

**The Quest for Teacher Identity: A Qualitative Study  
of Professional Identity Construction of Novice  
English Teachers in Algeria.**

**By**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the process of professional identity among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) novice teachers in the Algerian context. More specifically, it aims to identify the factors which constitute professional identity such as personal histories and the practicum. It also considers the role of the communities of practice as well as the various struggles and challenges that novice teachers face during their journey of becoming (Danielewicz, 2001). A sociocultural theoretical lens incorporating communities of practice as well positioning theory lens employing discursive positionality are used as a theoretical framework for this thesis.

A broad qualitative study approach is employed and 14 participants from various middle and secondary schools were recruited. The participants are 9 first year teachers (7 females and 2 males) and 5 second year female teachers. Second year teachers' stories and experiences were also elicited in order to offer variations in the understanding of professional identity when compared to novice teachers in their first year of teaching. The data was conducted over 12 weeks and included interviews as the main data tool accompanied with NQTs' (Newly Qualified Teachers) written reflections and researcher's journal. Three semi-structured interviews were conducted with first-year teachers and one semi-structured interview with second-year participants.

This research has developed a theoretical framework for understanding professional identity which refines and develops previous frameworks found in the literature such as those of Mockler (2011), Wenger (1998) and Lave and Wenger (1991). In other words, the findings of this study revealed that the quest for professional identity is complex and it involves negotiation of meaning between imagined, practiced and future identities. This is to say that, it was found in the data that novice teachers constructed imagined identities through their identification with their sociocultural background including family, society and former teachers, prior to joining the profession. These imagined identities formed their 'core identity' as teachers. Novice teachers'

personal experiences helped them in developing a positive and resilient professional identity. By relying on these experiences novice teachers became aware of their professional growth and showed a high sense of agency in their teaching. The findings further demonstrated some ways to revisiting Wenger's notion of Communities of Practice in the light of some of the context-specific aspects of the findings of the study, in particular, those relating to gender, ethnicity and membership of broader communities outside the school. This research also revealed that novice teachers' sense of belonging to the teachers' community was an important marker of their professional identities. The emotional support that novice teachers' received from their colleagues as well as their engagement within and beyond their school communities impacted positively on their professional growth. Issues of recognition from administration and students was also found to have an impact in their professional growth.

This study provided valuable theoretical implications for broadening the concept of the COP to consider the various cultural practices that operate within different professional contexts. In addition to that, practical implications of the teaching education programmes and institutional assistance are presented. Mentors and principals should provide novice teachers' with support and guidance during their teaching to help them shape a positive sense of professional identity.

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## Table of abbreviations

EFL	English as a Foreign Language
CBLT	Competency Based language teaching
CBA	Competency Based Approach
LMD	Licence Master Doctorate
BEF	Basic Education Certificate
BEM	Middle school certificate
CNRSE	National Commission of Education Reform system
NQTs	Newly Qualified Teachers
COP	Communities of Practice
PSTs	Pre-service Teachers
SCT	Sociocultural theory
ELT	English Language Teaching
ENS	Teachers' Colleges
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy

## **Chapter 1: An Introduction to the thesis**

### **1.1 Background of the study**

The Algerian government has engaged in a series of reform since the country's independence in 1962 which aimed at developing the educational system in Algeria. In light of these reforms, English was introduced as a second language in schools in 1997 (Bouazid and Le Roux 2014). There was a shift in teaching using old methods like grammar-translation methods to implementing CBA (Competency-Based Approach) in schools, which emphasises the notion of communication and learner-centeredness rather than only focusing on the linguistic skills (see section 1.9). The LMD (Licence Master Doctorate) is another reform introduced in higher education.

Despite the various educational reform programs introduced by the government, the country is still struggling with several issues with the quality of its education. Idri (2012, p.2174) claims that these reforms are only a matter of "official documents but is there any perceived change in practice?" She further illustrates that most people including parents reject and complain about these reforms, and "strikes, press talks, debates are still part of our routine" (Idri 2012, p.2174).

Following Idris's (2012) quote above, and with regards to the implementation of CBLT (competency-based language teaching) in middle and secondary schools, Bouhadiba (2015) for example, claims that the status of teachers under the CBLT approach remained the same. This is to say that, though teachers are supposed to be facilitators and guide in their classes, they still rely on the old teaching methods where the teacher is considered as the main source for knowledge. Bouhadiba's (2015) observations show that teachers were resistant to change and to the adaption of new teaching approaches. Similarly, Benadla (2012, p.149) claims that many middle school teachers complain about the new reform she says:

Teachers often find themselves teaching linguistic points that they do not master themselves...many of them were not trained to be teachers... Teaching for them is just a job for bread-earning...many of them do not care for their self-development and do not have access to technologies like computers which might help in accomplishing their jobs.

This shows that improving the quality of education does not only reside in introducing new teaching methods and approaches (Danielewicz 2001) however, it needs an understanding of teachers' identities (see chapter 2 for further discussion). Thus the Algerian government needs to devote more attention to understanding teachers before implementing new teaching methods and approaches.

Additionally, looking at the quality of education in Algeria entails incorporating the quality of teacher education programs. The quality of these programs is one of the most factors contributing to the quality of teacher education (Afrianto 2017). Inadequate teaching preparation programs may lead to poor English quality in the classrooms (Miliani 2012, Idri 2012). Using qualitative research to explore teachers' beliefs with regard to curriculum innovation in Algeria, Bellalem's findings reveal a low quality of pre-service training in Algeria “pre-service training courses were too theoretical and lacked a solid practical component” (2008, p.144). Thus more attention should be devoted to improving the quality of these programs.

In light of these issues, and because of the significant role professional identity plays in preparing newly qualified English teachers (see section 2.3.1), this study seeks to understand the development of professional identity among fourteen novice teachers in the Algeria context. This qualitative study explains the role of personal background as well as the teaching practice in developing teachers' identities. It also looks at the role of the communities of practice in strengthening and maintaining novice teachers' professional identities. All the participants in this

study are novice teachers with one to two years of teaching experience.

This chapter introduces the rationale and motivation for conducting the research. It also introduces the research questions, aims and significance of the study. A brief discussion regarding the Algerian educational system is also provided. The chapter concludes with a thesis map summary.

## **1.2 Rationale and personal motivation**

In this section, I illustrate my interests in studying novice teachers' professional identity development in the Algerian context and how this interest developed into a focused study. The reasons behind conducting this research derived from the theoretical needs to understand teacher identity in the Algerian context, and my personal experience as a pre-service teacher. In terms of the theoretical needs, research investigating teacher identity in ELT education in the Algerian context is a new topic. To my knowledge, few master and doctoral theses explored the importance of teacher training such as (Bellalem 2008, Messaoudi and Hamzaoui 2012) without integrating and particularly focusing on teacher identity. Thus this research would add more insights into teacher education in the Algerian context especially that Algeria recognizes education as a basic element in the development of the country. In light of this, the Algerian education system underwent a series of reform since independence in 1962 (see section 1.6) in the sake of developing the educational system. For example, a shift from traditional teaching methods like, grammar-translation method where the teacher's role was essentially to transmit knowledge and the learner's role was to receive it, to introducing CBA (competency-based approach) which encourages learners to be more active in their learning process. However, understanding teachers' selves and helping teachers to understand themselves was not considered. The literature on teacher education and teacher identity shows that being a teacher is not only a matter of acquiring professional knowledge, but understanding teacher identity is an integral part of this process (Danielewicz 2001). Thus such scarcity of research in the area of

teacher identity development in Algeria aroused my interest in this particular research.

Moreover, in terms of my personal interests, this study was also inspired by my personal experience as a prior pre-service teacher, which contributed to developing my academic interest and my professional curiosity on how novice teachers construct their professional identities.

Reflecting on my experiences as a student, pre-service teacher and my experience as a PhD researcher I could say that the development of my identity as both future teacher and researcher was a complex process that involved many struggles. Like most of my participants, my decision to study English was influenced by many factors. My love of the language, self- desire to become a teacher the encouragement of my family which helped me to make such decision at an early stage in my studies. It was when I passed my BEF (an exam taken at the end of middle school) that this decision was clearly made. I joined the foreign languages stream with a high desire to become an English language teacher. I invested myself in learning the language and developing my skills.

I graduated from a public university where I had a training course twice during my third year and master degrees. In terms of teaching and interaction with students, both experiences were positive. However, I struggled with constructing and developing a teacher identity. These periods particularly the one in my third year was challenging. I had those thoughts in mind of being a "student and a trainee" which distanced me from my mentor and other teachers inside the school. Though I loved teaching, I was a bit scared of that moment where I have to join other teachers in the staffroom. Becoming a member of that community was a challenge for me. I started then to question the reliability of the training programme in sustaining the professional development of pre-service teachers. In the section below I am going to provide a brief explanation of how these ideas developed to a focused research study.

### **1.3 Developing the focus of the thesis**

After my last training during my master degree, I came to realize that most of the training programmes that involve pre-service teachers lacked an essential feature of practicality and a focus on pre-service teachers' sense of self. This triggered the idea of researching the relationship between the role of the practicum and the construction of a professional identity. My experience of travelling to the United Kingdom, for a pre-doctoral preparation in 2015, offered me an opportunity to observe the CELTA programme which helped me to develop the focus of my study. Those sessions made me realise that the fear of being part of a community either teachers or students' community is included in the process of becoming. In other words, the feelings I had when I did my training challenged me to become who I am. Some teachers in the CELTA programme felt the same thing, however, the constructive feedback and the support they received from each other's and their mentors made them stronger and their professional identities developed during this programme.

As previously stated, my preliminary ideas were about studying the impact of the practicum on pre-service teachers' identity development as well as the development of teachers' beliefs during this programme. My initial research questions were:

1. How do student teachers in Algeria develop their professional identity during their pre-service teacher education experience?
2. To what extent does their engagement with different professional communities within schools contribute to the development of their professional identity?
3. What evidence is there for the development of student teachers' beliefs during their pre-service training programme?
4. What are the pre-service teachers' views about the value of the practicum?

The focus of the study then has changed from exploring teacher identity and beliefs during the training programme to focusing on studying teacher identity in transition. This shift started during my first year in PhD through reading about this area, my supervisors' guidance and engaging in various academic meetings and research conferences within and outside Canterbury University. These academic supports offered me the privilege of sharing my research interests and developing my ideas about my research focus. Another important aspect which encouraged me to shift the focus to studying novice teachers' identities was the limited time of the practicum and the difficulty to access various schools where student teachers undertake the training. For these reasons, I broadened the focus of my research to include the development of novice teachers' identities, not simply during their practicum, but both before they began their training, and in their first year of teaching after it. The final research questions are as follows:

**RQ1).** How does the personal background of novice teachers influence the construction of their professional identities?

**RQ2).** To what extent does their engagement with different professional communities within school contribute to the development of their professional identity?

**RQ3).** What role did the practicum play in the formation of novice teachers' identities?

**RQ4).** How have their professional identities been affected by the challenges they face during their first year of teaching?

It is important to clarify that the first research question emerged from the data. I acknowledge that I conducted three round-interviews (see section 4.5.1) but the personal background questions asked during the first interviews were designed to familiarise my participants with the process of interviews and to "break the ice" between the researcher and the participants (Dörnyei 2007). However, this became important data as it appeared to be central to developing a professional identity.

#### **1.4 Research questions and aims of the study**

The current study attempts to explore the process of constructing a professional identity among EFL novice teachers in the Algerian context. Though this research was mainly conducted during NQTs' first and second year of teaching, it sheds light on other important factors which constitute professional identity such as personal histories and the practicum. Thus this research provides deeper insights on the journey of becoming a teacher (Britzman 2003, Danielewicz 2001). Each research question captures a significant aspect in constructing a professional identity.

**RQ1).** How does the personal background of novice teachers influence the construction of their professional identities?

This question aims to understand the role of personal experiences in developing a professional identity. More particularly, this question explores the extent to which teacher identity is affected by the sociocultural background, for example, former teachers, society and families.

**RQ2).** To what extent does their engagement with different professional communities within school contribute to the development of their professional identities?

In this question, I seek to understand the role of the communities of practice in developing or hindering novice teachers from developing their professional identities. This highlights the role of belonging to different communities in shaping teacher identity through, for example, collaboration, engagement in activities and interaction with others.

**RQ3).** What role did the practicum play in the formation of novice teachers' identities?

This question aims to understand the role of the practicum as a place for learning to become a teacher. It considers the role of supportive and positive mentoring in strengthening NQTs (newly qualified teachers) professional identities.

**RQ4).** How have their professional identities been affected by the challenges they faced during their teaching?

In this research question, I seek to examine the possible issues that novice teachers faced during their journey of becoming a teacher. More particularly, this research question addresses how novice teachers overcome and cope with the various challenges they experienced.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

It is true that many studies have been conducted in the field of professional identity either with pre-service teachers with a particular emphasis on the role of mentoring on shaping student teachers' identities (Mann and Tang 2012, Izadinia 2012, 2014, Danielewicz 2001) or with novice teachers (Kanno and Stuart 2011, Lee 2013, Correa et al., 2015), in addition to the role of personal histories in developing professional identities (Flores and Day 2006, Olson 2008, Clarke 2008). However, though some of these studies explored teacher identity in different phases, the present research adds more depth to the previous studies by providing a detailed analysis to the process of professional identity formation. What differentiates this study from other research is that it takes a longer-term perspective on the development of professional identity. Though the data was conducted when novice teachers started their actual teaching, it also provided deep insights into the process of professional identity development prior to joining the profession that is during NQTs' childhood and schooling experiences. This research has also developed a framework which refines previous frameworks found in the literature such as those of Mockler (2011) and Xu (2012) and views teacher identity as a cyclical process which evolves through the negotiation of meaning between imagined, practiced and future identities.

Moreover, this research is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, this research is in line with previous studies which highlight the importance of training programmes in developing teachers' identities. As a consequence training programme needs to consider helping pre- service teachers to understand their sense of self as teachers by providing them with more space to teach and

enact their imagined identities. In addition to that, reflection should be encouraged as a mean of reflecting on their previous experiences and making sense of their emerging identities.

Secondly, this research also highlighted the pivotal role of COP (communities of practice) in sustaining and developing NQTs' identities. Thus, the current study suggests that novice teachers need support particularly at the emotional level which has helped them to increase their self-confidence and self-esteem. Yet, the study also illustrated the role of teachers as an agent of change and their sense of individuality in making independent decisions from their colleagues. It is also important for colleagues and principals for example to encourage novice teachers in maintaining their sense of self and striking a balance between their individual and collective identities.

Finally, this study provides suggestions for extending Wenger's (1998) framework and looking at the concept of the COP as a "small culture" (Holliday 2013) which has its norms and particular dimensions. One of the interesting findings which added more depth to Wenger's (1998) framework is the age, gender as well as the ethnic dimensions of the participants.

### **1.6 Brief history of the public Education in Algeria**

This section provides a brief history of the educational system in Algeria and the different changes made by the government since the country's independence. It also highlights the status of English language in Algeria. Since Algeria is considered a multilingual context, it is important to explain the diversity of the social context. Algeria is situated in North Africa and it is characterised by a rich and complex linguistic diversity. The dominant languages in Algeria are Arabic and French which is the language of colonialism. Since the country's independence in 1962, the Arabic language was adopted as a national and official language. Algerian Arabic is the dialect which is spoken in daily life by the majority of Algerians across the country. Besides, French occupies an important position as it is "used by the Government, the agencies revolving around it, and by the different media outlets" (Benelhadj Djelloul 2018, p.23). In addition to

these languages, the Berber language is the native language of the country (Benrabah 2013). The Berbers are the indigenous people of Algeria and are also called "Imazighen"(Benrabah 2013). They refer to their language group as Tamazight because it refers to their ethnic identity in a more positive way, Imazighen means "free people". Berber language or Tamazight encompasses four major dialects which are:

Tamashek” is the language of the Tuaregs of the Sahara; the Mozabites and Shawia speak “Mzab” and “Shawia”, respectively; Kabyles, who represent about two-thirds of the Berberophone population, call their mother tongue “Kabyle” or “Takbaylit” (Benrabah, 2014, p.45)

All the participants in this study are Berbers and their mother tongue is Kabyle. The Berber language is considered a national language but not an official one. Many protests were held by Berbers demanding the government to officially acknowledge Tamazight as a national language to be taught in the Algerian schools. It was until 2002 that president Bouteflika institutionalized it as a national language (Benrabah 2007).

To understand the complexity of the language situation in Algeria, we have to go back to its historical development from the period of colonialism. Benrabah (2007) demonstrates this complexity by referring back to the Algerian history which comprises three phases. I will briefly describe these phases as they shed light on how the educational system in Algeria has shifted during these periods.

To begin with, the first phase describes the situation of education during the French colonization (1830-1962). During this period French was the dominant language in schools with low importance given to Arabic. The second phase, which is called "nationalist transition" lasted for 30 years beginning from the (1960s to 1990s). During this phase, the Arabic Language was imposed in school education. After independence in 1962, the Algerian government adopted the

system of Arabisation where Arabic became the official language in both administration and schools (Bouazid and le Roux 2014, Chemami 2011). Egyptian teachers were recruited in Algeria to teach Arabic and this need derived from the lack of Arabic teachers in Algeria as most of the Algerian teachers were taught in French language. However, Algerian students could not understand Egyptian Arabic. In addition to this, the Egyptian Arabic enabled Egyptian teachers to establish "Islamic ideology into Algerian public life" rather than classical Arabic (Benrabah 2007, p.230). This period of Arabisation was not successful and failed to bring a strong education change to Algeria (Mami 2013).

