are in a process of transition between practice contexts and theoretical contexts as well as between vocational and academic content all underpinned by individual, personal motivations, aspirations (Burchell, Dyson & Rees 2002; Guskey 2002) and constraints (Davis & Preston 2002). These transitions are accentuated where the qualifications they aspire to achieve go beyond the explicitly practical into the realms of the more formal situations bound by academic conventions and knowledge creation and, whilst students are encouraged to draw on both academic theory and practice within their assignments, the content and assessment regimes have a focus on the requirement to demonstrate higher level academic skills. There has been some research into the kinds of transitions with which the study will be concerned, for example Penketh & Goddard (2008) and Pike and Harrison (2010) have both looked into FD students who progress into third year top up programmes of honours degrees, but according to Tobbell, O'Donnell & Zammit's (2008:4) introduction to their report on improving the quality of postgraduate learning experience for the Higher Education Academy (HEA)

> An understanding of educational transitions is becoming increasingly important in constructing learning environments, because the nature of individual students' transitions can shape their study experience and may impact on their eventual level of success.

THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE RESEARCH

In the same report mentioned above Tobbell, O'Donnell & Zammit (2008:4) also state that 'Whilst there has been a research focus on transitions … postgraduate study has, largely been ignored.' Taking into account my own position, my current role as incoming Programme Leader for MA Education students and underpinning government agendas this research aims to probe into the transitional experiences of in-service MA Education students as they navigate through their professional development contexts.

At postgraduate level the inference is that these students hold a first degree and are qualified practitioners and, therefore, on paper are competent both vocationally and academically. Yet, I am noting the same struggles and doubts experienced by their less qualified counterparts – they seem to lack confidence in their 'academicness'; my anecdotal findings are supported by research conducted by Lahiff (2005). These students find themselves in a position where they simultaneously have to prove, and improve, their practitioner competence measured by employer targets, their academic skills determined by HE measures and, surely, some outcome to satisfy their personal needs. In short they have to satisfy the needs of their employer, the HE institution and themselves each having different priorities and different perspectives on what learning means.

The proposed study aims to explore the potential triangle of tensions arising as a result of transitions between practitioner learning in the work place and simultaneous academic learning whilst studying at masterly level and the personal challenges and development experienced. Such a triangle of tension suggests the attempts of the individual to achieve organisational, academic and personal professional outcomes through the medium of practitioner-academic learning. It leads to a consideration of the implications for these practitioners as they adopt and adapt to a range of learning identities whilst they respond to the demands of their contexts.

The study will build on Tobbell et al's (2008) report and their following collaboration with Lawthom in O'Donnell, Tobbell, Lawthom & Zammit (2009). Much of the other literature so far considered examines the characteristics of the MA Education student and provides a strong indication that an increased level of confidence is a key outcome for a student completing an MA Education. If transition could be better understood and catered for perhaps key outcome areas would shift from an almost unintended, what might be called soft or therapeutic focus to the more specific outcomes valued by stakeholders in practitioner study at this level.

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3. Provide an outline of study design and methods.

The study design is based on naturalistic contexts (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) ie it aims to explore individuals' understandings, ideas, feelings and responses to their situations. Therefore, a qualitative and interpretivist approach will be adopted. Focus groups will be used, only once necessary permissions have been obtained. The approach will be longitudinal and cross-sectional; that is two series of three focus groups will be held each with a first stage group and a second stage group. IE In each year a focus group will be held as early as possible after enrolment; towards the end of the first module and then at the end of the stage. A final focus group with students who complete their third stage study.

Focus groups will take place at a time and location agreeable to all parties. It is anticipated that with the permission of the participants discussions will be audio recorded, with key reference notes hand written along the way. The structure of the discussion will be loosely defined in terms of the order of content, whilst the pre-prepared questions and prompts will provide a framework within which to work as well as a list of reminders of areas that need to be covered – these will not be intended to constrain the conversations taking place (though the 'conversations' will be encouraged to be one-sided with the participants doing most of the talking). The aim is to be able to adapt the process in response to the the participants involved in the discussion, but to avoid prompting and leading questions though the use of probing techniques to achieve more in-depth comment. Attention will be paid to planning a questionin route as discussed by Krueger and Casey (2009) who also advocate strong active listening skills, on the part of the researcher.

The first focus group will commence with an introduction to myself and explanation of the study; key terms will be defined to ensure common understanding where appropriate – example professional development – this will be informed by the piloting of the questions. Krueger and Casey (2009:60) suggest that this can be done with '… a few people …' in the form of an interview with each. Permission will be confirmed with regard to the use of the audio equipment, protocols with regard to withdrawal, anonymity and confidentiality will be confirmed. Participant questions will be invited and answered. Wellington (2000) suggests that where interviews are concerned other information for the participants would include: why

they were invited to contribute and how long the discussions will take and it is logical to apply this to the focus group context.

Time will be planned so that transcripts can be made at the earliest possible opportunity after the discussions.

REFERENCES

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4. Please provide a detailed description of the study sample, covering selection, sample profile, recruitment and if appropriate, inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The sample will be selected from the MA Education student population registered at the University of Derby.