There was a need for reform since the 1990s as it was announced by the Algerian presidents Mohamed Boudiaf in June 1992 and Abdelaziz Bouteflika in April 1999 who described the Algerian educational system as 'unhealthy and doomed to fail' (Benrabah 2007, p.228). The last phase was characterised by a series of reforms as the Algerian government recognised the failure of the educational system in Algeria and started to plan for a successful one. Since the early 2000s, Algeria has been engaged in a series of reforms and the issue of languages in education system became the subject of debates among people who favour monolingualism (Arabic) and those who call for bilingualism (Arabic-French) (Benrabah 2007 and Chemami 2011). The main aim of this reform was to improve the level of education in Algeria as well as to revise both curriculum and the status of foreign languages (Chemami 2011). As a result of this debate, the ministry of education stopped the reform on September the 3rd (Benrabah 2007). In March 2001, CNRSE (National Commission of educational Reform System) recommended some changes in the educational system. It suggested the reintroduction of French as the first compulsory language in the early stages from 6-7 years old of the primary school instead of teaching it from 8 to 9 years old as it has been done since 1970. This reform also consisted of teaching scientific streams in secondary schools with the French language (Benrabah 2007, Mami 2013, and Rezig 2011). In light of these reforms, English has gained considerable

importance in education and was identified by the government as an international language and an important language for science and technology. It was introduced in schools as a second foreign language after the French language at the beginning of the 90s and late 2000 (Mami 2013). According to Miliani (2000, p.13), English is considered as a competitive language to French:

In a situation where the French language has lost much of its ground in the sociocultural and educational environments of the country the introduction of English is being heralded as a magic solution to all possible ills-including economic, technological and educational ones.

Moreover, the English language is considered as a "prestigious and sophisticated language" in Algeria which is used to project a "certain status" (Belmihoub 2018). Thus, English is a compulsory language which is taught in middle and secondary schools. In the middle school students study English for 4 years, however, compared to other subjects like Math's, Physics and Arabic, English has a lower coefficient (Benadla 2012). Students are encouraged to learn the written and spoken language since this period. During secondary school, students study English for 3 years. The coefficient of the language depends on the stream. For example, English has a high coefficient in literary and foreign languages streams but it a less important subject for students in other streams such as scientific, technical and technological. The next section will discuss the basic and the higher educational system in the country. Since the study focuses on novice teachers who teach at these levels, it is important to highlight them.

## **1.7 The educational system in Algeria**

The education in Algeria is free and compulsory for the earliest stages of children educational life. It can be summarised in three different stages (primary, middle and secondary school).

### **1.7.1 The primary school**

Generally, this period has two main stages. The first one is the ‘nursery period’ which lasts for one year beginning from the age of five. It aims at introducing children to the learning community and helping them develop their physical, intellectual and thinking capacities. After the nursery period, children start their primary schools which last for five years. By the end of the fifth year, children sit a national examination called “Primary School Examination” in which they are assessed and evaluated in three different subjects: Arabic, French and mathematics. Generally, children finish primary school at the age of 11-12 years old.

### **1.7.2 Middle school**

This period used to last for three years and by the end of the study cycle students are supposed to take a national exam called “Basic Education Certificate” (BEF). However since the educational system’s reform in 2004 the ministry of education extended the period to four years in which students have to undergo a national exam called “Middle School Certificate” (BEM) in order to join the secondary school (Bellalem 2008). In middle school students are introduced to different subjects of learning and sometimes to new one such as English. The students also by the end of this year are supposed to choose a stream to follow in secondary school.

### **1.7.3 Secondary School**

The secondary school has three different streams. a) Literary streams, which in essence include studies in Humanities and the Social Sciences, b) scientific streams, which include studies in Biology, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, and c) technological streams, where students study Applied Technology’ (Bellalem 2008, p.51). At the beginning of the academic year 2004-2005, a reform in the educational system was adopted and a new branch of foreign languages was added. The 3 years study at secondary school end with a national examination called the Baccalaureate (BAC). Students must take this exam in order to gain access to higher education studies.

## **1.8 Teaching in Higher Education**

Once students finish their secondary school and successfully pass their baccalaureate exam they join the university to fulfil their studies. In this study, participants graduated from both public universities and teachers' colleges. Teachers who graduate from teachers' college are assigned to teach right after they finish their studies which take 5 years for secondary school teachers and 4 years for middle school teachers. However, teachers who graduate from public universities take an oral and written exam which is organised by the Ministry of Education to be illegible to teach (Bellalem 2008).

As mentioned previously, the higher education system in Algeria has witnessed significant changes, which are marked throughout various reforms including the application of the LMD system at the level of higher education. Prior to the implementation of the LMD system, studies at university used to last for four years. The system was called the classical system.

Samir, Kahina, Faiza and Imene have integrated the teaching profession through this programme. During 2004 and 2005 the Algerian Ministry decided to introduce the new system in higher education which is called LMD and is designed in three main grades, which are as follow:

- The licence has a period of three years to be awarded.
- Master's degree granted after 2 years of study.
- The doctorate has, at least, three years of research.

(Benmati, 2008, p. 123)

Thilleli is the only participant who integrated the teaching profession through the LMD system. The rest of the participants graduated from teachers' college (see table 4).

### **1.8.1 The teaching practice in Algeria**

This section provides a description of the teaching practicum programme at both the public university and the teachers' college where the participants graduated. The pre-service teacher education is part of the undergraduate course run by universities. During their undergraduate

studies students study particular modules on how to teach such as didactics, which prepares them on how to plan a lesson, strategies and techniques of teaching and how to deal with learners. The main objectives of the practicum are discussed in appendix A, which is a training agreement between the university where the participants graduated and the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education. I obtained both appendices A and C from the university where NQTs in this study graduated.

In Algeria, there are two main Ministries of Education which are the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of National Education (Bellalem 2008). The Ministry of Higher Education is the body which is responsible for determining and implementing policies in Higher Education, such as creating the objectives of the practicum. On the other hand, the Ministry of National Education acts as a recipient body for student-teachers during their training. Pre-service teachers' training files should first be signed and agreed by the Ministry of National Education as it is the one responsible for maintaining the policies at the level of schools (primary, middle and secondary schools) where the training takes place.

Here I summarize the main objectives as is shown in appendix A:

- The training allows student teachers to apply the theoretical knowledge and methodology obtained during teaching and to write a reflective journal.
- It prepares student teachers for the professional life, and the training is part of the undergraduate studies and is compulsory to obtain Bachelors or Masters degrees.

(Translated from Arabic in Appendix A)

I will start by describing how the practicum takes place at teachers' colleges and then describe how it goes at public universities. For student-teachers at teachers' colleges, the training takes place at the end of their studies which is during their fourth year for those who study to become middle school teachers and the fifth year for those who study to become secondary school teachers. The administration at teachers' college sends student-teachers in form of groups to different schools either middle (for those who study four years) or secondary school (for those

who study five years) to receive a training for a period of a month (see table 4). The teaching practice here is divided into two main phases which are theory and practice. The first phase takes place during their first semester which is generally in January and it lasts for two weeks. The role of the student-teacher here is to sit at the back of the classroom and observe how their mentors teach and take notes (see appendix B which is a part of Ali's reflections where he described what he observed during his training). The mentors on the other hand provide student-teachers with information and advice on how to plan lessons to prepare them for the practical phase. The second phase takes place during their second semester in March for two weeks as well. Here the student-teacher is supposed to prepare a lesson and teach for the whole hour. The number of the presentations differs from one participant to another. Sonia, for example, stated that she presented four times during her practicum. The role of the mentor is to observe how well the lesson went and to take notes about the student-teacher presentation according to the evaluation sheet criteria provided by teachers' college and public university (see appendix C). In addition to these two periods the English department adds one day which is generally Thursday for the trainee-teachers to do more training.

The training at the public university is slightly different from the one at teachers' college. Student-teachers do teaching practice during their Bachelor and Master degrees i.e. during their 3rd year and 5th year. At public university the student is required to do a training or to write a thesis at the end of their studies. For third year students they have a particular day during the week where they go to a school of their choice either middle or secondary school to receive a training over a period of three months. Master students however, have a whole semester to do their training starting from March until May. The training is divided into three phases which are *observation, initiation and presentation*. Both observation and presentation are similar to the phases described above (theory and practice). In the initiation phase the student-teacher is required to present a small task for at least 15 minutes. This prepares student-teachers for the last

phase in which they present a lesson for the whole hour.

Mentors are appointed by the headmasters in their institutions to guide student-teachers during their teaching practice (both pre-service teachers who graduated from teachers' college and public university) and must have at least five years of teaching experience. According to the official document in appendix A the University also should appoint a lecturer to assess the progress of the student teacher. However, the participants in this study claimed that they were not assessed by their lecturer either at University or at teachers' college.

By the end of the teaching practice the mentor writes comments on the whole performance of the student teacher on the evaluation sheet and grades them with no more than 15 out of 20. The evaluation criteria taken from appendix C are:

**Trainee teachers' behaviour:**

- Personality
- Analytical attitude
- Motivation
- Punctuality
- Language (written or spoken)
- Interaction with students

**Professional attitude**

- Technical knowledge of the job
- Quality of the accomplished job
- Methods of teaching and organisation
- Initiative and autonomy
- Practical imagination

(Translated from French)

This evaluation helps pre-service teachers not only to get good grades in their studies but it also prepares them for their future teaching as they will be assessed on almost similar aspects by their inspectors once they start their actual teaching (see appendix T).

Finally, student-teachers reflect on their teaching practice by writing a reflective journal which follows the different phases they had in their practicum (see appendix D). These journals are assessed by their mentors only. From my own experience as a student-teacher, my mentor read my reflective journal to assess the language, then this journal was transmitted to my English

department without any evaluation. This is to say that, the training is a great opportunity for pre-service teachers to learn about themselves and about the field of teaching (see section 2.4.2), however, it is necessary for those who are responsible of these programmes to provide more attention to particularly the reflective journals written by the student-teachers as they sometimes write important aspects about their experiences which may affect their selves as future teachers (Lee 2013). Though the practicum is not the research site of this study, which was carried out exclusively in schools during the participants' first two years of teaching, it has a very important and formative role in the development of novice teachers' sense of professional identity, and their expectations about what it means to be an English teacher in Algeria (see section 5.3). In other words, the practicum promoted NQTs' identification to teaching and contributed to the development of their professional identities (Danielewicz 2001). Further discussion about the role of the practicum occurs throughout the whole thesis.

### **1.9 CBLT in Algeria**

Among the reforms introduced in the Algerian education system since the 2000s is the implementation of CBA in teaching (Competency-Based Approach). Competency-based approach is a theory of teaching which emerged in the USA (Richards *et al.*, 2001). It focuses on what learners can achieve through the language. That is to say, it places more importance on the outcomes of learning rather than inputs (Richards *et al.*, 2001). Competency-based language teaching (CBLT) refers to the application of CBA's principals in teaching languages. In other words, while CBA refers to a theory of teaching adopted in teaching all subjects including mathematics, physics and Arabic, CBLT is limited to the teaching methods used for teaching foreign languages (Benadla 2012).

The competency-based approach was implemented in the Algerian schools during the academic year 2003-2004. The educational system shifted from the use of the grammar-translation method and communicative language teaching to the adoption of CBA (Benadl2012, Bouhadiba 2015). The major purpose of implementing CBA and more particularly CBLT in the Algerian education is to provide learners with an opportunity to take responsibility for their learning by applying what they learned in classes, apply them in their daily-life to solve their problems. These objectives are achieved through using a particular method of teaching in which teachers are no longer 'spoon-feeding the students' rather they became facilitators (Benadla 2012, p.146). The implementation of CBA was followed by designing new textbooks, teachers' guides and a series of seminars on how to use this theory.

Regardless of the support provided by inspectors during the seminars, Bouhadiba (2015) observed that in real practice, teachers still favour the old teaching methods over the CBA. Teachers in his study felt inadequately prepared for applying this approach. Such experiences had implications on how participants in this study made sense of themselves as professionals in their schools. This is to say that novice teachers in this study are found to be innovative in their work, this will be further discussed in section (7.3.2.1), unlike their colleagues who rely on old teaching methods, and thus the development of their identities is set against that background.

### **1.10 Organization of the thesis**

This thesis is organised into nine chapters. Chapter 1 as presented above has provided an introduction to the study and explained my motivation and rationale for conducting this research. It has provided the importance of the study, research questions and aims. This chapter has also provided a brief historical background of Algeria and highlighted the basic education system in the country.

Chapter 2 and 3 position this study within research conducted on teacher identity. Chapter 2

provides a detailed review and discussion on the current and relevant literature regarding pre-service and novice teachers' identities. The chapter presents some factors which contribute to the development of professional identity such as personal experiences and the practicum. It also highlights the challenges that teachers experience as part of their journey of becoming.

Chapter 3 outlines the theoretical framework informing this study. It discusses the development of teacher identity within the communities of practice and the positioning theory.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology and methods employed for collecting the data. It starts with positioning the study within broad qualitative research and justifies why the Interpretivism, associated with the qualitative approach, was deemed most appropriate for the study. It explains my awareness of my positionality in relation to the study through reflexivity. The chapter further discusses how the participants were selected and the procedures for collecting data. The process of data analysis is explained in details and the trustworthiness of the findings is also discussed. The chapter concludes by discussing the ethical issues encountered during this study.

The following three chapters (5-7) analyse the themes which have emerged from the data. Chapter 5, in particular, discusses findings on how novice teachers joined the profession, their reasons to become teachers and the influence of their sociocultural background on their decisions to teach. It also illustrates the role of the practicum in developing NQTs' identities. Chapter 6 discusses the challenges that novice teachers experienced during their journey of becoming. It shows how the participants in this study developed their identities in light of these troubles. Chapter 7 further analyses the findings in relation to the role of the communities of practice in strengthening novice teachers' identities. The findings in this chapter showed the importance of the support, encouragement and positive feedback in shaping early career teachers' identities. The chapter also discusses the role of novice teachers' agency in developing their professional identities. Novice teachers showed a high degree of individuality in their

teaching which contributed to developing a positive sense of identity

Chapter 8 discusses the findings of this research and relates the findings to previous research conducted in the area of teacher identity. It also develops a framework for understanding teacher identity which views professional identity as a cyclical process that involves negotiation of meaning between imagined, practiced and future identities.

Chapter 9 is the final chapter concluding the discussion and addressing some recommendations for further study as well as acknowledging some limitations of this study. It begins by providing a theoretical and practical implications for conceptualizing teacher identity in the Algerian context and in other contexts as well. It then addresses the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research.

## **Chapter 2: Conceptualizing teacher identity**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims at situating this study within previous research on teacher identity by critically reviewing the literature on teacher identity and its construction. This chapter is divided into four major parts. In the first section, I discuss the concept of identity in general and its construction. My intention in writing this section is to show the different epistemological views underpinning the understanding of identity (as being personally or socially developed) which provides a background to understanding the process of teacher identity development. In the next section, the concept of professional identity is elaborated and followed by the reasons behind studying teacher identity. I then review empirical studies which consider the process of identity formation among pre-service and beginning teachers, and the role of personal biographies and motivation to teach in its construction. Finally, I explore the challenges and dilemmas faced by novice teachers, as discussed in the literature, and their effect on their emotions.

### **2.2 The nature of identity and its construction**

The notion of what constitutes identity and professional identity in teacher education literature is considered elusive and complex. The core issue which is usually addressed while defining identity concerns the fundamental question of "who am I" or "who are you?" which may evoke a vast array of responses from different perspectives. Identity and self are used interchangeably in the literature on identity. Both concepts are complex as they draw on a number of theoretical disciplines that particularly include philosophy, sociology, psychology and psychotherapy (Day *et al.*, 2006).

There has always been a debate regarding the personal and the social dimensions of identity in the literature. Danielewicz (2001, p. 10) defines identity as "our understanding of who we are

and who we think other people are". Thus this definition implies both the self and the other. In other words, the concept of identity engages individuals with their personal experiences as members in different communities. Looking at identity from this perspective implies psychological and cognitive understanding. On the other hand, the sociological perspective which includes gender, ethnicity, historical and cultural factors, is of significant importance in understanding identity construction.

Earlier writers such as Cooley (1902), Mead (1934) and Erikson (1968) tend to "position the self as singular, unified, stable essence that was little affected by context or biography" (Day *et al.*, 2006, p.602). They position identity as "internalised mental models or ideals, located within individuals" (Davey 2013, p.26). In this perspective identity is more about how individuals recognise themselves than how they are seen by others. Even though these views focused on the inner side of individuals, they did not totally deny the role of social contexts in shaping the self. Feedback from others was filtered and interpreted subjectively, but the central self-concept system remained individually "distinct and identifiable" (Day *et al.*, 2006, p. 602). On the other hand, sociologists conceptualise identity as the result of "external, social, political and economic forces" (Cote and Levine 2002, p.9). Even though these two fields viewed identity differently, they contributed to a wide understanding of this concept.

Cooley (1902) for example developed the concept of the "looking glass". For him, the construction of the self depends on the influence of others. It could therefore be said that 'who someone is' depends on others' perceptions. Society plays the role of a mirror, "looking glass" that reflects who we are. This concept consists of three major elements "the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance and some sort of self-feeling such as pride or mortification" (Cooley 1902, p.152). Thus, the recognition of the self is related to how we imagine society sees and recognises us.

Drawing on the self-concern for how others relate to an individual, Mead (1934) believed that self is a “continuous concept closely linked to social interaction and created through language and social experiences” (Mead 1934 cited in Day et al., 2006, p. 602). Like Cooley (1902), Mead (1934) extended the discussion on self by considering the social interaction as the main element in constructing the self. He claims that the self develops in an interplay between the “I” (the self) and “me” (the social world). However, at the same time, each individual ensures that his/her sense of individuality is preserved while reflecting on various social structures. Thus, the resistance shown by NQTs (newly qualified teachers) in the light of becoming members in their professional communities, for instance, played a part in maintaining their sense of selves while interacting and engaging with their colleagues (see section 7.3.2.1). Akkerman and Meijer (2011, p.315) remind us of the complexity of understanding the meaning of identity as both individually and socially constructed. They believe that depending "so strongly on those we relate to, to the groups we participate in, to the epochs of our times, one might wonder what is left for the individual agency".

Other debates that have emerged from the psychological literature, suggest that individuals have a number of “selves” that change from one situation to another (Goffman 1963, Ball 1972). Most writers and scholars now agree on the point that each individual has multiple selves and that each one behaves differently according to a particular situation at a given time (Alsup 2006, Akkerman and Meijer 2011). That being said, individuals might enact different identities in various contexts (Lemke, 2008). For example, a novice teacher might adopt different personalities and enact various identities in different classes. He/she could play the role of an authoritarian teacher in one class and the role of a friendly teacher in another class (see section 7.3).

Parallel to these perspectives, but in the psychoanalysis tradition, Erikson (1968) expanded on the works mentioned above. Erikson (1968) believes that individuals go through different stages

during the process of identity formation. He suggests that adults establish a new sense of identity out of their childhood identifications. According to Erikson, children reach the stage of identification through their interaction with others such as parents, friends, and teachers and so on. He considers identification as the end of the childhood period, which distinguishes the identity of children from adults. Further elaboration on the concept of identification will be considered in the next chapter. In this respect, he points out that identity refers to the way the community recognises the individual as “somebody who had to become the way he is” (Erikson 1968, p.159). In other words, adults’ identity is achieved when they give less importance to their childhood identifications, which is characterised by the playfulness of childhood, and commit themselves to different tasks and challenges in their society.

Researchers, later on, report that Erikson’s work has taken into consideration society, culture and historical moments as drivers for identity formation (Penuel and Wertsch 1995, Schwartz 2001). Penuel and Wertsch (1995) claim that Erikson did not discount the external and cultural influences on the development of identity, however, his work has a complex view of identity formation and shares some similarities with Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of learning. They claim that “Erikson recognised that cultural resources, in the form of images and ideologies passed down through generations in history, played a key role throughout development, even in early childhood” (Penuel and Wertsch 1995, p.89). Similarly, Schwartz (2001) asserts that Erikson’s theory of identity is multidimensional in a way that it encompasses the historical, personal and social definition of identity. He also believes that Erikson’s identity theory paved the way to further research on identity formation in different fields. Cote and Levine (1987) hold comparable views with regards to the complexity of Erikson’s work. However, they believe that the external power of society on identity formation is not clear in Erikson’s work and that further research is needed to show the role of external factors on identity formation.

On the other hand, identity is also "a sociocultural phenomenon that comes from and within

local, interactional discourse contexts that are social and cultural in nature" Clark (2013, p. 7). Specific to the notion of how identity is constructed, the present study draws on a sociocultural perspective which views identity as culturally and socially constructed. Thus, the nature of identity does not only relate to the personal dimensions of self, but it also incorporates the various responses to the external world. As Danielewicz (2001, p.11) maintains "individuals are constituted subjects, their identities are produced through participation in discourse". Discourse in this study does not only refer to the active participation in different discourses that individuals engage in but also to how other people "treat, talk about and interact with us" (Gee 200, p. 105). Thus, NQTs in this study take different positions or roles according to how their colleagues, students and other staff member recognise them (see chapter 7).

In the same vein, other social theorists like Wenger (1998) stresses the importance of others in the construction of one's identity. Identity in this study is seen as something that develops as a result of becoming a member of a community of practice (COP). Wenger (1998) highlights the notion of identity as constructed and evolving as individuals participate in COP. In other words, part of who we are is probably shaped and nurtured by engagement in different COP (this notion of a COP is elaborated further in the next chapter). Wenger (1998) claims that the knowledge of the individual is constructed through the knowledge of the collective named "communities of practice". In this conception, it is difficult to be precise about where the role of individual ends and the social starts (Wenger, 1998). That is to say that, the emphasis while studying identity should not be on a person or a community but on the "process of a mutual constitution" (Wenger 1998, p.146).

Consistent with the role of the significant other in the construction of identity, Jackson (2008) stresses the importance of social interaction with regards to identity formation. She says "Our sense of self (identity) may develop when we are children within a particular sociocultural context (e.g. family, ethnic group) but may change due to contact with others and desire or

willingness to open up to new environments and ideas”(2008, p.33). This indicates that individuals belong to several communities with different degrees of affiliation and alignment (Lemke, 2008). Interaction and identification with families as well as former teachers is an evident example which shows the role of the sociocultural context in shaping identity (see chapter 5). Moreover, NQTs' identities were evolving through their participation in different school communities (see section 7.2). That being said, identity is a multiple entity that changes over time.

In this study, teacher identity is explored through the participants' engagement in different communities starting from their personal background which includes their parents and former teachers to their actual teaching. In other words, teachers' interaction with their colleagues, students and staff members during their teaching practice as well as their actual teaching are considered very important to understanding their identity development.

### **2.3 Teacher professional identity**

This section discusses the concept of professional identity which is the central aspect of this research. It looks at how existing literature conceptualized professional identity. "Professional identity" and "teacher identity" are used interchangeably in the literature on teaching. Similarly, this study uses both concepts reciprocally. The study of teacher identity has attracted scholars and researchers in the field of education (Lasky 2005, Rodgers and Scott 2008, Mockler 2011). The psychological and the sociological debates discussed in the previous section (2.2) on whether identity comes from the inner side of a person or from the different roles individual plays in various communities have been echoed in the way scholars and researchers have addressed teacher identity in education.

Despite the growing interest of identity within the field of teacher education, consensus about its definition remains elusive. Olsen (2011) argues that research conducted on teacher identity has not sufficiently explained the meaning of "teacher identity" or the theories underpinning this

concept. Moreover, in a study of research on teacher identity, Beijaard *et al.*, (2004) share the same views over the inadequacy of a clear understanding of teacher identity and highlights the varied use of this concept in the literature. The fact that identity has various meanings that derive from a range of disciplines (Gee 2001) might be the main factor for its ambiguity as Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, p.176) assert, "a major hurdle in gaining an understanding of identity is resolving a definition of it".

Teacher identity involves the personal dimensions of self which includes teachers' expectations about teaching, their ideologies and beliefs. Pennington (2015, p.17) defines teacher identity as "a construct, mental images, or model of what "being a teacher" means that guides teachers' practices as they aim to enact "being a teacher". This definition shows that both the personal and the professional sides of teacher identity are interrelated and inform each other. Moreover, in an overview of the literature, Mockler (2011) distinguishes three dimensions of teacher identity. She presented a framework for understanding teacher identity formation that includes three main aspects as shown in the figure below.

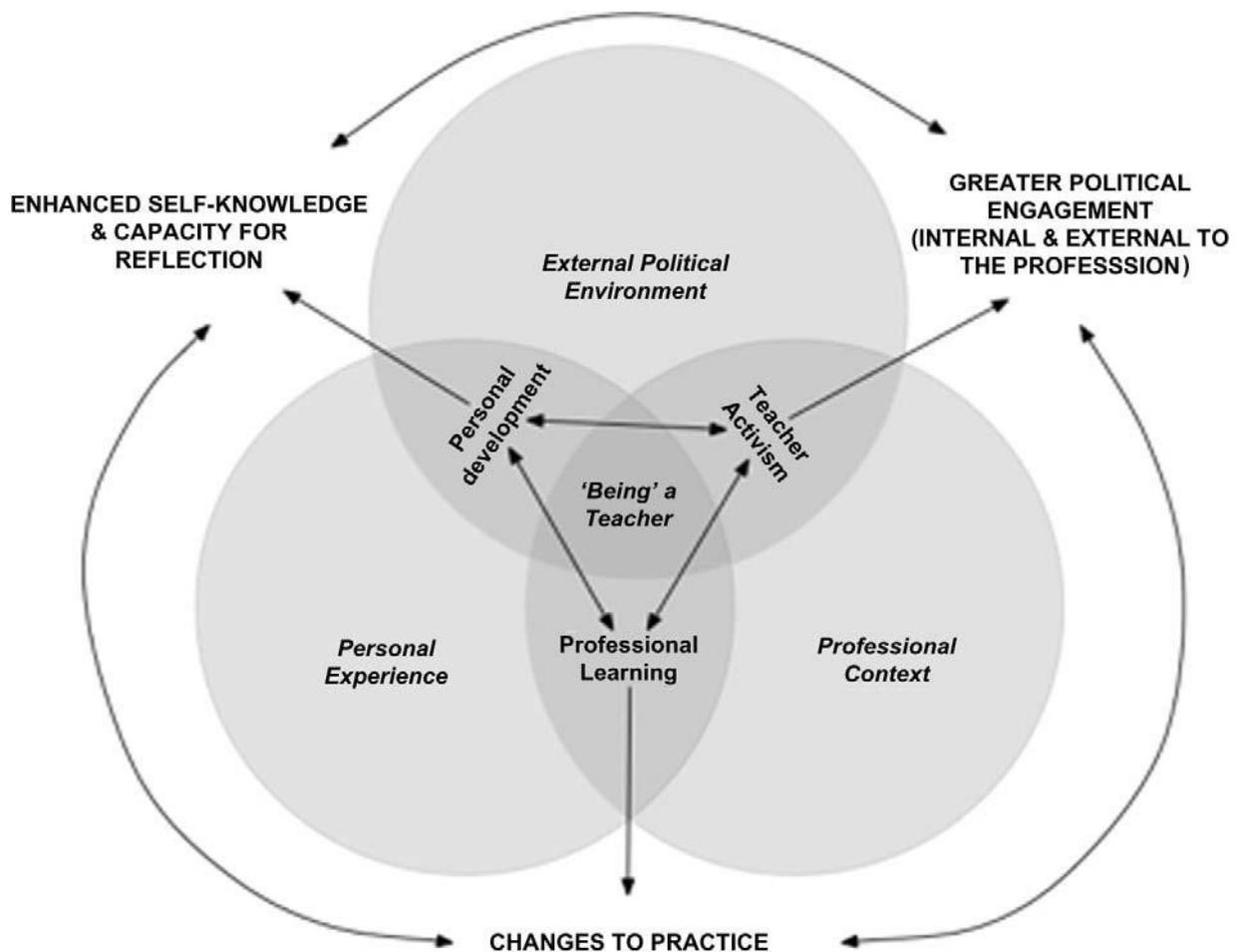


Figure 1: The formation and mediation of teacher professional identity (Mockler 2011, p. 521).

Mockler (2011) argues that teacher identity is located at the intersection of three domains: personal experience, professional experience, and the external political environment. According to Mockler (2011, p.521), these three domains work in a "dynamic shifting manner" that influence both personal and professional selves of teachers. The domain of teachers' personal experience includes those aspects related to teachers' lives that exist outside their professional worlds, such as race and gender. For example, it is noted in this study that both gender (see section 5.2.3) and ethnicity (see section 6.4) played a role in the construction and re-construction of teacher identity.

A salient aspect of the personal experience domain is the teachers' prior experiences at school or what Lortie (1975) called "apprenticeship of observation". In his work on the teaching profession, Lortie (1975) demonstrated how teachers construct their professional selves through

their observations and evaluations as schoolchildren during their journey of learning. During this lengthy process as students, expectations, emotions and motivation emerge. This experience of observing their teachers enabled novice teachers to construct meaning about teaching in general and about the characteristics of a good teacher in particular (see section 5.4) as they brought with them more than ten years of apprenticing into their teaching field, where the construction of their identities continues. These experiences are of a vital importance in constructing teachers' identities. This process then expands through affiliation and disaffiliation with the profession.

The second domain which refers to "teachers' professional context" relates to their experiences within the professional sector. In this domain, teachers' careers and professional learning are considered to be the main features. Teachers broaden their professional experiences and career histories through "involvement in professional associations, unions and networks on small and large scales" Mockler (2011, p.521). This idea resonates with the communities of practice developed by Wenger (1998) where teacher identity is shaped while engaging in various professional communities.

The last domain which is "external political environment", comprises the external discourses and attitudes that surround teachers' professional lives. In particular, these discourses derive from media as well as the government policy, both of which play a role in influencing teachers' work. In the context of this study, the recognition of society played an important role in the construction of NQTs identities (see section 6.2).

Yet another important dimension of teacher identity entails an understanding of their teaching practices through their performance. Kiely and Askham (2012, p.502) contend that teacher identity "involves an understanding of doing a teacher rather than just being a teacher". This definition highlights the significance of understanding teacher identity in practice through a mutual engagement with others such as colleagues, students, etc. In relation to this view other

scholars like Kanno and Stuart (2011, p.240) viewed teacher identity in practice as "mutually constitutive relationship between identity and practice". According to Wenger (1998, p.6) "developing practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants". Thus, the recognition of others or the social dimension of teacher identity is fundamentally linked to the different roles that teachers enact within and outside their institution. As Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, p.178) maintain identity is "an understanding of the self and a notion of that self within an outside context such as a classroom or a school, necessitating an examination of the self in relation to others". They also claim that teacher identity is shaped through interactions within professional communities. The school environment, students, colleagues and other members of the institution can all have a positive or negative impact on novice teachers' identity construction.

At face value, teacher identity is not a stable entity but rather one that is continually changing, dynamic and multifaceted Sachs (2001, 2005), Rodger and Scott (2008) and Lasky (2005), and involves sub-identities Beijaard et al., (2000). It shifts across time by the various influences of teachers' personal and professional experiences, professional contexts, interaction with others within various communities (Flores and Day 2006, Rodgers and Scott 2008, Beauchamp and Thomas 2009, Wenger 1998).

Thus, the definition provided by Miller (2009, p.174) resonates with my understanding of teacher identity as "relational, negotiated, constructed and enacted, transforming and transitional". Teacher identity in this study is relational in that it forms and evolves through various interactions with others within and beyond their institutions (see chapter 7). It is negotiated as NQTs interpret and re-interpret their lived experiences through reflecting on them as Britzman (2003, p.31) highlights "learning to teach is a social process of negotiation". The next chapter provides further details about this concept. Furthermore, it is constructed through NQTs identification with their families as well as their former teachers (see chapter 5) and

enacted in their classrooms with their students and their colleagues (See section 7.2). Finally, teacher identity is transforming and transitional as novice teachers' move from one stage to another in their career journey, for example, it shifts from being a pre-service teacher to becoming novice teachers.

In addition to Miller's definition, and since my study focuses on the construction of professional identity among a group of EFL novice teachers and the extent to which the community of practice shapes their understanding of themselves and others, my working definition of teacher identity would incorporate a number of ideas from various scholars. For the purpose of this study, I opt for Mockler (2011), Wenger (1998), Gee (2001) and Lasky (2005) conceptualization of identity. While Gee (2001, p.99) considers identity as "being recognised as a certain kind of a person" and Lasky (2005, p.109) as "how teachers define themselves to themselves and to others", my definition would be as follows:

Language teacher identity is being recognized as a certain kind of an EFL novice teacher with regard to oneself and others. It is dynamic and mediated by the interplay between personal, professional and political dimensions. Language teacher identity develops as a result of becoming a member in a community of practice and engaging in a range of activities within the school community. It also evolves in interaction with others including colleagues, students and members of staff on a daily basis.

The following table is adapted from Miller (2009) which provides a range of definitions used in general teacher education literature and which are related to the definition provided in this section.

"Teacher identity is used to refer to the way that teachers, both individually and collectively view and understand themselves as teachers"	Mockler (2011, p. 519)
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"Being recognised as a certain 'kind of person', identity is connected not to internal states but to performances in society"	Gee (2001, p. 99)
““Identity is not just <i>relational</i> (i.e., how one talks or thinks about oneself, or how others talk or think about one), it is also <i>experiential</i> (i.e., it is formed from one’s lived experience)”	Tsui (2011, p. 33)
“identity references individuals’ knowledge and naming of themselves, as well as others’ recognition of them as a particular sort of person”	Clarke (2008, p. 8)
transformational, transformative, context-bound, and constructed, maintained, and negotiated via language and discourse	Varghese et al. (2005, p. 21)
“how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future”	Norton (2000, p. 5)
"teacher identity is moreover the sense which a person has of the self as individual, including the person's self-image and self- awareness as may be captured in the stories which the person tells about her/himself and also as this is projected and understood by others "	Richards (2015b, p.117-19 cited in Pennington, 2016, p.7)
“Who we are and who we think other people are. Reciprocally, it also encompasses other people understanding of themselves and others... it involves similarities and differences"	Danielewicz (2001, p.10)

Table 1: Some definitions of teacher identity adapted from Miller (2009, p.174).