The criteria for inclusion in the sample will be that participants are undertaking the MA as part of their professional development as practitioners employed in teaching and learning environments. The learning environments may include primary, secondary and lifelong learning contexts, but it is not a function of the research to differentiate between these. Wellington (2000) would categorise this sample as a non-probability, purposive sample. Within these criteria the sample will be random, all students meeting the criteria will be invited to participate and from those who volunteer it is hoped to be able to select 6 individuals for each series of focus group meetings, ie one group of students for a series of meetings from stage 1 and one group from stage 2 and for one meeting only a group at the end of their studies from stage 3. This sample will reflect the typical type of the population in so far as individuals within a group are able to do so.

5. Are payments or rewards/incentives going to be made to the participants? No
If so, please give details below.

6. Please indicate how you intend to address each of the following ethical considerations in your study. If you consider that they do not relate to your study please say so.

Guidance to completing this section of the form is provided at the end of the document.

a. Consent

Permission to undertake the focus groups with the MA Education students will in the first place be obtained from the Programme Leader who will be informed in writing about the nature, purpose and process of the study (App A)

Once permission to make contact with the students has been obtained the cohort will be contacted in two stages. In the first place awareness raising will be achieved by going into class groups to introduce myself in person and explain that I will, by email, be formally inviting those students who meet the required criteria to take part in the study; the second stage will be, by email, through the formal Invitation to Participate (App B) with accompanying Participant Information Sheet (App C). The Participant Information Sheet (App C) clearly states the purpose and process of the study as well as possible benefits or issues that may arise for them as a result of taking part. Opportunities for questions about any aspect of the study from participants will be encouraged. However, there are no technical terms used in any of the documentation

only educational terms which it is reasonable to be confident that students at this level will be familiar with. Participants are clearly informed that they can withdraw from the study at any time and App C indicates the measures I am taking to ensure anonymity and the confidentiality of data. Finally, participants will be invited to sign Participant Consent Form (App D).

b. Deception

This research does not engage in any deception.

c. Debriefing

At the end of the discussions participants will be thanked for their time and valuable contributions. Time will be offered for their personal reflection on the interview so they can offer any further comments, retract or amend anything that had transpired within the interview. A written transcript will be forwarded to the participants as soon as possible after the interview to allow the participant opportunity again to add further comment or retract/amend any content. Their right to withdraw will be reiterated (App D).

d. Withdrawal from the investigation

The Participant Information Sheet acknowledges the details of the participants' right to withdraw as does the Participant Consent Form (App D); also the debrief after the discussions will reiterate this.

e. Confidentiality

Participants will be assured of confidentiality (Participant Consent Form App D). Responses to invitations to participate will be conducted by email between the respondent and myself; any notes taken will be securely stored as will the audio recordings and transcribed digital data and these will be used only for the purpose of extracting data to inform the study. Anonymity will also be employed within the written study as participants' names will not be used, rather they will be coded – eg: participant A, B, C etc. Agreement with participants to respect confidentiality and anonymity between each other will be sought prior to commencing any discussion on each occasion of a focus group meeting.

f. Protection of participants

There is no reason for any physical or psychological harm to be a threat to participants. However, it is acknowledged that there may be circumstances where individual participants may be at risk of low level emotional harm if they are, at the time of the interview, undergoing any stress as a result of pressure of work combined with study which may be brought to the fore as a result of reflections taking place during the interview. Steps to overcome this are the pre-discussion information; post-discussion debriefing; participants' right to withdraw at any stage and my willingness to stop the discussion should any stress be detected in any participants.

g. Observation research

Observations will not be conducted.

h. Giving advice

I will not put myself in a position of authority from which to provide advice and will in all cases refer participants to suitably qualified and appropriate professionals other than myself.

i. Research undertaken in public places

The research will take place privately in rooms within the university.

j. Data protection

I will comply with the Data Protection Act and the University's Good Scientific Practice by:

- ensuring that the Participant Information Sheet (App B) includes information on what the research is for, who will conduct the research, how the personal information will be used, who will have access to the information and how long the information will be kept for.
- I will not do anything with the personal information I collect over and above that for which you have consent.
- I will only make audio or visual recordings of participants with their consent and this will be included on the Participant Information sheet.
- I will ensure that identifiable personal information should only be conveyed to others within the framework of the act and with the participant's permission.
- I will store data securely. Consent forms and data will be stored separately and securely.
- I will only collect data that is relevant to the study being undertaken.
- The sole use of the data will be for research purposes and meets the following conditions:
    - The data is not being used to take decisions in respect of any living individual.
    - The data is not being used in any way which is, or is likely to, cause damage and/or distress to any living individual.
- Although the nature of the discussions means that the participant cannot be completely anonymous, as I will be face to face with them and they with each other, I will always protect all anonymity by ensuring that I do not discuss who I have interviewed with anyone, nor will they be named in the study unless they have given their permission to be identified (if they do so, this will be stated on their Informed Consent Form). The focus groups will not go ahead until agreement from each participant has been obtained with regard to adhering to rules of confidentiality and anonymity.
- I will return all data to participants or it will destroyed if consent is not given after the fact, or if a participant withdraws.
- Participants will have the option to request a copy of the final analysis.

k. Animal Rights – there are no animals involved in this study

l. Environmental protection – there are not environmental issues involved in this study.