This table shows the complexity of teacher identity as involving many factors such as social, personal and discourse. Clarke (2008), Mockler (2011) and Varghese (2005) highlight the role of context and social interaction in developing teachers' identities. In the same line with these explanations, Danielewicz (2001) suggests that teacher identity develops both through similarities and differences. When applied to this study NQTs positioned themselves both through the similarities they share with their colleagues as well as the difference such as using ICTS (see chapter 7.3.2.1). This then might lead them to critically reflect on their personal images of who they are (Richards 2015b, p.117-19 cited in Pennington, 2016, p.7). Norton (2000) and Tsui (2011) also

discussed teacher identity in terms of their lived experiences. In that sense, by interpreting and re-interpreting the lived experiences, novice teachers will make sense of their identities. Finally, Gee (2000) characterises teacher identity through the way teachers view themselves and are recognised by others. He distinguished four identities that are:

- Nature identity (N-Identity): a state of being a "kind of a person" that people do not have a control over it. E.g., "being an identical twin". N-identities are recognised and sustained through the forces of discourse, institution and affinity group that are listed below.
- Institution identity (I-identity): we are who we are because of the position we occupy in society.
- Discourse identity (D-identity): it is recognised within interaction. We become a particular kind of a person because of how other people "treat, talk about and interact with us" (Gee 2001, p.103).
- Affinity identity (A-identity): this arises from the experiences shared in the practice of affinity groups. People are recognised as a kind of a person with "specific allegiances and shared culture" (Gee, 2001, p.105).

### **2.3.1 Investigating professional identity: Why does it matter?**

In this section I am going to explore the importance of identity in understanding novice teachers' professional development in their first two years of teaching which is the focus of this study. As discussed in the previous section (2.3) teachers' professional identity affects their sense of purpose, teaching behaviour as well as their performances in class (Mockler 2011, Pennington 2015, Kiely and Askham 2012). These studies also highlighted the significance of professional identity for both teachers' professional development and their professional learning.

Taking into consideration the importance of understanding identity, Danielewicz (2001) posits that identity is at the heart of learning to teach, thus, understanding the field of teaching requires more than enacting the role of a teacher. She says:

"If we need teachers who effectively educate (a fundamental requirement for any optimism about the future), then we need to know how the best teachers became themselves. What makes someone a good teacher is not a methodology or even ideology It requires engagement with identity, the way individuals conceive of themselves so that teaching is a state of being not merely ways of acting or behaving".

Danielewicz (2001, p.3)

In other words, teaching is not merely a cognitive or a set of methodological procedures that teachers follow to become good and competent, but it is "a complex, personal, social, often elusive, set of embedded processes and practices that concern the whole person" (Olsen 2008, p.5). Danielewicz's (2001) explanation is in line with Britzman's (1994) useful distinction between role and identity: roles are easily adopted and superficial as Danielewicz (2001, p.10) asserts "I would not be a good teacher if I felt I am playing a role". However, identity requires more commitment toward teaching. Thus becoming a teacher requires self-commitment not just enacting various roles.

Similarly, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, p.175) acknowledge the significance of professional identity as a "frame or analytical lens through which to examine aspects of teaching". This is to say that identity can be used to investigate teachers as whole persons who continually construct and re-construct their views and perspectives of themselves in relation to others such as their students and colleagues, as well as in relation to their personal and professional development. In the light of this study, it is important for those involved in sustaining teachers' development such as mentors during their pre-service teaching and inspectors, to be aware of this issue and provide NQTs with encouragements which nurture their professional identity development. A mentor or an inspector can provide some space for NQTs to teach using their own teaching philosophies. This can help them to critically interrogate the ways in which their previous experiences as students shaped their professional thinking and development (see section 2.4.2).

Moreover, recent literature highlights the importance of exploring identity for understanding teacher development (Day and Kington 2008, Olsen 2008). Professional identity affects the "sense of purpose, self-efficacy, motivation, commitment, job satisfaction and effectiveness" (Day et al., 2006, p. 601). According to Kiely and Askham (2012, p.502) second language teacher identity "emerged as means of understanding both why teachers act as they do and how they learn and progress in their careers". Here, teacher identity provides an explanation of how learning to teach takes place as well as how teachers make decisions about their teaching plans and contents. In other words, teacher identity contributes to an understanding of how teachers make sense of their practices. Kanno and Stuart (2011, p.239) believe that "learning in practice is different from learning by doing since learning by doing is still positioned as the ultimate goal to which doing is supposed to contribute, in contrast in learning in practice the practice is the ultimate mission novices learn because they need to do their parts in practice "

Furthermore, in answering the question raised by Danielewicz (2001), in the above quote of "what makes a good teacher", Korthagen (2004) onion model below describes the relation between teacher identity, competency, beliefs and behaviour.

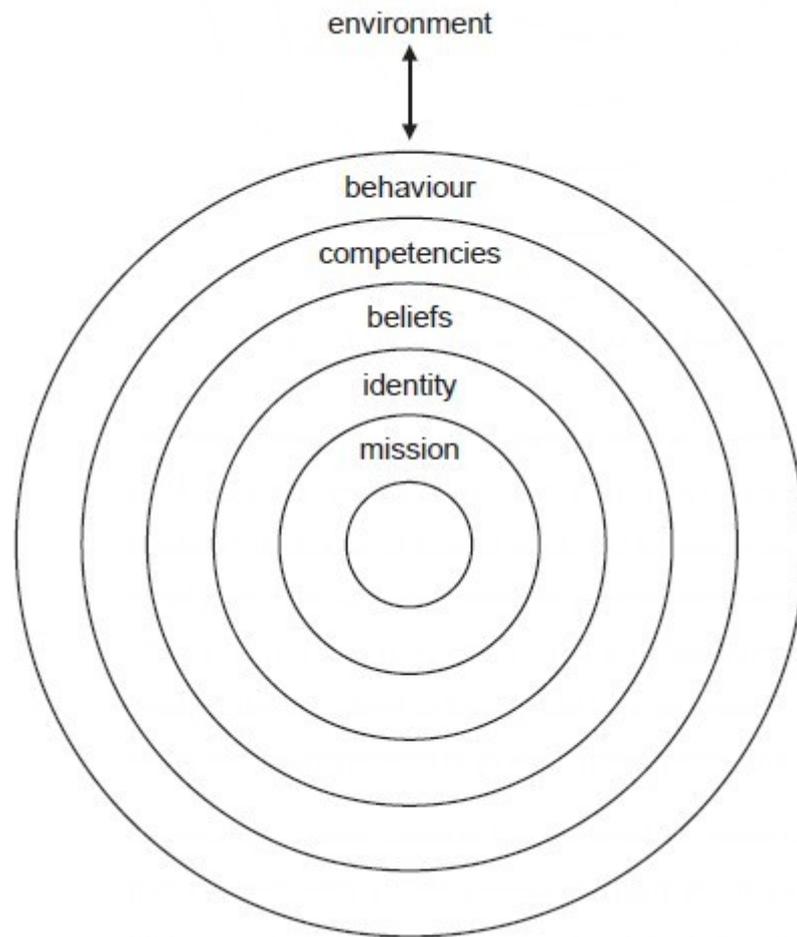


Figure 2: the onion: a model of levels of change adopted from Korthagen (2004, p.80)

The onion model perspective is divided into two levels. The inner levels are: mission which is related to teachers' sense of calling, teacher identity "who am I as a teacher?", beliefs which are related to teachers' ideologies on how to teach and competencies which focus on teachers' knowledge. On the other hand, the outer level involves environment which includes "class, students, school" (Korthagen, 2004, p.80) and behaviour. Both levels are equally important in the context of being and becoming a teacher. The outer level influences the inner and vice versa. For example, a students' misbehaviour can lead a teacher to respond in an authoritarian voice and an angry manner.

Interestingly, as is shown in figure 2, teachers' sense of calling is a central influence. This could mean that teachers with a strong sense of calling are more likely to develop their competencies and a professional identity. This does not mean that the other aspects of the framework do not

have an impact on teachers' development, however, as Korthagen (2004) pointed out, that little attention is devoted to the inner side. Moreover, Mockler (2011, p.523) states that moral purpose is "a positive driving force for the profession and that as a teacher, holding a sense of moral purpose, a desire to do good or make a difference will necessarily be acted upon within the field of teachers' professional practice ". NQTs sense of moral values, for instance, has a huge impact on their professional identity development (see section 7.3.1)

Although there is a lot of research conducted on the issue of teacher identity in many parts of the world, to date research in the Algerian context has not examined this topic. Much of the research conducted in the Algerian context was found to be discussing the LMD system (Idri 2012), teachers' training and beliefs (Bellalem 2008, Messaoudi and Hamzaoui 2012) and the CBA in Algerian schools (Belmihoub 2015, Benadla 2012). Thus, this research is deemed to be crucial to fill the gap in the Algerian context especially that education is changing and many reforms are taking place (see section 1.6). In other words, in the Algerian context, the understanding of professional identity development of English teachers also needs to take account for the role of English as a global language in Algeria and its connection to teachers' sense of professional identity. As was discussed before, Algeria has become aware of the importance of the English language and started to initiate collaboration with other English speaking countries to enhance the level of English language teaching in Algeria. Among these initiatives is the collaboration with the United Kingdom to fund 500 Algerian PhD scholars in English over 5 years starting from 2014 which will help to "build capacity in English in universities and to diversify its international partnerships into the Anglophone world" British Council (2014). In light of this study, novice teachers viewed themselves as English teachers having a role in changing the place of English language in the country. Examples of these could be seen in implementing new teaching methods like ICTs and being innovative and creative in their teaching (see section 7.3.2). Further discussion is considered in chapter 7.

## **2.4 Aspects of teacher identity construction**

Having previously discussed teacher identity, I am going now to position my study in relation to other empirical work on teacher professional identity. In this section, I discuss two important aspects which are related to teacher identity: personal biography and motivation to teach. I am aware however, that there are other aspects which may equally influence teacher identity, like reflective practice, yet in line with the scope of this study I will focus on these two aspects. I then move on to review some research studies conducted in the field of teacher education particularly with pre-service and novice teachers.

### **2.4.1 Personal biographies and reasons to become a teacher**

The decision to become a teacher is argued in this study to be the first stage where teachers develop their identities and their sense of who they want to become. This is to say that NQTs' quest for a professional identity started at an early stage before entering the profession. As this phase is generally defined as the "process of learning to teach", a time when teachers construct a broad understanding of teaching (Britzman 2003) it is of paramount importance to closely look at how these experiences might contribute to (re) shaping of teachers identities.

The literature on teacher identity construction suggests that teachers' personal histories affect their professional development as well as their decision to become teachers (Beijaard *et al.*, 2000, Chong and Low 2009 and Britzman, 2003). Early career teachers join teaching with an established understanding and held beliefs about how to teach that were mainly constructed during their schooling. As Britzman (2003, p.1) asserts "Because teachers were once students in compulsory education their sense of teachers' world is strangely established before they begin teaching". This shows that school biography is an important aspect which shapes teachers' identities.

Many researchers such as Olsen (2008), Clarke (2008), Flores and Day (2006) believe that factors like previous teachers' images constructed during schooling, either positive or negative

stereotypes, can highly contribute and help novice teachers make sense of their teaching. Such understandings can be traced back to Lortie's (1975) work on the apprenticeship of observation. The apprenticeship of observation describes the phenomenon "whereby novice teachers arrive for their teaching courses having spent thousands of hours as school children observing and evaluating professionals in action" (Borg 2004, p.274). This means that unlike other professions such as medicine and law, teachers are more likely to be prepared to teach through observing and evaluating their teachers. These observations, however, as Britzman suggests (2003, p.26) could lead to "over-familiarity with the profession" as pre-service teachers' way of teaching may be dominated by the various stereotypical image they constructed when they were students. By imitating their previous teachers, novice teachers might become less critical as they rely heavily on these beliefs without negotiating them. In addition to that, this might also create identity crises or conflicts as their journey of becoming may mean "becoming someone they are not" (Britzman 2003, p.27).

In an empirical study that shares some similarities with mine, Olsen (2008) explored the reasons for entry to teaching of six novices secondary English teachers in California. The study also looked at how such reasons influenced and affected novice teachers' professional identity and their teaching development. To examine the connection between novice teachers' identity development and their ambition to teach, Olsen (2008) conducted two rounds of semi-structured interviews with each teacher during their first year of teaching. The interviews uncovered aspects of their personal and professional experiences, their schools' perception and their future goals. In addition to interviews, he collected various teaching artefacts, documents and information about the training program. After analysing the data Olsen (2008, p.25) created an identity profile for each participant and then compared the profiles against analytic categories included in his model of teacher identity: reasons for entry, teacher education experience, current teaching context, prior professional experience, prior personal experience, and future career

plans or retention.

The findings of his study revealed that participants' biographies played a major role in their choice to become teachers. As Olsen (2008, p.36) maintains "a teacher's reasons for entry bridges prior events and experiences with the kind of a teacher one is becoming". Some of his participants, for example, reported that they have talents and passion to become teachers that were derived from observing their former teachers and learning from other aspects of their personal experiences.

It may be argued that negative experiences associated with teachers' influence could discourage some teachers to build a career in teaching, but in contrast, such experiences might affect novice teachers' decision to teach positively. Such influence was found in Hong's (2010) research in the USA, where one of his participants related his reasons to teach to his observation of his former teacher who was not good enough in teaching. As he said "you know I can be better than they did and I can make up for the fact that they were not very good" (Hong 2010, p.1534). Early career teachers' decision to teach were derived from both positive and negative experiences.

Apart from the stereotypical teachers' images that pre-service and in-service teachers draw on when making their decisions to teach, the socio-cultural background which includes society, family and gender are found in some studies to be amongst the crucial factors for choosing to teach. Clarke (2008) related the act of deciding to teach to an early way of belonging to the teaching community. His findings were a result of two years research study with 75 female pre-service teachers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Learning to teach and becoming a teacher was influenced by family encouragement, the influence of relatives as well as the discourses of gender in his context. Similarly, Olsen's (2008) findings indicated three gendered related influences on teachers' reasons for entry which are playing the role of a teacher when they were kids, the influence of a female teacher relative, and the compatibility of teaching with

mothering. Thus, these early representations of teaching "deriving from school experiences, society and perhaps family may very well have planted in their young developing identities some deep images of who teaches, how and why" (Olsen 2008, p.28).

The literature on teacher identity also looks at the relationship between teachers' motivation to teach and professional identity development, particularly in studies of pre-service and beginning teachers. Chong and Low (2009) for instance, investigated how a group of pre-service teachers of the Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) in Singapore developed their professional identity. They looked at two factors a) the reasons behind choosing to teach and b) their perception of teaching during the practicum and initial teaching. Their findings showed that pre-service teachers who chose to teach were mainly motivated by intrinsic (to do with personal growth and working in a school environment), and/or altruistic (a liking for and desire to work with children and young people, and a wish to serve society) factors (Chong and Low 2009, p.63). They found that both factors of choosing teaching and their attitudes toward teaching contribute to identity development.

To conclude this study considers NQTs' personal experiences as not only a stage where teachers learn to teach (Britzman 2003) or as an early act of belonging (Clarke 2008) but as a period that helps novice teachers to make sense of themselves and of who they want to become through various identification with others (see chapter 5). Moreover, novice teachers' prior experiences and their reasons to become teachers are important as they might determine their resilience toward teaching as well as their future goals (see chapter 7). Thus it is important as Olsen (2008) suggested to encourage teacher educators to familiarize themselves with their pre-service teachers' reasons for entry and "make teacher identity visible to novice teachers' so that they can learn to identify and adjust what and how they learn from their pasts.

#### **2.4.2 The teaching practicum as a site of teacher identity construction**

It is argued that the teaching practicum is a central component in teacher professional development. It is a crucial period in pre-service teachers' journey of becoming teachers as it provides them with an opportunity to apply the various aspects that they learned during their apprenticeship of observation and undergraduate period (Richards and Farrell 2005). In other words, as the practicum is the first official teaching experience for pre-service teachers (PSTs'), it offers them a real teaching experience to translate their theoretical knowledge into practice. This is generally achieved through learning aspects about lesson plans, designing activities and materials, and learning about the methodology (Canh 2014, Richards and Farrell 2005, Korthagen 2006).

Furthermore, the teaching practice also enables PSTs to learn about the realities of the profession as many PSTs are found to have idealistic views about teaching (Hong 2010). Pre-service teachers join the profession with a set of expectations about how to teach. Thus the practicum may challenge these expectations and PSTs may "develop resilience, remove their unrealistic assumptions or expectations and become familiar with the real life practices of the profession" Huu Nghia and Ngoc Tai (2017, p.3). Yet the opposite also may happen when failing to meet the realities of teaching, PSTs might consider leaving the profession (Hong, 2010).

The significance of the practicum does not only reside in its importance on learning to teach, but it also helps pre-service teachers to develop a strong professional identity (Yuan and Lee 2015). Pre-service teachers develop their identities through the various practices they engage themselves with within a particular school culture as Kanno and Stuart (2011, p.246) maintain "becoming a teacher is very much a process of learning through engagement in practices". From a sociocultural perspective, learning occurs through interaction with others. In the context of this study, and when applied to the learning experience during the practicum, this kind of professional development occurs when student teachers interact with their mentors and depend on their scaffolding. Here the teaching practice is considered as an official place for socialization

where pre-service teachers undergo "a process of becoming a member of a specific group, the teaching profession" (Farrell 2001, p.49).

Thus student teachers as newcomers to these schools will interpret and re-interpreted the different meaning of their experiences through these interactions. However, given the minimal status they have, pre-service teachers might experience a power relation with their mentors (see the next section). In contrast to the traditional supervision model, Walkington (2005) suggests that pre-service teachers' individuality has been found to be effective in supporting the development of teacher identity. Though he acknowledged the positive role of mentoring he believed that leaving some space for a teacher agency would be of a great importance (see section 3.5). Similarly, Kiely (2015, p.217) believes that "supporting and helping teachers in meeting the needs of their students, and protecting them against inappropriate practices can actually act as constraining...as this denies the creative engagement that make an essential contribution to effective teaching".

To sum up, the teaching practicum is viewed as an important aspect which helps novice teachers to develop their identities and their skills as well. It is also a place for interaction with mentors and other students. It can foster PSTs' identities through positive mentoring as well as undermining them through limiting their agency (see the next section). The next section discusses some empirical studies on teacher identity development.

### **2.4.3 Empirical studies conducted with pre-service and novice teachers**

The concept of novice teacher had frequently been used to refer to teachers who are new to the teaching field. Thus, there is no clear definition regarding this term (Farrell 2012). Some research has defined novice teacher as someone with less than five years' experience while others referred to it as someone with two years of teaching experience or less (Kim and Rurth 2011). For the purpose of this study my use of the concept of novice teachers refers to two years

of teaching experience.

Since the focus of this study is to understand the construction of professional identity among EFL novice teachers, studies done particularly with pre-service and beginning teachers are considered. As highlighted in the literature, the transition from students to teachers involves a "sudden and dramatic experience" (Flores and Day 2006, p.219). Thus, in order to research the development of teachers' professional identity, teacher identity must be tracked from the early years of practice "where the influence of their surrounding context, the nature of the educational institution, teacher colleagues, school administrators, their own students and the wider school community is strongly felt" (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009, p.186).

Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that identity develops once newcomers (novice teachers) become a valid member of a school community (old comers). Teachers form and construct their identities by engaging in different activities and interacting with others within their teaching context. Studies within this category generally rely on Wenger's (1998) and Lave and Wenger's (1991) conceptualisations of identity as constructed through learning and practice in various communities of practice. For example, Kanno and Stuart's (2011) study examined how L2 teachers learn to teach and identify themselves as language teachers through intense engagement in classroom practice. During one academic year, they followed two novice graduate students in an MA TESOL program (Master of Arts for teachers of English to speakers of other languages) in North America. Kanno and Stuart (2011) looked at the mutual influences of identity and practice. For them, teachers' identities in practice referred to "the mutually constitutive relationship between identity and practice" (Kanno and Stuart 2011, 240). Discourse identity was also part of identities in practice. The results of this study show that both practice and identity impinged on each other. In other words, the sustained practice enabled novice teachers to develop their language teachers' identities. After a year of teaching, participants developed general teaching skills and expertise in ESL, which boosted their confidence and resulted in a

stronger sense of language teacher identity. Their emerging identities, in turn, shaped their classrooms practices. As they started to recognise and identify themselves as language teachers, novice teachers started to act comfortably and take control of their classes.

Similarly and within the field of L2 development, drawing on a sociocultural perspective, Lee (2013) reported changes in the identities of four English writing teachers in Hong Kong. The study was part of a master program offered by Hong Kong University, which took place at the end of the 20 hours part time-in-service writing teacher education. The participants were secondary school teachers, who had 5, 6, and 12 to 15 years of teaching experience. Data gathered from the study revealed that the participants' identities were reflected in the ways teachers talked about themselves as writing teachers (identity in discourse), in what they said about their identities while performing different activities (identity in practice) and in how they negotiated their identities within a work context (identity in activity). Lee's findings show that her participants' writing identities were mediated by their previous teacher education, their reflective stance as well as the tension arising from their communities of practice. After taking part in the writing course which encompassed aspects related to how to teach writing and included feedback and discussion, the participants developed new discourses to talk about themselves as writing teachers. For example, the participants in Lee's study used to position themselves as "language teachers" as their focus in teaching was related to language like grammar and vocabulary but after the writing course was over they positioned themselves as "writing teachers" as they shifted their focus to writing features like genre, purpose and context. As Lee (2013, p.342) claims "they acquired new language to talk about themselves and their work, constructing new identities as teachers of writing". Though Lee's study dealt with L2 writing teachers and the acquisition of discourses in a particular writing coursework, I consider it important to understanding the construction of identity in my study, as even the participants in the present study might develop new ways of talking about themselves as language teachers,

through the different positions they take within their institutions. Moreover the discourse in this study does not only include the language but also the way they use the language to talk about themselves which then can affect the way they are viewed by others in their schools. For example, using an authoritarian voice with students could position this teacher as a strict teacher (see chapter 7.4).

Even though the teachers in Lee's study were more experienced than those in Kanno and Stuart's study, their findings identified teacher identity as a process of becoming that is constructed while teachers engage in real classroom practices. In other words, the amount of learning experience teachers bring to the classroom does not necessarily forge their professional identities.

Furthermore, drawing on sociocultural theory, particularly communities of practice, Clarke (2008) longitudinal study revealed that pre-service teachers' beliefs and sense of belonging shaped their identities. He observed that:

"The students' embodiment of learning to teach as the taking on of a new identity, the strength of their community and the strength of their beliefs are integrally related" (Clarke 2008, p.183).

Clarke (2008) highlighted the notion of belonging as being a major part of pre-service teachers' identity construction, for instance, choosing teaching and particularly language teaching is considered a step forward to belonging to teachers' communities.

Moreover, the role of context in shaping teachers' identities was present in the literature on teacher identity. Several studies have highlighted the relationship between teacher identity and context (Flores and Day 2006, Tsui 2007, Lee 2013). Focusing on beginning teachers, Flores and Day (2006), investigated the ways in which professional identities of 14 new teachers were shaped and reshaped over the first two years of teaching. The study took place in different school settings in Portugal and the participants were teaching different subjects like maths,

physics and languages. The main findings indicated the interaction between teachers' personal histories and the influences of a workplace. Beliefs, values and attitudes that novice teachers in Flores and Day's (2006) study had, were challenged in their day-to-day teaching practice. Teachers became more aware of their responsibilities as teachers, for instance, they recognised how to deal with their tasks. In other words, the influence of a workplace either negative or positive seems to play a major role in the (re)shaping of beginning teachers' identities.

Similarly, drawing on Wenger's (1998) social theory of identity formation, Tsui (2007) explored the identity formation of an individual EFL teacher, Minfang, from the People's Republic of China. Using narrative inquiry, Tsui (2007) traced the lived experiences of Minfang, as an EFL learner and an EFL teacher for a period of six years at Nanda University. The analysis of this study showed a complex interplay between Minfang's personal identity and the institutional context in constructing and forming teacher identity. Even though Minfang's learning experience made him feel marginalised and not fully accepted by his peers, as he was weak in both English and standard Cantonese, through situated learning, he developed the expertise to become a CLT teacher in the same university. He became an important member of the school community as he adapted the practices imposed by his institution. Interestingly Lee's (2013) study of L2 writing teachers mentioned above, found that the sociocultural environment where teachers work restricted the development of some of her participants' identities. One of her participants felt marginalised by her colleagues however, teachers in her study acted upon these constraints, which helped them to develop their identities.

In a recent study about exploring teacher identity during the practicum, Yuan (2016) reports the role of mentoring in undermining the identity of two pre-service teachers' (Ming and Yang) in China. Yuan (2016) claimed that pre-service teachers' "ideal identities" were badly affected by negative mentoring. "Ideal identities" refers to the way the participants Ming and Yang positioned themselves before joining the practicum. Ming viewed himself as a "caring

supportive teacher" and Yang as "modern teacher". The study's main findings revealed that interaction with mentors created different "ought (e.g. a follower), feared (e.g. controlling teacher) identities" (Yuan, 2016, p.188). This shows that mentors restricted pre-service teachers' agency to seek change in their practice and obliged them to follow their ways of teaching. Ming, for example, viewed herself as an "outsider", she reported that her mentor assigned her tasks which were not relevant to her professional growth such as marking students writing, which limited her interaction with students. This study also shows how potentially fragile teachers' identities can be in the early stages of their development, and vulnerable to negative feedback from mentors. Early career teachers clearly needed scaffolding.

In another study, however, Mann and Tang (2012) showed the importance of positive mentoring in shaping teachers' identities. Using qualitative case study research Mann and Tang (2012) examined the experiences of four novice teachers with regard to the role of mentoring in supporting their professional development during their first year of teaching. Their findings highlighted that mentors were supportive in many ways with regard to aspects related to how to teach such as explaining the syllabus, observing and providing feedback. Their findings also suggested that both age and experience between mentors and novice teachers affected their development. Young mentors in Mann and Tang (2012, p.485) study were found to be "more approachable, and a good source of emotional and practical support". One of their participants described his relationship with his mentor who has only one year of teaching experience, as being positive and based on collaboration and willingness to help each other. This shows that novice teachers at this stage do not need only support on how to teach but also emotional support is of paramount importance. For example, when mentors encourage their pre-service teachers by giving them positive feedback they boost their confidence and self-desire to carry on teaching (see section 5.3.1).

To conclude, the body of the literature examined in this section comprises various studies

conducted basically with EFL and ESL teachers. As the table (table 2) below shows, different data collection tools were used and different methods (qualitative and mixed methods) were employed by various researchers. Most of the studies reviewed above, though differ in the duration, they all show that teacher identity is mediated by various factors. Even though, I have focused on one major finding in each study some overlaps were noticed across the studies. For example, Flores and Day (2006) study which I categorised in the context, appeared to belong to prior experience as well. In other words Flores and Day (2006) findings highlighted both the importance of context and prior experiences in developing teacher identity. Thus, in general the concept of professional identity derives from multiple sources some internal (personal) and other external (social and political). It evolves and changes over time and consists of knowledge/expertise, prior experiences, motivation to teach, discourses and learning communities. The current study extends the literature on the issues being discussed. Thus the quest for a professional identity in this study is viewed as beginning before teachers join teaching (see section 8.3). Though Tsui's study (2007) provides an interesting understanding on how teachers construct their identities through their lived experiences, the current study adds additional and detailed explanations on how NQTs (re) shape their understanding of themselves through their previous experiences as well as through their participations in different COP.

<b>Author, year and context of the study</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Duration of the study</b>	<b>Main data tools</b>
Flores and Day (2006) in Portugal	14 new teachers	Two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two round semi-structured interviews.</li> <li>• Questionnaire administered to all staff in each school.</li> <li>• Pupils were asked to write a short essay and describe any changes they perceived in their teachers.</li> <li>• Annual reports and teachers' formal documents.</li> </ul>
Mann and Tag (2012) in Hong Kong	4 novice teachers	One year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with both novice teachers and mentors.</li> <li>• Novice teachers' documents such as lesson observation.</li> <li>• Research diaries and field notes.</li> </ul>
Lee (2013) Secondary school in Hong Kong.	4 writing teachers.	One year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two semi-structured interviews in June 2008 (two months after the completion of the L2 writing coursework) and in June 2009 (a year after the first interview)</li> <li>• Classroom research report</li> </ul>
Kanno and Stuart (2011) in North America.	2 novice ESL teachers.	One year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews, teaching journals, stimulated recalls, classroom observation, videotaping of classes and documents.</li> </ul>
Tsui (2007) in China	One EFL teacher	Six months but covered Six year of development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face to face interviews.</li> <li>• Reflective diaries.</li> <li>• Exchange of both researcher and participant diaries.</li> <li>• Intensive face to face conversation over a week</li> </ul>
Clarke (2008) in United Arab Emirates	75 student teachers	Two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus group interviews and online discussions.</li> </ul>

Chong and Low (2009) in Singapore	603 student teachers	One year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires.</li> <li>• Interviews with teachers and other staff members inside the school.</li> </ul>
Yuan (2016) in china	2 pre-service teachers	Longitudinal study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In depth interviews.</li> <li>• Field notes.</li> <li>• Personal reflections</li> </ul>

Table 2: Studies on teacher identity

## 2.5 Challenges faced by novice teachers.

This study also looks at how newly qualified teachers develop their professional identities in light of the different troubles and challenges they experienced when they started teaching. This transition is documented in previous research on teacher identity as highly complex as novice teachers face the discrepancy between their expectations and teaching reality (Flores and Day 2006, Mann and Tang 2012). Veenman (1984, p.143) coined the concept of "reality shock" which is used to indicate "the collapse of the missionary ideals formed during teacher training by the harsh and rude reality of everyday classroom life". This concept implies that the practicum does not adequately prepare novice teachers to face their classrooms and deal with the daily problems of the profession (Correa et al., 2015). In the same vein, Britzman (2003) refers to this phase as a "culture shock" when novice teachers start to realise the complexity of their job. Summarizing research conducted in the sixties, seventies and early eighties, Veenman (1984, p.160) highlighted eight problems that NQTs face which are: classroom discipline, motivating students, dealing with individual differences, assessing students' work, relationships with parents, organizations of classroom, insufficient and/or inadequate teaching materials and supplies and dealing with problem of individual students. The problems cited here could also be similar with what more experienced teachers face on a daily basis, however, it might affect novice teachers more than others as they are in a fragile position. In a more recent study, Mann and Tang (2012) found that novice teachers were more concerned about the flow of the lesson and students' negative reactions toward the activities. Novice teachers' focused more on

maintaining an appropriate classroom environment and felt more comfortable when classes progressed as they planned. The same troubles were also found in Ulvik et al., (2009). However, Ulvik et al., (2009) added that novice teachers in their study were struggling with two diverse ideas which are: being recognised as new teachers and on the other hand wanting to be seen as qualified teachers. This means that NQTs in their study needed some support and help from more experienced teachers but also wanted to exercise their autonomy and maintain their sense of self.

Unlike Veenman (1984), and others who referred to the problems that beginning teachers face with regard to students discipline, Correa *et al.*, (2015) identified other dilemmas that NQTs face in terms of being a new member in an established community. Participants in their study reported a lack of agency and recognition from their school community in the sense that their colleagues for example do not acknowledge their opinions and views during staff meetings. Correa *et al.*, (2015, p.66) challenge the concept of the "reality shock" coined by Veenman (1984) and argue that its construct is "based on a simplified dichotomy between the novice and the expert, neutralizing opportunities for innovation that novices bring to school". They claim that this concept proposes a division between newcomer and more experienced teachers. They believe that newcomers could also bring new innovation and creativity to the school. Novice teachers for example can add new teaching methods and contribute to their schools as old-timer do (see chapter 7.3.2.2).

These challenges do not only affect NQTs' way of teaching but they also affect their emotions. Previous studies show a direct link between teachers' emotions and their professional identity development (Flores and Day 2006, Zembylas 2003, Hargreaves 1998). In other words, the emotional dimensions of teaching are linked to NQTs' satisfaction with their teaching experiences. Both the climate of the school as well as classrooms affect NQTs attitudes toward teaching. Novice teachers express both positive emotions which include confidence, high self-esteem, pride and happiness as well as negative emotions which involve anxiety, anger and frustration (Hargreaves 1998, Flores and Day 2006). Novice teachers in this study, for example experienced positive emotions when their lessons went well as well as when their relationships with students were good (see chapter 7.2.3). They also experienced negative emotions regarding their recognition within their communities as well as their students' behaviours (see section 6.3).

In a sociocultural perspective emotions are considered to be socially constructed and they "inform and define identity in the process of becoming" Zembylas (2003, p.223). Thus for novice teachers to overcome these tensions they need to be provided with support within their institutions. In Mann and Tang (2012) study, they suggested that an important aspect that helped novice teachers to talk about the students' behaviour was the discussion they held in the staffroom with other staff members. Man and Tang (2012, p.478) viewed these kinds of conversations as an "emotional support" which helped novice teachers to survive during this period. Early career teachers' level of frustration and anxiety about students' behaviour decrease when more experienced teachers share the same troubles with them (see chapter 7). This means that NQTs feel more confident when they share a particular problem with more experienced colleagues as this affirms to them that they are not alone in these tensions. This study explores the challenges faced by early-career teachers and looks at how they coped with them.

## **2.6 Research gaps and Chapter summary**

This chapter has conceptualised the concept of professional identity and how it is understood, constructed and reconstructed over time. This chapter has clearly shown that professional identity is not a fixed entity, however, it is constantly changing. Moreover, by reviewing research on teacher identity I have identified some gaps which call for further research. First of all researchers claim that few research is conducted with non-native English speakers (Lim, 2011) thus this research will add new knowledge to understanding teachers' identities in non-native speaker countries as well as teacher education as a whole. Secondly, research on teacher identity as rooted in the personal background (Flores and Day 2006, Olsen 2008) did not adequately provide a detailed examination of how identities are constructed during that phase.

Finally, most studies looked at the support that NQTs needed during their transition from pre-service to in-service teacher education and only a few studies (Ulvik *et al.*, 2012, Correa *et al.*, 2015) have addressed the role of novice teachers in their own development through exercising their agency and being resistant to the norms of their communities.

Thus to address these gaps and give more depth to this research, the current study explores the construction of professional identity through different theoretical frameworks. The next chapter discusses these theories in details.

## **Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework**

### **3.1 Introduction**

I discussed in the previous chapter the concept of professional identity and its use within the educational literature. I highlighted the different trajectories of teacher identity starting from the early stages of identity construction which include personal histories and reasons for joining the profession to the importance of the teaching practice and the various challenges faced during the transition from pre-service teachers to becoming an official teacher. I also explored different studies which dealt with pre-service and in-service teachers to better understand teacher development. The range of studies I illustrated in the previous chapter differed in their conceptualization of professional identity. Yet, as I have already stated, these scholars agreed upon the complexity and multiplicity of teacher identity. Thus to better understand this

complexity, I combine three theories which could form a strong theoretical framework for studying teacher identity.