7. Are there any further ethical implications arising from your proposed research? Yes ☐

If your answer was no, please explain why.

The participants may know my role with the regard to the programme of study to which they are enrolled, this could raise issues around their responses being skewed towards their perception of what I would like them to say. As with any interview schedule care will be taken to eliminate leading and inappropriate questions.

8. Have / do you intend to request ethical approval from any other body/organisation? No

If 'Yes' – please give details

9. What resources will you require? (e.g. psychometric scales, IT equipment, specialised software, access to specialist facilities, such as microbiological containment laboratories).

Access to interview room
Audio recording equipment, notebook

PC for transcribing Lockable storage
10. What study materials will you use? (Please give full details here of validated scales, bespoke questionnaires, interview schedules, focus group schedules etc and attach all materials to the application) Interview schedule (App D)
Which of the following have you appended to this application? ❑ ✓ Other debriefing material ❑ ✓ Covering letter for participants ❑✓ Information sheet about your research study ❑ ✓ Informed consent forms for participants ❑ ✓ Other: Permission request for PL

PLEASE SUBMIT THIS APPLICATION WITH ALL APPROPRIATE DOCUMENTATION

(Appendices A, B, C, D associated with this request for ethical approval follow)

Appendix A (Request for consent)

Dear

Request for Consent to Interview Students undertaking MA Education at the University of Derby

As part of my Education Doctorate course at the University of Derby I am proposing to conduct research into **Becoming an MA** student with a focus on in-service education practitioners. For information on the purpose of this study and information that will be provided to students please see the attached Participant Information Sheet.

I am, therefore, writing to request your permission for me to invite students on this programme to participate in three focus groups with me with me. Should you have any questions or points of discussion you would wish to raise regarding this study I would be very happy to respond.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Cottle
SNR LECTURER FOR BA EDUCATION STUDIES AND MA EDUCATION

UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

APP B

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

Dear Participant

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH INTO BECOMING AN MA STUDENT

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study which is part of my doctorial studies in Education at the University of Derby. Before you agree to participate you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you.

Please take time to read the attached information carefully and do ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. You are at liberty not to take part.

I do hope that you will feel able to participate in this study, should you decide to do so please complete and sign the attached consent form and forward to me at v.cottle@derby.ac.uk. I will then contact you to confirm the time and place for the focus group which will be arranged at a time when you would normally expect to be on site at the University. I would be grateful if you could let me know by: …

If you would prefer not to be involved I would appreciate an email to confirm this so that you are not contacted again.

Contact Information
Vanessa Cottle
v.cottle@derby.ac.uk
Thank you

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Cottle
Snr Lecture for BA Education Studies and MA Education

Appendix C - PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Title of Study: Becoming a MA Student

Researcher: Vanessa Cottle

Supervisor: ?

Purpose of Study
All practitioners are involved in learning while undertaking a variety Continuing Professional Development activity. These activities range from short input on new policies within the work place; development through mentoring; learning new ideas informally from colleagues to those requiring more academic rigour – for example individually accredited level 7 modules or full masters qualifications. This study aims to explore the challenges and developmental experiences of students studying an in-service MA in Education. The knowledge generated by this research will inform approaches to facilitating learning and study for MA Education students with the potential of also being applied in other areas of post graduate study.

I am conducting this research as a key part of my doctorial studies in Education at the University of Derby and as such the outcomes will inform my own practice as Programme Leader of the MA Education at the University of Derby.

The research has been approved by the University of Derby Research Ethics Committee.

Why have you been invited to participate?
I am inviting all current students who are registered to study for the MA Education at the University of Derby to participate in this study where they meet the following criteria:

- are currently practicing within an educational context
- have already completed at least one module

.

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time up to the point at which at which the analysis has been completed (anticipated as the end of 2014) and without giving a reason.

Your choice to take part or not to take part in the study will in no way impact on your current or future assessments or studies.

What will happen to you if you take part?
If you agree to take part you will be invited to engage in 3 focus group meetings consisting of 5 or 6 persons. These meetings will be arranged at a time when you are normally on site. The focus group discussions will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour, but I suggest you allow a little longer in case you wish to contribute more than is anticipated by myself. I aim to make the process as informal and as comfortable as possible, it is in no way a test – I hope that you will be able to explain your own understandings and perceptions of your experiences as a MA student whilst also engaging in practice.

I anticipate no serious costs or risks to yourself by taking part. I do acknowledge, however, that there is a small time commitment and that the questions may require you to reflect on your experiences as a MA student. For some participants this could bring to the fore stressful experiences. In such cases the discussions can be terminated and participants signposted to appropriate support.

After the discussion you will be sent the transcript for you to amend as appropriate and agree – no data will be used without your final authority. No-one other than myself will have access to the raw data, both hand written and electronic data will be stored securely at my personal address.

Anonymity is assured in the following ways: participants' names will not be used, rather they will be coded – eg: participant A, B, C etc – all references to this will be securely stored as with interview notes, recordings and transcriptions mentioned previously in this paragraph. Participants will agree to rules of confidentiality and anonymity within the groups.