In this chapter, while I take into account Wenger (1998) conceptualization of identity as developing through interaction within COP, I also use sociocultural theories of learning (SCT) and positioning theory. The notion of positioning theory as found in the literature become increasingly relevant to my research as I collected and analysed my data. Each theory provides a deeper understanding of studying teacher identity. Given the importance of sociocultural theory in explaining "teacher development at all phases of teacher careers and in all contexts where they live and work" (Johnson and Golombek 2011, p.1), positioning theory provides interesting understanding on how NQTs come to see themselves as a "certain kind of a person" (Gee, 2001). In the context of this study, the sociocultural theory provides an understanding of how professional identity is constructed and re-constructed through time. The positioning theory illuminates aspects of teacher identity as they are explained by the participants. Finally, the COP provides more details about how newcomers develop their professional identities by becoming a full member in different communities.

### **3.2 Sociocultural perspectives on identity development**

"From a sociocultural perspective, a person' identity reflects their individual meanings, values, attitudes, dispositions and practices, but these, in turn, construct and are constructed from their background experiences, their narratives about the past and their history of responses to like or unlike 'others" (Davey 2013, p.27)

I open this section with this quote by Davey (2013) which provides an interesting perspective about the sociocultural theory (SCT). That is to say that, SCT considers identities as developing through mediation. In other words, past experiences are mediator tools which help individuals to understand their identities. By reflecting on past experiences, people negotiate and challenge these beliefs and ideologies which then contribute to the development of their identities.

As context is central in the sociocultural theory, in this section, I am going to present a brief overview of Vygotsky's (1978) work on human learning and cognitive development and then I shall discuss the relevance of SCT to teacher identity formation.

Arising from the field of psychology, sociocultural theory is "a theory of mind, based on Vygotsky's belief that the properties of mind can be discovered by observing mental, physical, and linguistic activity because they are intrinsically related" (Roebuck, 2000, p. 80). Vygotsky (1978), who is best known for his pioneering work in the field of child development, argued that learning happens by the virtue of participating in social activities and interacting with people in various cultural contexts. The most important tenets of his theory are mediation and the zone of proximal development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky (1978), mediation underlies the transformative process of internalization. Human contact with the world does not happen in a straightforward process. They "use symbolic tools, or signs to mediate and regulate their relationships with others and themselves and thus change the nature of these relationships" (Lantolf 2000, p.1). From this perspective, teachers in this study while engaging in culturally valued activities in their schools such as joining different school communities, would develop new behaviours and new ways of thinking, which would result in the transformation and development of their sense of identity as teachers.

With regard to ZPD, Vygotsky defined it as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (1978, p.86). He articulates ZPD as the gap between what an individual knows and what he/she can do in collaboration with others or with the guidance of more experienced people. In the context of EFL teacher education, Johnson and Golombek (2011) made this link between the ZPD and novice teachers' growth clearer:

“...knowing what a novice teacher can do on her own tells us little about her potential to learn something new. However, when we see/hear how this same teacher interacts with someone who is more capable while accomplishing a task that is beyond her abilities, this creates a window through which we can see her potential for learning and her capabilities as they are emerging” (Johnson and Golombek 2011, p.6)

This imaginary space or ZPD permits us to understand what novice teachers could do with assistance while articulating their internalised knowledge. In another sense, NQTs develop their skills through engagement, scaffolding and support by the more knowledgeable others. Identity, then, develops through assistance as well as through opposition. Sociocultural theory is a useful framework to think about professional development but it does not really account for the process of identity formation where the individual is actually resistant to the norms of the community of practice (see chapter 7).

Having discussed Vygotsky's views on the sociocultural theory and the connection between social learning and cognition, I shall now link this concept to identity development. In studies related to teachers' growth, scholars have adopted a sociocultural perspective in an attempt to understand teacher professional identity (Norton 2006, Johnson 2009, and Davey 2013). Identity in sociocultural theory is considered as dynamic, multifaceted and related to larger social contexts (Norton 2006). In other words, it is formed in a sociocultural setting where it involves other aspects such as the "linguistic, ethnic, racial and gender mix or profile in the administration, the teaching faculty and the student body" (Pennington 2015, p.27).

Pennington also adds that a teacher's sociocultural identity is bound to other people including "students, employers, and the wider society and the teaching field" (2015, p.27). Similarly, Jackson (2008) stresses the importance of social interaction with regards to identity formation. She says "Our sense of self (identity) may develop when we are children within a particular sociocultural context (e.g. family, ethnic group) but may change due to contact with others and desire or willingness to open up to new environments and ideas"(2008, p. 33). Moreover, Johnson believes that:

Sociocultural perspective ... opens up the possibility to trace how teachers come to know, how different concepts and functions in teachers' consciousness develop, and how this internal activity transforms teachers' understandings of themselves as teachers, of their students, and of the activities of teaching (Johnson 2009, p.13).

In this quote, we can notice the complexities of the sociocultural theory in identity development, and how different tools such as language, mediate the inner side of the teacher within society. Teachers' communications with other colleagues or mentors in the institution would help them to build up an image of who they are and what they are aiming to become. Other theories that stem from the sociocultural theory like, situated learning (Lave and Wenger, 1991) which stresses the importance of learning in collaboration and moving from legitimate peripheral participation to full membership, and communities of practice (Wenger, 1998 see the next section) share the belief that "the way in which human consciousness develops depends on the specific social activities in which people engage" (Johnson 2006, p.273). In this case learning, knowing and thinking derive from individuals' participation in social practices of learning and teaching in a particular school environment.

Wenger (1998) claims that the knowledge of the individual is constructed through the knowledge of the collective named "communities of practice". In this conception, it is difficult to be precise about where the role of the individual ends and the social starts (Wenger 1998). In other words, the emphasis while studying identity should not be on a person or a community but rather on the "process of a mutual constitution" (Wenger 1998, p.146). Importantly identity and practice are interrelated and mirror each other as Wenger argues:

“There is a profound connection between identity and practice. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage with one another and thus acknowledge each other as participants” (Wenger 1998, p.149).

To conclude, the sociocultural perspective is an important theory in studying teacher identity as it accounts for "the complex ways in which we change and become competent in new tasks and activities and move into new roles and identities" (Kiely and Askham 2012, p. 497). In the context of this study, novice teachers develop a sense of who they are as they engage in different communities at an early age until joining the profession. Their professional identities are also shaped as they negotiate the meaning of their experiences with others inside and outside the profession.

### **3.3 Communities of practice**

The preceding chapter has reviewed studies related to identity development among pre-service as well as novice teachers. Many studies have drawn on Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger's (1998) theories of social learning to illuminate the identity development of newly qualified teachers' from peripheral learning trajectory to full participation in the communities of practice (Tsui 2007, Clarke 2008, Nagatamo 2012, ). This study is framed within a sociocultural perspective and adopts Wenger's theory of learning.

As the aim of this study is to look at the process of identity formation in different stages of

NQTs' lives, this theory will offer an appropriate lens for examining identity formation as it views identity as a nexus of multimebership (Wenger 1998). Thus, identity in this view is constructed at multiple levels within a community membership. According to Wenger (1998), individuals develop who they are through identifying with what is familiar and unfamiliar in the communities to which they belong. For example, early-career teachers may construct their professional identities through identification, dis-identification and engagement with other COP such as families, schools, mentors, previous teachers and colleagues.

Moreover, this theory is deemed important as it sheds light on the transition period from being a student to becoming a teacher. It provides possible explanations on how NQTs develop their professional identities by moving from one learning trajectory to another. As Tsui (2011, p.33) asserts "this theory also helps us to understand how different forms and trajectories of participation in the community's core practice can shape the identities formed by teachers". For example, COP provides more details on how professional identity shifts from peripheral trajectory to becoming a full member in a community (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998).

Finally, this theory resonates with the literature considering the personal and the social dimensions of identity. COP views identity formation as "being rational and experiential, as well as social and personal" Tsui (2011, p.33). In other words, COP considers identity formation as a product of interaction and identification with other members in various communities as well as a negotiation of meaning of personal experiences. This position views identity in the interplay between "the social, the cultural, and the historical with a human face" (Wenger 1998, p.145). Wenger (1998) argues that identity is neither individualistic nor societal, however, it resides within the reciprocal connection between the social and the individual. Novice teachers in this study, while joining a pre-existing community (teacher community) experience an act of belonging as newcomers to the COP. This entails forms of participation, non-participation and interaction. The combination of both participation and non-participation shape their identities.

### 3.3.1 Understanding communities of practice

In terms of the preceding discussion on identity and professional identity development (see chapter 2), the concept of the communities of practice that was first developed by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) share similar aspects with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory which considers interaction with the world as a salient aspect in learning (3.2). Communities of practice was first introduced by Lave and Wenger (1998) and then developed by Wenger (1998). Thus, a community of practice is a group of people who share a common enterprise and mutual goals, as explained by Wenger (1998):

"As we define these enterprises and engage in their pursuit together, we interact with each other and with the world and we tune our relations with each and with the world accordingly, in other words, we learn. Over time, this collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprises and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of a community created over time by the sustained pursuit of shared enterprise. It makes sense, therefore, to call these kinds of communities *communities of practice*" Wenger (1998, p.45).

Communities of practice encompasses three dimensions that are mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire. Though Wenger (1998) conceptualised the meaning of COP around these three concepts, he, however, does not "presume that this generates a shared understanding, indeed, Wenger acknowledges the possibility of conflict" (Handley *et al.*, 2006, p.646).

Mutual engagement refers to a "participation in an endeavour or practice whose meanings are negotiated among participants" (Clarke 2008, p.30). In other words, mutual engagement involves a group of people engaging in actions. It moves beyond the notion of a group, team or network and it involves complex relationships that establish and sustain their ongoing activities.

In the context of this study, it could be explained in terms of the inclusion or exclusion of novice teachers from the school community. In other words, one way that NQTs developed their mutual engagement at school was by working with their colleagues on aspects such as designing exam papers and talking about students' discipline (see section 7.2.1). Mutual engagement is an important component which enables participants to be part of what is important in their communities as it is what defines belonging as Wenger (1998, p.74) states:

Being included in what matters is a requirement for being engaged in a community of practice, just as engagement is what defines belonging.

Sustaining this mutual engagement thus involves work, which Wenger (1998, p.74) called "community maintenance". In this study NQTs worked hard to become full-members in their communities by participating in different activities within their schools such as invigilating during the exams and taking other responsibilities like being the head of their classrooms (see section 7.3).

Though the present study showed many examples of mutual engagement (see chapter 7), it also highlighted the absence of mutual engagement in some cases which resulted in a sense of non-participation, marginality and absence of belonging. The examples of ethnicity and gender in chapter 6 show these findings. In other words, Samir who was the only male teacher at school did not engage with the other female teachers in the staffroom and distanced himself from them because of the cultural restriction and the religion of the country (see section 7.2.1). NQTs in this study looked for a sense of belonging in different broad teaching communities (see section 7.2.2). This is to say that, though mutual engagement is an important aspect of belonging, in this study however, the belonging process emerged also through NQTs' engagement with others beyond their school communities. Samir, for example, who was not able to mutually engage with the other female teachers in his institution, found Facebook groups as an alternative way to

develop his professional competencies in English language teaching. Thus it is necessary to acknowledge the limitation of mutual engagement in sustaining the development of the COP and particularly their sense of belonging.

Joint enterprise "refers to the focus of activity that links members of a community of practice" Clarke (2008, p.31). It can be seen for example, in negotiating lessons, school matters and so on, with colleagues and staff members. According to Wenger (1998) sharing a joint enterprise does not merely mean agreeing on everything within the community of practice.

The enterprise is joint not in that everybody believed the same thing or agrees with everything, but in that it is communally negotiated.

(Wenger 1998, p.78)

This study supports Wenger's explanation in the above quote as in many examples NQTs shared their own views about different aspects regardless of their colleagues' opinions. Examples of these could be teaching according to their own methods (see section.7.3.2.1), sharing their views on important school matter regardless of the power relation (see section 6.3.1) and innovating in their teaching (see section 7.3.2.2). These disagreements reinforced NQTs' sense of agency and allowed them to be part of a wider community by identifying themselves with other English language teachers beyond their school community (see section 8.5.1). For example, Sonia attended many seminars and conferences about English teaching in other parts of Algeria on her own initiative (see section 7.2.2 for further discussion). Thus joint enterprise here could be seen as a "productive part of the enterprise" (Wenger 1998, p. 78).

The last dimension of practice as a source of a community coherence is the development of a shared repertoire. A shared repertoire involves the resources that create meaning that was the result of mutual engagement in a joint enterprise. This repertoire includes "routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the

community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice" Wenger (1998, p.83). In the context of novice teachers, a shared repertoire would include school events, classroom arrangement, timetable, staff meeting that give meaning to teaching. Moreover, NQTs in this study developed a shared discourse through observing their colleagues in the staffroom (see the example of Dihia in section 7.2.1) and by reflecting on how the administration works and react accordingly (see the example of Ali in section 7.2.1).

Wenger's theory has been criticised for failing to adequately theorise the role of power in the communities of practice, especially in, hierarchical places like schools (Robert, 2006). For example, this study showed this power relation between the principal and NQTs (see chapter 7). However, Wenger acknowledged such limitation as his theory is based on learning through mutual engagement which probably would dismiss power relation. In addition to that, Trent and Gao (2009) believe that Wenger's theory does not account for individuals' reactions and responses to marginality within communities. In their study, they described how a group of second-career teachers (i.e. teachers who had a previous career in another field such as engineering or business etc.) in Hong Kong defined their language teacher identities. The main finding of this study reveals that teachers' views were not valued within their schools. In response to this matter, second-career teachers used their non-participation position to create a space to enact their own identities. This was achieved by rejecting the 'traditional teaching' which is more teacher-centered and was adopted by their colleagues, by adopting what they described as 'out-of-the-box' teaching which is creative (Trent and Gao 2009).

To sum up, as novice teachers enter the school community as newcomers, they experience an identity shift from being a student to becoming a full-time teacher. The theoretical framework of COP informs this study. It shows how novice teachers construct and re-construct their professional identities through their participation, non- participation as well as their interactions with other colleagues, students and staff members of the school community. The teacher

community offers a realistic experience of teaching. Working with a team, planning lessons and creating new teaching methods would shed light on how identity is constructed and whether or not the communities of practice shape novice teachers' identities. The next section will consider identity formation in the light of the dual process of identification and negotiation of meaning which emerged from the data.

### **3.3.1.1 Identification**

Wenger (1998, p.188) states that identity is formed amid the "tension between our investment in the various forms of belonging and our ability to negotiate the meanings that matter in those contexts". Therefore and from Wenger's perspective, identity involves a dual process of identification and negotiation of meaning which may lead to both participation and non-participation in different communities. This study uses these two concepts as "they provide a lens to theoretically capture both individual agency and the impact of the community's legitimation and recognition in their conceptualization of identity" Yazan (2018, p.209). Since the present research views the construction of teacher identity as both personal and social, identification and negotiability will provide a coherent explanation of how novice teachers' identities are formed and re-constructed over time. In other words, these concepts would shed light on how NQTs' identities are developed in the light of becoming a new member in their COP as well as through their personal endeavour to becoming the teacher they wished to be. Wenger (1998) claims that identification occurs through the three modes of belonging that are: engagement, imagination and alignment (see section 3.3.2).

Identification through imagination as described by Wenger (1998, p.173), involves "creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience". Imagination involves learning and goes beyond a "sense of self-belief" Kiely and Askham (2012, p.498). In the context of this study, NQTs learned their future selves as teachers, through their strong identification with a significant other. Thus identification through

imagination involves not only who a person is in reality but also "who they imagine themselves to be" Xu (2012, p.569). Early-career teachers, in this context, can construct imagined identities during that time of identification with their families, former teachers and society. As outlined by Anderson (1991), Norton (2013), Pavlenko (2003) and Xu (2012) imagined identity refers to an identity that is constructed in one's imagination, in this case NQTs, regarding his/her relationship to themselves and others. Wenger observes that this type of identification allows individuals to connect and distance themselves from a particular community. It can lead to a sense of affinity as it can lead to "stereotyping when practice is not fully understood and overgeneralizations are made on the basis of specific practices" (Tsui 2007, p.660). This then will lead to an identity of non-participation.

### **3.3.1.2 Negotiation of meaning**

The other process of identity formation concerns the negotiation of meaning. According to Wenger (1998, p.197) negotiability is "the ability, facility and legitimacy to contribute to, take responsibility for and shape the meanings that matter within a social configuration". For example in this study, negotiability determines the extent to which newly qualified teachers are able to contribute and to shape the meaning of their practices during their practicum as well as their actual teaching. However, Wenger also notes the issue of power in negotiability as "some meanings have more currency than others because of the different relations of power between those who produced them" (Tsui 2007, p.661). Instances in which problems of power relations might occur in this research could include relations between NQTs and their mentors during their practicum as well as within their institutions. As newcomers to the COP, they might face problems with their colleagues as well as other staff within their institutions which are linked to power relations. Thus, participants are able to exercise different degrees of control over the meanings they produce.