Are there any benefits for you of taking part?
The main benefits will be with regard to providing a greater understanding of in-service MA Education students' experiences and how this understanding can inform the way programmes are structured to facilitate effective learning and the best possible outcomes for students. It is also anticipated that reflections induced for some participants during the interview process may give them insights to themselves which enable them to identify, and possibly address, barriers to learning that were previously hidden. Finally, experience as a research participant can inform the manner in which participants may wish to conduct their own research.

Confidentiality
Participants are assured of confidentiality. Responses to invitations to participate will be conducted by email between the respondent and myself. Any interview notes taken during our meeting will be securely stored at my work place as will the audio recordings and transcribed digital data and these will be used only for the purpose of extracting data to inform the study. All notes, recordings and related information will be destroyed/deleted should a participant wish to withdraw prior to the analysis being completed and, in any case, once the analysis has been completed. It is anticipated that the analysis will be completed by December 2014.

Choosing to take part or not to take part
If you would like to take part please complete and sign the attached consent form and forward to me at: v.cottle@derby.ac.uk. I will then contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time and place for our discussions. I would be grateful if you could let me know by: …

If you would not like to take part, please take no further action.

Contact Information
Vanessa Cottle
Email: v.cottle@derby.ac.uk

Thank you for taking time to read this and should you choose to participate please remember to sign the attached consent form and return to me by:

date

Appendix D

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM – APP D

Full title of Project:: Becoming an MA Student

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:
Vanessa Cottle
Snr Lecturer BA Education Studies and MA Education
University of Derby

	Please initial box
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.	☐
I agree to take part in the above study.	☐

	Please tick box	
	Yes	No
I agree to the focus group being audio recorded	☐	☐
I understand that video recording may also be used and would agree to this option	☐	☐
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in the final dissertation/future publications	☐	☐

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Name of Researcher	Date	Signature

APPENDIX 2 – ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER

Approval Letter

Date: 2nd July 2013
Name: Vanessa Cottle

Dear Vanessa,

Re: Request for ethical approval

Thank you for submitting your application for the above mentioned study which was considered by the Social Studies and Post Graduate Research Ethics Committee (SSPG REC) on Friday 21st June 2013.

Your study has been **unconditionally approved** and you are advised that you have clearance to begin the data collection phase of your study.

Yours Sincerely

Dr Neil Radford
Chair of the Social Studies and Post Graduate Research Ethics Committee

APPENDIX 3 – SUMMARY OF DATA COLLECTION AND IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Data collection method	**Number of instances using the method**	**Number of participants/ responses**	**Identification reference**
FGIs	2 FGIs	5 in each group Total: 10	Focus group interview 1 - FG1 Focus group interview 2 - FG2 Participants referred to as Participants (P)
SIIs	5 SIIs	Total: 5	Participants referred to as Voice 1; Voice 2, etc (V1; V2, etc)
EMQs	4 sets of questions to 2 separate groups	Total: 7 replies to EMQs	Each set of email questions - EMQ1, EMQ2, EMQ3 and EMQ4 Participants referred to as Respondents and identified as: R1, R2 etc (see App 17)
RSES completed for each of personal, professional and postgraduate contexts	4 occasions: • FG1 • FG2 • with EMQ 1 • with EMQ 4	5 from FGI 5 from FG2 10 from EMQ1 1 from EMQ4 Total: 21	Participants (P) Respondents (R1, R2, etc)
• Collectively Participants, Voices and Respondents are referred to as Participant group members			

APPENDIX 4 – REVISED STRUCTURE FOR FOCUS GROUPS

Focus Group Discussion Guide	**Group No:**

Welcome

- introduce research with information to participants sheet
    - Study title and purpose
    - What will be done with the information
    - Why selected to participate

- ask for consent form to be signed
- ask for name tent to be filled in

Explanation of the Process

- about focus groups:

    - no right/wrong answers; doesn't matter if you change your mind as you go; - - not trying to achieve consensus – it's about gathering information;
    - starting question with supplementaries – about your discussion with each other

Ground rules

- invite suggestions
- make sure
    - everyone participate
    - try to call your own name when you speak
    - anonymity/confidentiality
    - turn off mobiles

Turn on tape recorder

- invite and answer any questions
- introductions: name, role, motivations and aspirations for registering as an MA student

QUESTIONS:

Definitions: Learning – gaining new knowledge, understandings and skills

1. *How do you feel about being an MA Student?

2. How have you managed your learning journey as an MA Student?

3. How effective has your learning journey been?

4. *Have there been any personal or professional consequences/implications for you as you have progressed as an MA Student?

5. (*) What are your memories of learning in other contexts (work place, other)

6. In what ways, if any, has learning in the workplace and out of the workplace prepared you for becoming an MA Student?

7. What have been the highs and lows of learning in any context?

8. Would you like to add anything?

* agreed with Viv; (*) amended from tutorial with Viv

APPENDIX 5 – STRUCTURE FOR INTERVIEWS

VOICE NO:

Welcome

- introduce research with information to participants sheet
    - Study title and purpose
    - What will be done with the information
    - Why invited to participate

- ask for consent form to be signed

Explanation of the Process

- There will be just the one main question – with a few supplementaries if necessary – no more than one hour

Turn on tape recorders

- Explain why two recorders

Main question: Reflect on your experience so far on the journey towards becoming a master of education student

Supplementaries if required:

1. How do you feel about being an MA Student?
2. How have you managed your learning journey as an MA Student?
3. How effective has your learning journey been?
4. *Have there been any personal or professional consequences/implications for you as you have progressed as an MA Student? (include effects on others in terms of their approach to study)
5. What have been the highs and lows of learning in any context?
6. Would you like to add anything?