Furthermore, Wenger (1998) realises that people can claim 'ownership of meaning' which

describes the extent to which an individual can control, "use, modify and appropriate them [meanings] as their own" within their communities Tsui (2007, p.661). Wenger (1998) points out that ownership of meaning increases when people participate in the negotiation process. However, when the members of a community fail to negotiate the meaning of their practice due to uneven power distribution, it might result in an identity of marginality which is a form of non-participation (Wenger 1998). Although Wenger (1998) viewed marginality as a form of non-participation, Trent and, Gao (2009, p.267) suggest that the forms of non-participation allowed participants to "exercise their individual agency, claim ownership of meanings, that were important to them, become, in part, the type of teachers they wanted to be, and thereby avoid developing an identity of marginality".

Wenger theory of identity formation can provide an appropriate framework for analysing the process of identity formation during the different trajectories of becoming a teacher as "it allows researchers to explore pre-service teachers' complex interactions and interpretations of their lived experiences which contribute to their professional identity formation and development ". (Le Huu Nghia and Ngoc Thai 2017, p.5)

The figure below outlines Wenger's (1998) social ecology of meaning which shows identification and negotiability as the main constituents of identity. Both identification and negotiability can give rise to participation and non-participation in the communities of practice depending on the degree of participation while engaging in various activities through the modes of belonging.

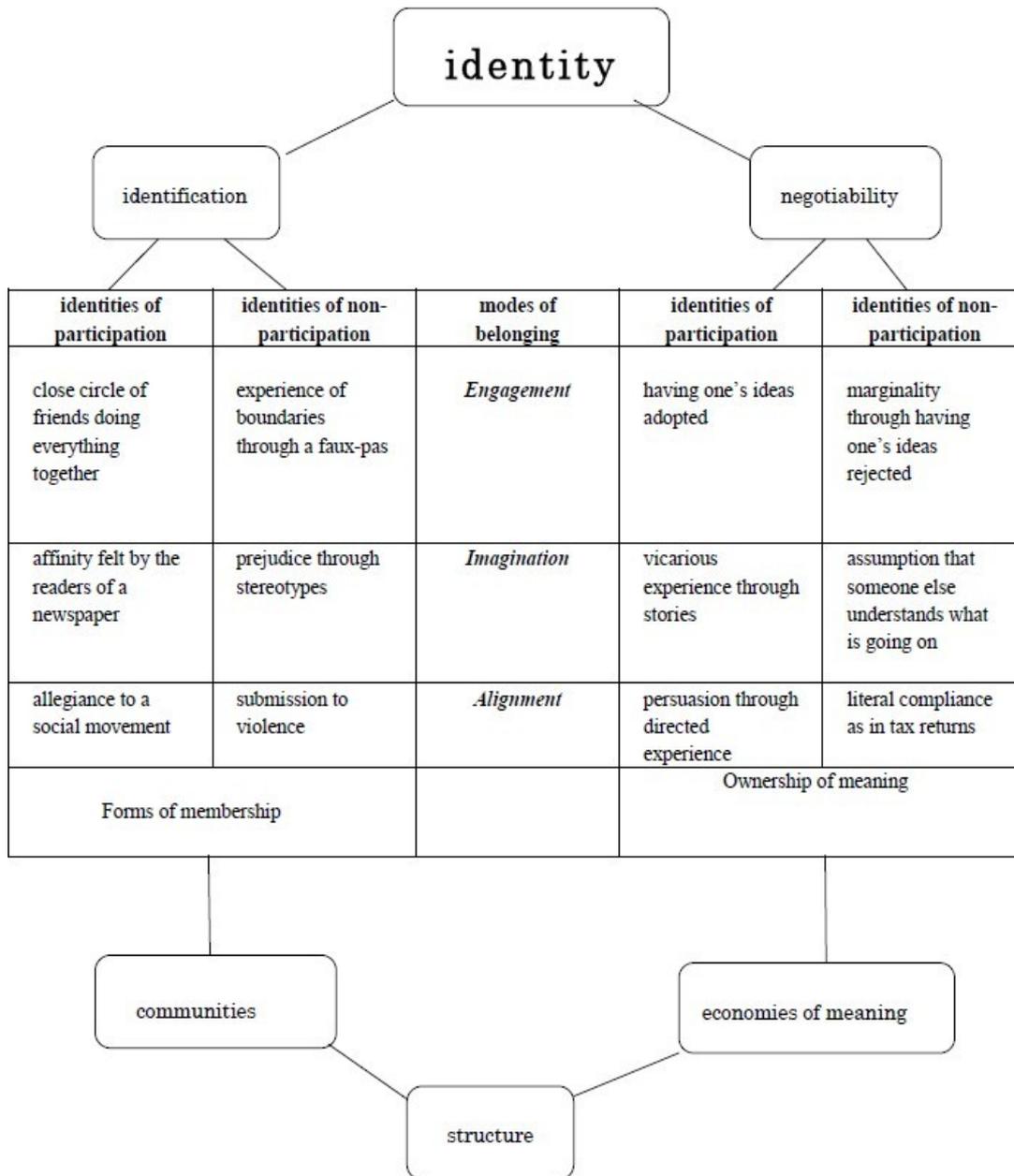


Figure 3: Social Ecology of Identity (Wenger 1998, p.190)

### 3.3.2 Wenger's three modes of belonging

This section looks at the three modes of belonging highlighted in Wenger's work which are engagement, imagination, and alignment. To begin with, Wenger (1998, p.174) views engagement as a mode of belonging and a "source of identity". Engagement in practice involves "investing ourselves in what we do as well as in our relations with other members of the community" Tsui (2007, p.660). Engagement enables newcomers to establish and define the meaning through interaction and participation with other members of their communities. In the

context of this study, engagement is linked to the relations and interactions between novice teachers, staff members, students and colleagues. This participation is believed to provide a real space within which teachers construct reality and identity (Clarke, 2008).

Generally, teachers share and participate in the same activities within the school, such as timetable and school meetings. These activities develop their relationships and create mutual engagement. Clarke (2008) describes how a group of pre-service teachers in the United Arab Emirates engage in various communities to develop their professional identity. His data reveals that student teachers establish relationships with others through sharing and negotiating. He shows how professional dialogues and discussions among this group of student teachers about various issues, might enhance their understanding of teaching as a shared enterprise, he says:

In discussions like this students are sharing experiences, trialling points of view, working through issues and responding to each other's perspectives while at the same time establishing and maintaining relations of mutuality through this shared engagement with common issues" (Clarke, 2008, p.86).

Moreover, and following the previous discussion, imagination comprises an ability to move "beyond the immediate world of experience (Clarke, 2008, p.37). Imagination does not entail fantasy as the word itself connotes. It is related to the ability of the individual to re-create and re-build the images of the world in different perspectives. The participants in this study engage themselves in different tasks inside their schools, but the way they see themselves, colleagues, students and the environment where they work differs. For example, a classroom may represent different aspects for different teachers. For some, it could be seen as a place of work where they guarantee their lives. Others might consider it as an opportunity to create new ways of teaching and learning. These views depend on their degree of imagination and interpretation that vary from one teacher to another.

The third mode of belonging, alignment, enables people to place their practices, actions and energies within broader communities. It results from "coordinating our energy and activities in order to fit within broader structures and contribute to broader enterprises" (Wenger 1998, p.174). It requires establishing "a common ground and defining broad visions" (Goodnough, 2010, p.169). In other words, teachers, for example, should not narrow their network to what is just happening in their schools. Their engagement in other school communities', projects and seminars might gradually widen their vision about teaching in general and help them to develop their own identities in particular. This later aligns with Beauchamp and Thomas who reason that "identity shifts occur throughout a teachers' career as a result of interaction within schools and in broader communities" (2009, p.175).

In an investigation of how four Japanese teachers construct their professional identity Nagatomo (2012), using Wenger's framework, identified the distinct ways her participants align themselves with within their communities. She asserts that teachers in her study align themselves with different groups while engaging in various tasks. Their alignment includes the university where they work, the student, scholars and people outside the academia.

Alignment involves sharing principles and objectives with another group of people and communities. It entails "negotiating, arguing and persuading" other people in the community (Clarke 2008, p.92). Participants in this study could align their practices with other colleagues and mentors from different schools and attend professional conferences and seminars. These contexts could help in the construction of their professional identity as they articulate their views and negotiate real issues with others.

In summary, the three modes of belonging have a crucial role in shaping and forming the identity. Each component contributes to the success of the other. Clarke (2008, p.37) highlights the importance of these three modes in “providing a dialogic framework for understanding how identities are constituted within communities of practice”.

### **3.4 Positioning theory**

Positioning theory is a poststructuralist theory in which "a given person's identity is equated to her discursive position" Correa *et al.*, (2015, p.69). That is to say that the main focus of this theory is on the (re) construction of identities through discourse. The term discourse has various meaning and it is used differently across disciplines, but its common use is related to "language in use" Kayi-Aydar (2015, p.95). In this study I adopt Gee's (2012) definition of big 'D' Discourses. According to Gee (2012, p.2) the big 'D' Discourses "include much more than language" these Discourses are "ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities" (Gee 2012, p.3). Thus capital 'D' Discourses are related to "who you are and what you are doing" (Gee 2012, p.2). Early career teachers in this research might be, for instance, recognised by their students and colleagues as strict teachers, successful teachers or friendly teachers according to how they project their identities (see chapter 7). In this way, each teacher is a "member of many Discourses and each Discourse represents one of their multiple identities" (Gee 2012, p.4).

As the main aim of this research is to understand the process of professional identity development, discursive positioning would be a helpful theory as it reveals "how teachers construct and enact identities over time and in relation to their students and colleagues" Vetter and Schieble (2016, p.18). Positioning as referred by Davies and Harré (1990, p.91) is a "discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines". In other words, positioning theory has to do

with different positions that individuals assume for themselves while engaging in conversations and these positions can be accepted or rejected. According to Davies and Harré (1990), individuals position themselves either interactively (by how others position them) or reflexively (i.e. self-positioning). Davies and Harré (1990) distinguished between role and position. The role is "static and formal" however positions are "situation-specific, disputed, challenged, shifting and therefore dynamic" Kayi-Aydar (2015, p.95). For example, a novice teacher may position himself as a "modern teacher" when interacting with more experienced colleagues and they might position themselves as "trainee teachers" when reflecting on their teaching skills and abilities (see chapter 7). These positions are then challenged when interacting with others such as colleagues. NQTs may shift their positions through interactions from viewing themselves as "trainee teacher" to an "official teacher" (see section 7.3)

While communities of practice offer a useful lens for studying professional identity in various communities through the different practices teachers engage in, positioning theory as outlined by Linehan and McCarthy (2000, p.449) provides a:

"dynamic, agentic model of identity construction where a person creates possible identity for themselves in a particular context through active positioning in relating to, or perhaps in opposition to, elements in their discursive cultural context".

In another sense, positioning may influence NQTs agency (further discussion about agency is considered in the next section). Novice teachers may or may not exercise their agency according to the way they are positioned in a particular situation such as being recognised as a "successful teacher" or "incompetent teacher". Thus, COP and positioning theory complement each other and provide a useful frameworks for understanding professional identity in the present research.

### **3.5 Agency**

This section discusses the concept of agency and its relationship with teacher identity. This discussion, however, is not a sociological analysis about the roots of agency or the debate of structure versus agency. In this section, I take the view of Danielewicz (2001) who argues that agency exists and can be fostered in NQTs.

Agency is a central concept in the sociocultural theory and it is an important component in teachers' identity formation. Danielewicz (2001) demonstrated this relationship by using the story of her participant Ellen. As Ellen begins to strongly identify herself as a teacher, her confidence as an agent of change increased. Ellen believed that she knows how to take actions in ways that will impact positively on her students. Danielewicz (2001, p.163) then believes that agency is the "power or freedom or will to act, to make decisions, to exert pressure, to participate or to be strategically silent". In other words, the concept of agency is based on the understanding that individuals act on their own rather than repeating others' practices. Similarly, Hadar and Benish-Weisman (2019, p.138) defined agency as a "combination of teachers' capacity to initiate and enactment of this capacity to actively direct his/her professional life in accordance with his/her own will, judgement and choice".

Using positioning theory framework Kayi-aydar (2015) found that agency and positioning are intertwined and influence one another. Kayi-aydar (2015) explored how three pre-service teachers negotiated their teacher identity and agency in the United States. The findings of her study showed that taking a particular position may affect a teacher's agency. Janet, for example, one of her participants, positioned herself as a caring teacher who wants to help her students with difficulties in reading by tutoring them over summer. Although Janet wanted to enact her desired identity as a caring teacher she could not take actions as her principal ignored her request. Seen this way, teacher agency could be constrained by context.

In terms of novice teachers in this study, agency is the role that NQTs play in their efforts to

bring change and contribute to their classrooms as well as their institutions. Novice teachers are not passive individuals but they are active agents in their schools. Their agency also enabled them to "actively resist certain behaviours, practices, or positioning, sometimes leading to oppositional stances and behaviours leading to other identities" Duff (2012, p. 15). As was discussed in chapter 2, many studies have dealt with the support that novice teachers require during their early career teaching, however, the role of agency of NQTs is "insufficiently problematized in many discourses of English language teaching and teacher development" Kiely (2015, p.217). In this study, NQTs showed a high sense of agency and resilience toward their communities (See the example of Mellissa).

### **3.6 Chapter summary**

This chapter has illustrated the theoretical frameworks deployed in this study. It provided detailed insights into each theory and its importance in illuminating aspects of teachers' identity. While the sociocultural theory and the COP capture the process of identity formation through interaction and engagement in various activities, the positioning theory provides more insights into how NQTs identities shifted during their teaching from imagined identities to practised identities. The next section will discuss the methodology used in this research.

## **Chapter 4: Designing the study: Methodology**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology and methods of data collection employed in this study. It starts by explaining the research approach which underpins the study and it offers the rationale for using broad qualitative research. This is followed by discussing the research paradigm, which is in this case interpretivism. This chapter also provides a discussion on my own developing position in the field. The instruments used for collecting the data and the rationale for using them are explained. This includes a series of semi-structured interviews, teachers' written reflections and researcher's field notes. All these data tools served as a means for understanding and tracing the changes of professional identity development of fourteen novice teachers in this study. This is followed by a detailed discussion for the data analysis and justifications for why my findings are trustworthy. Finally, the chapter discusses the ethical consideration.

The aim of the thesis is to understand how a group of Algerian novice teachers develop their professional identity. It also considers how they align themselves within an existing school community during their early stages of teaching. The study took place in different middle and secondary schools in one of the cities in North Algeria during the beginning of the academic year October 2016/2017.

The research questions informing this study are:

RQ1). How does the personal background of novice teachers influence the construction of their professional identities?

RQ2). To what extent does their engagement with different professional communities within school contribute to the development of their professional identities?

RQ3). What role did the practicum play in the formation of novice teachers' identities?

RQ4). How have their professional identities been affected by the challenges they face during their first year of teaching?

#### **4.2 Research approach: Qualitative study**

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008), qualitative research is a complex field that has undergone enormous changes in its history. Examples of these moments are modernist, postmodern and new ethnography (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008, p3). Though its definition was not stable during these historical moments, Denzin and Lincoln (2008, p.4) agreed that qualitative research is "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world". This is to say that, qualitative research looks at the phenomenon from different perspectives by implementing a variety of data tools such as field notes and interviews that provide multiple versions of reality to the study. It allows the researcher to obtain rich data by carrying out the study in the settings where participants live and work. According to Braun and Clarke (2013), this latter argument is seen by quantitative researchers as a weakness of the qualitative methodology as they view the analyses in qualitative research as simply "made up" by researchers in the field and nothing is certain (Braun and Clarke 2013, p.20). However, they agreed that analysis in qualitative research is like a story where each participant has lived the experience differently and brought a different meaning to the study.

The qualitative research according to Creswell (2014) is significant in many ways. First, it permits the researcher to maintain direct contact with the participants in the study as it provides the researcher with an opportunity to interact and observe how participants behave and act in their natural setting. In addition to that, qualitative research allows the researcher to employ different data tools such as documentation, observation and interviews, which may offer rich and in-depth data. Qualitative researchers focus on the subjective meaning of what participants say (interviews) or do (observation). They try to develop a "complex picture" of the study, by looking at the situation from different perspectives and framing a general picture from the data (Creswell 2014, p.186). Furthermore, Richards (2003, p.9) argues that qualitative research is the appropriate methodology for understanding language teaching in general, as "this is a dangerous territory for the experimental research" dealing with complex phenomena related to people'

experiences and events that could be more understood through interviews and observation rather than through the use of a questionnaire. If we rely on pure quantitative research we might miss important data. For instance, data generated from questionnaires would not provide the researcher with sufficient information about the situation compared to open-ended questions in interviews where the researcher can control the situation, add follow up questions and offer an opportunity to the participants to share their views.

As the main purpose of this study is to understand professional identity development among novice teachers, broad qualitative research was adopted as it helps the researcher in making sense of a “highly complex situations” (Dörnyei 2007, p.39). The qualitative approach allowed me to conduct an in-depth examination of the complex process through which novice teachers constructed (formulate) and reconstructed (develop) their professional identities. As Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2004, p. 3) state:

If you want to understand the meaning of a particular subject, if you want to listen to the subjective experience of others and somehow make sense of them, you may want to consider a qualitative methodology for your research.

Following the above quote, and with regard to the aims of this study, as mentioned in section (1.4), I believe that understanding professional identity can be derived from an in-depth and careful analysis of novice teachers' personal histories, their practicum experiences and their engagement with their school communities. Novice teachers' experiences were gathered through various data tools (which will be described in section 4.5) and they were later analysed to make sense of the participants' experiences. Finally, qualitative research suits this study as its main concern is related to the “subjective opinions, experiences and feelings of individuals” (Dörnyei 2007, p.38).