* agreed with Viv; (*) amended from tutorial with Viv

APPENDIX 6 – WRITE UP OF HANDWRITTEN NOTES FOR INTERVIEW 1

(original notes available on request)

VOICE NO: 1 – WRITE UP FROM WRITTEN NOTES

Welcome

- introduce research with information to participants sheet
    - Study title and purpose
    - What will be done with the information
    - Why invited to participate

- ask for consent form to be signed

Explanation of the Process

- There will be just the one main question – with a few supplementaries if necessary

Turn on tape recorders

- Explain why two recorders

Main question: Reflect on your experience so far on the journey towards becoming a master of education student

Notes from interview	Comments
'got my head around a different way of learning'	*V1 seems to suggest that they find learning difficult, or that they have an approach to thinking that doesn't fit the norm*
'process [*of learning*] enjoyed'	*V1 seems satisfied that the new way of learning has facilitated progress*
'confident – more'	*successful so far after a gap in study on the programme*
'learner – student (younger) – pleased about academic (status)'	*enjoys learning and being involved in academic type activity, also likes the status aspect of the masters*
'academic'	*This aspect seems important*

'didn't feel like learning'	*The change in V1's approach to learning made the experience more enjoyable – even intuitive – could be better interaction with more recent tutors*
'motivation – belong/role model/time constraints/lack of understanding from others'	*Motivated by needing to fit in with job – goes back to status idea? Wants to become a role model for others, but there are time constraints and lack of understanding about motivations from others*
'practice and study integral'	
'now – moved out of box'	*Feels that study is now making a difference – ties in with different approach to learning – seems more confident not just in study but in other aspects of work/life too*
'CoP would be useful, social media – not a fan'	*Feels would have benefitted from more interactions with other students, but as part time it's difficult, some students engage through social media, but not appropriate medium for everyone*
'current overcome barriers – broken own patters of learning (right time to do that) – derives from other life experiences which have developed determination – self-confidence'	*Continues to be occupied by difficulties in study brought about by own learning style – but suggests that continued experiences and exposure to different learning opportunities has led to more effective strategies*
'growth in self-esteem – contributed to be learning and accreditation – effects practice and personal life'	
'more + than –'	
	Success in their learning/academic status had not seemed to influence/inspire other members of their family

APPENDIX 7 – EXAMPLE OF CONVERSATIONAL STYLE OF QUESTIONING

Extract from Interview Transcript – Voice 2 – Page 2 – Lines 116-152

… MA have helped me to get more confident that I do know what I'm talking about, I do know how education works and where I can go for this, that and the other.

So you're able to have a better belief in yourself aren't you?

Yeah, definitely.

I'm really pleased for you that it's working well, that's fantastic. What about the actual qualification itself, it being an MA Education graduate, has that got any particular meaning for you?

It'll make me feel clever. My mum keeps saying does that mean you'll have letters after your name? And I was like well … It does, as daft as it is it does make you feel like I'll come across as a slightly more intelligent person. I ran over to tell the head that I'd passed my module from Saturday last night before I left and she was so excited and she turned to the other two members of staff in there and she's like ooh she's going to be our Brainiac and she's going to be the font of all knowledge and we'll be going to her for everything, she's clever you know. And I was like woah, woah, slow down a bit.

So it sounds as if she's quite proud of you …

Yeah she was lovely (13.26)

And it sounds as though your mums proud of you as well.

Oh my mum definitely, yeah my mum has always been proud of every tiny little thing that I've ever done and achieved so yeah she's really pleased.

Do you think it will influence anybody else to not necessarily do an MA but of people that you know do you think they might look at you and think or younger people 'oh if she can do it, I might have a go at that'.

If I can do it anybody can do it. Erm I don't know if I do. My best friend has got an MA, she did it straight after her degree, she just saved and carried on and did it. And then my other

close friend at work she always says to me I don't know how you do it, how you understand it all and she just goes I'm thick, I'm thick I don't understand it and I'm like you would. If there was something … it's about where your strengths are, just because I'm completing an MA in Education doesn't mean that you couldn't complete an MA in something else that you're interested in or skilled in. You know she's our music teacher so there's nothing to say she couldn't do an MA in something to do with music and performance and so …

I just wondered about that because that's incidentally come up it's not something that I've been looking for but in other interviews and focus groups it was interesting how … and I suppose it relates more to people that have got children, they have unsolicited said 'and my children have started to role model the fact that I come home and have to do homework if you like and study, it's made a difference to them' and I just …

My partner has got two daughters and one of them is just like her mum and she does homework as soon as she's got it and is very good at stuff like that and the other one is the total opposite a ….

APPENDIX 8 – EXAMPLE OF INTERACTION BETWEEN FGI PARTICIPANTS FROM TRANSCRIPT

Extract from Focus Group 2 Transcript – Page 2-3 – Lines 134-203

V – I think it's interesting what you said V[redacted], about coming out and thinking oh I'll have a masters - does that apply to any others

M – I went for an interview last week as a matron in Sheffield and for me emotional intelligence is an emerging field within midwifery so I feel I'm at the cutting edge forefront so for me the masters in ed I'm proud of what I'm doing it because I know that hardly anyone will have the emo intelligence component and the feedback at the interview was that I'm doing the wrong masters you need to go off and do a management and leadership in the nhs or in innovation and I was thinking how dare you, I was really proud of that – I think actually, it's such an emerging field that that head of midwifery hasn't realised that in say 10 years time people will be saying 'oh, wow, that it's really good that you have an MA in emo ed'. So, I feel like you, I feel really proud; when I first came on it like D2[redacted] I thought I'm in the wrong room because everyone was a teacher and a million miles away because everybody was a teacher and I was thinking how can they make it fit and now I see how it can fit.

D1[redacted] – yeh two things really, one is that as a person who is slightly older than the people I work with in my team three of which have done their masters already it's quite interesting to see from that perspective how they went off, they spent a lot of time, we gave them time in the role of their job to facilitate them doing their masters and actually what comes back isn't necessarily a person who has the experience to actually do better or perform better in their job. These were three people who went straight from their degree as PE teachers, straight into their masters. I chose not to do mine quite adamantly early on because I just felt like, well that, ha ha, as a stereotypical pe teacher, I feel really proud to be doing it because we get a lot of slack like you're not, laughter you're not academic are you, you get that a lot and personally I get that quite a lot in my family because my sister's the academic one and I'm not so I was never … do my degree and that's it; I never thought I'd do a masters but actually that delayed process until I was in my late 30s to do it I think I've learned a hell of a lot in my job that these younger people who went straight in and strut round in their job I've got an MA and you haven't and you're my boss; actually they what did it bring to their actual role and I question that with all three of them.

Group agreement – one participant mentions 'not masterly in their role' M – Yes D - no

L[redacted] – I think you're exactly right – the difference is – you've got that academic qualification that says that you can study at that level and that's what the people who work for D1[redacted] have got, they've got that piece of paper that says you're able to work at a masterly level however, what we are all doing as, you know, on the different pathways, is we're actually using it on a day to day basis, we are masters in action aren't we, we are using it as part of our job every piece of reading we do, every conversation we have we channel it back into what we are doing and that, for some respects that's when it becomes hard when you're writing an academic assignment because you want to put 'and I learned this and I thought about that and, and, and oh god! I read about this and it moved onto that and I realised that', [sounds really passionate and excited here about the learning taking place] but that's because we're doing it while we're working while we're, you know, acting and D1[redacted] will read something and then he'll put it into action immediately won't you? and I know from the

module we did before you were implementing the things as you were learning about them weren't you? and learning about them weren't you and handling situations differently weren't you?

D1[redacted] - yeh, there's still a part of me that thinks, almost what you said before, if this is masterly level there is a lot of common sense in that you know what I mean, I'm learning loads but I think do I need to change radically what I do, and what I naturally do, as an individual and that's personal to me and who I am, I've been brought up and everything, and you can't' track that, but it yeh I suppose at the end of the day it's about feeling proud about it it's about having that bit of paper I'm not going to put letters at the end of my name, the bottom line is that I've done it I'm purely doing it for for my own reasons, not really relating it to work; if it helps me get higher up in my job great, but I'm not sure I want to

D2[redacted] - I'm em I don't have that sense of pride in names and letters and masters and phds and BAs and anything else I've already done in that sense. I, there are two aspects to it for me, one is the meaning it gives other people to my role erm it doesn't necessarily make me feel any sense of growth in my own self-esteem or anything like that it is just something that means contextually for other people that they accept that what you are doing is at that level, that doesn't mean that I don't already think that what I'm doing is at that level, it's a bit like you've just said D1[redacted] that there is something in it the bit that's relevant for me is about being able to have the time to explore my own professional practice and then ensuring what I'm doing is evidence based and that that it will assist with the vulnerable people I work with which is important to me; it's the purpose of doing the research and work not what I get out of it in my own terms of accreditation or whatever it's because it allows me time to explore why a population of kids and adults want to kill each other and other people.

V – mmm so it's the practical application?

APPENDIX 9 – EMAIL QUESTIONS

First Email Questions

1. Explain any motivations you may have had for joining the MA Education?
2. What were your aspirations for joining the MA Education?
3. Did you have any expectations of the programme? Explain?
4. Did you have any perceptions of a typical MA Student? Explain?
5. Did you have any anxieties or fears about starting to study at masterly level? Explain?
6. What, if anything, did you hope you could bring to the programme – ie where did any confidences lie?
7. Please feel free to add any other reflections on your thoughts and feelings before you commenced study.

Second Email Questions

I am hoping that you are able to think of learning in its broadest sense – I like the ideas that are expressed here about learning:

> *The Inspiring Learning Framework is built on a broad and inclusive definition of learning, adapted from the Campaign for Learning.*
>
> *It identifies that*
>
> · *Learning is a process of active engagement with experience*
> · *It is what people do when they want to make sense of the world*
> · *It may involve the development or deepening of skills, knowledge, understanding, values, ideas and feelings*
> · *Effective learning leads to change, development and the desire to learn more*
>
> *http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk/learning/*

Questions

Q1: What are you current understandings of what it is to be an MA Education student, ie what does this title mean to you?

Q2: Since you began study at masters level can you identify any particular learning experiences that have a particular consequence for you in:

(a) your professional life and
(b) your personal life and
(c) your life as a participant in learning.

Q3: Can you offer a key word to describe learning for each of the three learning contexts?

Q4: Please add in any more reflections about your masterly experiences to date and, if appropriate, any consequences these experiences might have.

Thank you.

Third Email Questions

Again, many thanks for your continued support of my research. I do hope you are able to continue to participate – without you there is no research.

I remain very interested in the experiences of your learning journey and what the implications of this are for you in terms of your Personal Life; your Professional Life and for you as a Participant in a Learning Community. With this in mind please respond to the following:

a) What factor/s, in your experience to date on the MA programme, has/have **enabled** and/or **disabled** your learning?

b) To what extent have you 'given' or 'withheld' during your study? How? Why?

c) If you were to support or advise another 'you' contemplating a duplicate of your learning journey so far – what important messages would you give?

I have also attached a copy of the first and second email questions which you are more than welcome to answer if you have not done before, or add to if you wish.

Fourth Email Questions

Please return as much or as little as you can.

- **EMAIL QUESTIONS No 4**

Questions:
The focus of my interest is your masters learning journey in the context of three aspects of your life: your Personal Life; your Professional Life and your Participation in a Learning Community (ie the MA Education). With this in mind please reflect on the following and comment as much as you are able.

1. According to the literature masters students claim that a significant outcome of their study is that their confidence levels improve, but in what ways and by how much is unclear.
    - *Have your confidence levels changed as you have moved through the programme?*
    - *If so - in what ways, how can you tell/measure these changes?*

2. Everyone has an identity, or image of themselves, which is formed largely as a result of how individuals perceive others perceive them. One model of identity suggested by Illeris (2014) has three concentric circles.

    Simplistically: the central core identity is extremely unlikely to change unless a profound experience occurs; the middle circle has some flexibility and openness to change, it includes such characteristics as

values, attitudes and behaviours; the external layer is more unstable, more personal characteristics can be added into this layer, but nothing of importance will change in the self-perception of how one is perceived by others.

- *Do you belief your identity has changed/or is changing as a result of your study?*
- *Are you able to relate any changes to any of Illeris's layers of identity – if yes, how?*
- *Have any changes been more or less noticeable in the Personal, Professional, and Participation as a student aspects of your life?*

3. The focus of your study will be learning – comment on what this has meant for each aspect of your life: ie:
    - *Personal life*
    - *Professional life*
    - *Participation as a student*

APPENDIX 10 - SUMMARY OF TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts derived from	Number of data items	Number of data sets
FGI 1 and FGI 2	2 data items	1 set
SII 1; SII 2; SII 3; SII 4; SII 5	5 data items	1 set
EMQs Group 1 – 3 Respondents EMQs Group 2 – 4 Respondents	7 data items	1 set

APPENDIX 11 – EXAMPLES FROM QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS PROCESS

(Full versions available on request)

STEP 1

After the recordings were transcribed, transcripts were printed out in a two-column table with the right-hand column empty for hand written notes on initial points of interest and codes

… V – how would you describe being a masters student, what does it feel like? V[redacted] – being in full time work it's er quite stressful, it's a lot of pressure, it's a lot of extra commitment I feel personally because I'm always trying to play catch up almost because your job, especially in education, takes over you could work every minute of the day and wouldn't have done enough em so having to do this as well I find quite stressful, personally M[redacted] – I don't think it feels real, for a similar reason, so, working full time obviously that is my bread and butter and I have to do what I have to do and I know I'm on an MA and I say to people – oh, yeh, I'm doing a masters – but I haven't actually applied myself to … I read somewhere you have to do a 120 hours or 130 hours (laughs) of private study and I've got to the point where I think I've got to take a week off work to do 10 hours a day to even get in 70 hours of study, so it doesn't feel, I don't feel I'm giving it the level of commitment I should be giving it. It very much feels as though it's on the back burner and I'll have to give a last minute surge to get to where I should be V – thank you D[redacted] - I think very similar but in another way as well it's quite eye opening and scary because I, the reasons for wanting to learn more about education and about leadership and schools and things like that, the more I learn the more I don't want to be involved in it Laughter - ironic As you go into the detail of it [education?] because I think there are many flaws to it generally this is positive for me because I explore my MA so I can potentially go on and …	

Step 2

I combined common ideas into one code and placed these into a table against the relating data, there was a miscellaneous section to account for codes that were, at this stage unwanted. Codes were attributed to initial themes.

Developing ideas were hand-written and mind-maps to demonstrate connections are available on request.

THEME/ CODEs	DATA
1. Purpose - motivation for study -trajectory -progression (job, career) -personal development -access to knowledge -competition -improvement -external driver -job requirement -learning -identity -gives meaning to role -job demands (ext driver) -to develop confidence -to be different -to be at cutting edge	Progression in study levels progress in job and own personal development (FG2, s2 ME) Access to knowledge base and job progression (FG2, s3 DA) Unspoken sense of competition with colleagues (FG2, s3 DA) and siblings (FG2 s33 DA) I'm doing it for me, if it helps me get on that's a bonus (FG2 s36 DA) Improve understanding of education and job progression (FG2, s4, VI) External driver – MA a requirement for job (FG2 s6 LO) External driver – need to undertake research to fill gap in knowledge base of organisation – (FG2 s9 DW) Joy of learning, (fg2, s25 ME) Fundamental to professional development (fg2, s25 ME) Not for letters after my name (FG2 s37 DW) Gives meaning other people to my role for other people (FG2 s37 DW) Job, career progression (fg2, s77 ME) External driver – job demands (fg2, s77 ME) Developing confidence in learning and being at the cutting edge of new thinking in the context of work – being different (fg2, s32 ME) Unspoken sense of competition with colleagues (FG2, s3 DA) and siblings (FG2 s33 DA)
2. Triangle -3-way benefit -children previous barrier to completion -commitment compromised -learning to not want to be involved in job -priorities (work, job) -want it for self -competition -master in action v study -helps my role -need to get it done -job demands (ext driver) -meeting needs of both self and employer -**generates emotional responses**	Progression in study levels, progress in job and own personal development FG2, s2 ME) '… children and other things' never completed previous attempts at pgs (FG2, s9 DW) Playing catchup with job (FG2, s13 VI) Can't give the amount of commitment required; need to take a week off work (FG2, s14 ME) It's an eye opener – 'the more I learn the more I don't want to be involved in it [education]' (FG2, s16 DA) I'm doing an MA - I have to prioritise work, but need to prioritise study (fg2, s24 ME) Least important in life – parenting first, then job (FG2, s26 DW) Although required by employer I do want it for myself, (fg2, s28 LO) Developing confidence in learning and being at the cutting edge of new thinking in the context of work – being different (fg2, s32 ME) Unspoken sense of competition with colleagues (FG2, s3 DA) and siblings (FG2 s33 DA) Issue of being masterly in terms of study and masterly in role – *master in action* (FG2 s35, LO, s41 LO, s43 ME) [the MA] gives me time to explore professional practice and helps me in my role – seems to generate time (FG2 s37 DA)

Step 3

DA – FG1 – Coding 2 Dec 15

Codes from Coding 1 Nov 15 – listed and compressed (ie similar terms made into one code) –

Data collated relevant to each code

CODE	DATA
Andragogy	Interested in developing my knowledge (fg1 s3) 'you tend to balance time in favour of things that are interesting' (fg1 33; group agreement) Joy of learning (fg1 50) CPD – generates passive learning/surface learning does not elicit recognition *(fg1 64)* Had to put lots of work in to achieve depth of knowledge (fg1 85) To achieve; work hard; learn; COP (fg1 88)
Application to job/practice	I got a specialism (fg1 s3) 'the masters element was just, er just happened to be part of it – it was the maths bit, the teaching of it, that I was interested in …' (fg1 25) Subject speciality modules important (fg1 32) EBP – not of value to career (fg1 33) No application to practice in EBP (fg1 36) Workbased CPD not the same (fg1 50) Reading [ebp] not beneficial for role (fg1 50) Depth of knowledge when studying MAST important (fg1 60) 'we are supposed to be training each other [without expertise] all you are doing is bouncing the same ideas' [implies MA study as a vehicle in which to break the mould find new ideas] (fg1 60)
Change	Aspiration for change in professional career; I got a specialism (fg1 s3) Career change/progression (fg1 s7) The MA 'would bring me up to the next level (fg1 44) 'we are supposed to be training each other [without expertise] all you are doing is bouncing the same ideas' [implies MA study as a vehicle in which to break the mould find new ideas] (fg1 60)
Becoming	[sense of not being stretched] – 'just … been accredited' (fg1 27) 'scary' module makes it feel more masterly (fg1 28; fg1 30) Participation difficulty because of family (fg1 30) Not interested in EBP (fg1 30) EBP – not of value to career (fg1 33) '… like you say, you've done it 3 times before and crikey I've used methodology before and that's been find and now there's all this other stuff ..' (fg1 36; group empathy) Gave me confidence in learning [study] 'I was the youngest person in the group but had more awareness they called me 'the wise one that looked really young' they would sit and list [to me] they respect me (fg1 38) [MA] gives me confidence in what I already know [but not believed?]; I don't know what I'm doing; it's up and down journey; I'm at a brick wall at the moment – it's hard (fg1 38) About improving self in the role; bring me up to next level; subject knowledge; being able to argue in a critical way (fg1 44) MA provides excuse to read; though EBP reading not beneficial to role (fg1 50) [sense that recognition important] (fg1 64) Had to put lots of work in to achieve depth of knowledge (fg1 85) Provides strong sense of support when experience; a loss when no longer there [suggests difficulty in developing autonomy and independence as a learner] (fg1 90)

APPENDIX 12 - SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO EMAIL QUESTIONS

Email Question Sets Completed				
	EMQ Set 1	**EMQ Set 2**	**EMQ Set 3**	**EMQ Set 4**
Group 1				
R1	✓	x	x	x
R2	✓	x	x	x
R3	✓	✓	✓	x
R4	✓	✓	✓	✓
R5	✓	x	x	x
Group 2				
R6	✓	x	x	x
R7	✓	x	x	x
R8	x	✓	✓	x
R9	x	x	x	x
R10	x	x	x	x