### **4.3 The Philosophical assumptions underpinning the study**

According to Creswell (2013, p.5) the need for a clear position in research entails "not only understanding the beliefs and the theories that inform the research but also actively writing about them". Thus, in this section, I first start aligning my research with an interpretive paradigm. I also consider the ontology, epistemology and the methodology used in this study. In the next section, I consider my position within the research (reflexivity).

Researchers are "guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be studied" (Denzin and Lincoln 2005, p.22). These beliefs are also called worldview (Creswell 2014), and paradigm (Sarandakos, 2013). Though these beliefs might not be made explicit in research, they still influence the practices of the research and the nature of knowledge presented (Denzin and Lincoln 2008).

This study is situated within broad qualitative research approach and involves an interpretive paradigm. It adopts some features of the phenomenological approach as it seeks to generate an in-depth understanding of how novice teachers develop their professional identity. Phenomenology was first developed by the philosopher Husserl, and then adapted by others in the sociological context. Van Manen (1997, p.11) describes phenomenology as follow:

Phenomenological human science is the study of lived or existential meanings. It attempts to describe and interpret these meanings to certain degree of depth and richness...phenomenology differs from other disciplines... phenomenology attempts to explicate the meanings as we live them in our everyday existence, our life world.

Since the aim of this study is to investigate how novice teachers conceptualise their professional identity, it was necessary to conduct the research study in real working life settings. To fully understand and trace the changes in novice teachers' identities, in-depth data was used. Furthermore, teachers' experiences and the process they go through to engage in school

communities cannot be quantified. Hence, the present study relied on novice teachers' views and interpretations about the meaning of the phenomenon being investigated.

The Interpretive research paradigm is concerned with the construction of meaning from participants' views in a given study. It involves a "systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct, detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social world" (Neuman 2011, p.101-102). Interpretivist believes that the world is socially constructed through interaction with others and the meaning of different phenomena are socially generated (Neuman 2011). In other words, Interpretivist views, try to find out different interpretations of the same lived experience. This worldview contradicts with the positivist research paradigm, which is often applied in quantitative research. This view believes in "strict cause and effect" (Creswell 2013, p.23) connection. It upholds the view that knowledge is constructed through the relationship between observed facts and generated rules for instance smoking would provoke lung cancer. It claims that reality is single. In addition to this, positivist social sciences claim that "everyone experiences the world in the same way" (Neuman 2011, p.103).

The ontological assumptions underlying the Interpretivist paradigm deals with the issue of the nature of reality (Neuman 2011) or the focus of the research itself (Sarantakos 2013). Ontology has two different positions: realist and relativist. The former views the world as being "out there" (Neuman 2011, p.92). That is to say, real world exists independently and does not need the interpretations of human beings. Realist ontology is adopted by the positivist paradigm, as they believe that reality "exists objectively" (Phakiti and Paltridge 2015, p.17). This study is based on a relativist ontology, which rejects the idea of a fixed reality. Within relativism, people produce reality through their subjective interpretations of their own experiences and interactions with each other (King and Horrocks 2010, Neuman 2011). Hence, the same social phenomenon could be perceived and interpreted differently by different individuals.

Epistemology deals with the issue of how we know the world around us and what makes it true.

Neuman (2011, p.93) summarizes epistemology as follows:

What we and other people experience as reality is constructed from the outcome of a constant process of actions and interpretations that take place in particular locations and time.

This study refers to the subjective views of the participants. The meaning of professional identity is not fixed but rather emerges from the interaction with the participants in the study. In other words, the reality is constructed throughout the “cultural and historical experiences of people” (Sarantakos 2013, p.37).

Methodology relates to “a process where the design of the research and the choice of particular methods, and their justification in relation to the research project are made evident” (King and Horrocks 2010, p.6). It requires from the researcher a careful attention to how the study should be approached in order to obtain comprehensive knowledge about the phenomenon being studied. The qualitative methodology is characterized by its inductive theory in generating the data (Creswell 2013). In other words, data would be interpreted from a close understanding of the methods employed such as interviews and observations. Table (3) below demonstrates the relativist ontology, the subjectivist epistemology and the methodology of the Interpretivist paradigm as viewed in this study.

<b>Interpretive framework</b>	<b>Ontological beliefs (the nature of reality)</b>	<b>Epistemological beliefs (how reality is known)</b>	<b>Methodological beliefs (approach to inquiry)</b>
Social constructivism	Multiple realities are constructed through interactions with participants in the study.	Knowledge in this study is shaped through an interpretation of subjective views of participants.	This study adopts an inductive approach through which meaning and understanding emerge from the different data tools being collected (interviews, field notes and written resources)

Table 3: Based on Creswell (2013, p.36).

#### **4.3.1 Reflexivity and the role of the researcher**

Within qualitative research, researchers need to acknowledge their positionality and reflexivity throughout the study (Berger 2015, Creswell 2013). According to Berger (2015, p.1), reflexivity is a "major strategy for quality control in qualitative research". It is concerned with the researcher being conscious of the beliefs, values, or better-termed ideologies that he/she brings to the study. Creswell (2013) further distinguishes two ways of reflexivity. In the first, the researcher should incorporate his/her experience with the phenomenon being studied and this is approached by relying on "past experiences, schooling" (Creswell, 2013, p.216). In the second part, the researcher should explain how these experiences shaped his/her interpretations of the study. Thus, to ensure the validity of the present study I need to acknowledge my personal values and position. As a novice researcher in a new culture and community, I believe that I have experienced the challenges of developing my professional identity while preparing my doctoral degree within western culture. The challenges I encountered as a newcomer to an existing community, for example, may serve in understanding the identity construction of my participants.

Keeping in mind the importance of reflexivity in qualitative research, I believe that my role in this research was alternating between the position of an insider and an outsider. In terms of the

familiarity with the study, I consider myself as an insider who shares similar experiences with my participants. My status as a Berber Algerian female allowed me to approach the study with some knowledge regarding the educational system and the familiarity with the constraints of the Algerian culture (Nagatomo 2012). For instance, although the interviews were conducted in English, I could understand the participants' discourses when they switched to another language. Furthermore, I, like my participants, lived and graduated from an Algerian university and had completed a teacher training course in both university and school, as part of the procedures to obtain both my Bachelor and Master degrees. Coming from an insider position, helped me in understanding the multiple and nuanced perspectives of my participants (Ahmed *et al.*, 2011, Berger 2015). As we shared the same languages (Berber, Arab, French), I could understand both verbal and body language "I was able to hear the unsaid, probe more efficiently and ferret out hints that others might miss" (Berger 2015, p.223). However, this does not mean that being an insider does not carry risks and danger. Being familiar with the culture and the educational system often affected my interviewees' answers. For example, sometimes participants left sentences unfinished acting under the assumption that I know well what is going on in the system: "you know how the system works". To make sure that I did not misinterpret their answers I asked them for more clarifications and examples.

In addition to the aforementioned danger, the ideologies that a researcher carries with him/her to the field, might to some extent affect the outcomes of the research. At the beginning of the study, I realised that I lacked reflexivity and I was led by my own ideologies about my work.

During my data collection and while reading my interview transcripts I came to realise that in some cases I asked the same question for several times even when the participant had already answered it according to his/her own beliefs. This is to say that, I was not able to realise and catch the different perspectives they provided me. I was also influenced by the stereotypes of how a good teacher should be in the classroom. For example, when I informally observed one

teacher's classroom I wrote in my diary aspects like "she lacked classroom management".

From an outsider perspective, my educational background differs from most of my participants. I have studied at a public university with a different system. My knowledge about how studies were carried out in teachers' colleges was limited. At the beginning of my fieldwork, I did not consider this aspect to affect my positionality, however, later on in the study, I noticed that I had many expectations toward students graduating from those colleges. For instance, I had anticipated that participants' graduating from teachers' college are more knowledgeable than those graduating from public universities as these colleges are made particularly to form teachers (see section 1.8). I was also holding a view that the teaching practice at teachers' college has more value than the practicum done in public universities. However, these beliefs started to vanish after I heard their stories regarding those colleges. This enabled me to see things differently and from different angles. In addition to that, though I am familiar with the teaching field and the educational system in Algeria, I had no teaching experience as a full-time teacher. I was not aware of the important dimensions of teachers' lives, teachers' duties and rights and the politics of education. Moreover, my participants considered me as a researcher. In the beginning, my relationship was too formal with some of them. I started to worry about the fact that my participants might be giving me what they thought I was looking for. Salima for instance at the end of the first interview told me "I hope my interview helped you in getting what you are looking for". This distance at the beginning made me an outsider, but later on, I managed to gain their trust, and I became close to them.

Some novice teachers became more confident and comfortable to share some of their personal experiences with me. I cannot provide examples of these stories as they are personal and are not related to the study.

#### **4.4 Selecting the participants**

In choosing my participants, purposive sampling was employed (Cohen *et al.*, 2011) and a

strategy of the criterion sampling was followed (Dörnyei, 2007). This technique was adopted as it enabled me to choose participants according to “predetermined criteria” (Dörnyei 2007, p.128). For instance, in this research, my participants are all English teachers as the focus of the study is based on English teachers only. In addition to that, purposive sampling allowed for some diversity. Novice teachers of different biographical and professional backgrounds in terms of, years of experience, university of graduation and gender were included (see table 4).

In selecting my participants, I first contacted one English teacher who works in middle school and who is in charge of organizing seminars and workshops for novice teachers. He agreed to offer me help in finding participants. He informed some novice teachers about my research and gave them my Facebook account so that they can contact me for more details.

Thus, at the beginning of my fieldwork, seven participants agreed to take part in my research. With the help of the potential participants, more novice teachers joined my research. Overall, fourteen teachers (nine in their first year of teaching and five in their second year of teaching) agreed to take part in my research.

The first group of participants constituted of both female and male teachers, seven females and two males. As is seen in table 4 seven novice teachers in the first group graduated from teachers' college. In these colleges, students are taught basic principles of teaching to become middle or secondary school teachers. They were assigned to teach by the beginning of the academic year (September 2016). The two remaining teachers in this group graduated from different public universities and had different educational system backgrounds (see section 1.8). Participants in this group were secondary and middle school teachers and participated in the study from October until December 2016. They were all interviewed three times during my fieldwork. The second group of participants includes five females, who teach in middle school and have two years of experience in teaching. Three of them graduated from public universities and two from teachers 'college. Participants in this group were interviewed once during the whole process of

the data collection.

I decided to interview two separate groups of participants because the second group of teachers have already experienced one year of teaching compared to the first one where novice teachers have less experience. Thus, considering second-year teachers' stories and experiences, offered variations in understanding professional identity when compared to novice teachers in their first year of teaching. The challenges they went through during their first year of teaching (second-year teachers) made me aware of some issues which I did not consider at the beginning of the study, for instance, considering the effect of ethnicity on the identity formation and communities of practice (see section 6.4). Data generated from the second group added more depth to the formation of identity as well as the trustworthiness of my study.

Schools in both groups were middle and secondary schools. They are all situated in three different Berber provinces of northern Algeria. All the schools are far away from my hometown, I used a bus or a car to access them. It took me about half an hour for some schools and two hours for others to get there.

Most of my participants were assigned by the ministry of education to teach in the counties of those three provinces in North Algeria. For instance, Samir, Amel and Fatima had serious problems with the distance between where they live and their schools. They had to travel every morning and most of the time they arrive late at school. All the schools are situated in rural areas. These schools were randomly chosen after choosing the participants, as they happened to work there.

<b>Novice Teachers (first group)</b>			
<b>Novice teachers' pseudonyms</b>	<b>Secondary/middle school teacher</b>	<b>Years of study</b>	<b>University of graduation</b>
Sonia	Secondary school teacher	5 years	Teachers' college
Melissa	Secondary school teacher	5 years	Teachers' college
Dihia	Middle school teacher	4 years	Teachers' college
Fatima	Middle school teacher	4 years	Teachers' college
Ali	secondary school teacher	5 years	Teachers' college
Samir	Middle school teacher	4 years	Public university (classical system)
Thilleli	Middle school teacher	5 years	Public university (LMD) system
Salima	Secondary school teacher	5 years	Teachers' college
Amel	Middle school teacher	4 years	Teachers' college

<b>Novice teachers (second group)</b>			
<b>Novice teachers' pseudonyms</b>	<b>Secondary/middle school</b>	<b>Years of study</b>	<b>University of graduation</b>
Imene	Middle school teacher	4 years	Public university (classical system)
Safia	Middle school teacher	4 years	Teachers' college
Hamida	Middle school teacher	4 years	Teachers' college
Faiza	Middle school teacher	4 years	Public university (classical system)
Kahina	Middle school teacher	4 years	Public university (classical university)

Table 4: Participants' details.

#### **4.5 Methods of data collection**

I employed three methods for collecting data in this study: semi-structured interviews, field notes and participants' written reflections. Data was gathered from October to December 2016. Three round interviews were conducted with each participant (first group) during this period and one interview was carried out with second-year teachers. Novice teachers (first group) were required to write a weekly journal reflecting on their experiences in teaching. The field notes included a summary of each interview and my own observations of the school and participants. The figure below shows the multiple data tools that were adopted in this study.

Each method has a particular perspective (Neuman 2011) in revealing how teachers in this research conceptualised their professional identities. For instance, using verbatim data (interviews) of their own cannot "capture the physical aspects of what is going on" (Holliday 2016, p.70). In other words, relying on other data tools such as field notes in this study provided more insights into how novice teachers engaged in different professional communities. Moreover, as discussed in the literature review chapter, professional identity is shaped through interaction with others, teachers' experiences, engagement and participation in different school communities and activities. These different facets of identity are hard to recognize by relying on a single method.

The knowledge gained by the end of the study would be triangulated to show the meaning and the development of professional identity from different angles and avoid being restricted to the interpretation of the phenomenon from one single perspective. The following section discusses in details the rationales behind each data method and the procedures I followed when I conducted the data.

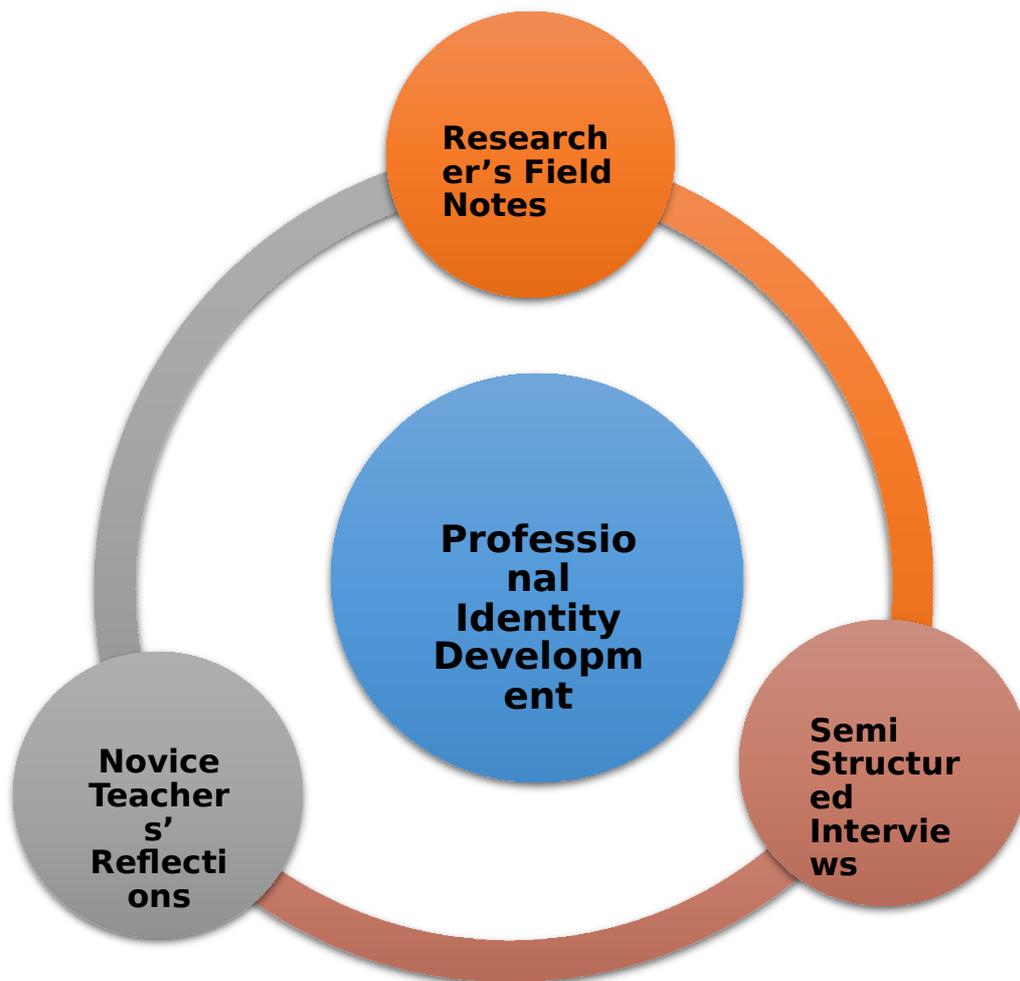


Figure 4: Data tools for analysing novice teachers' identity development

#### 4.5.1 Interviews

Interviews are widely adopted in qualitative research and are considered as “highly attractive alternative for the collection of qualitative data” (Bryman2016, p.466) when compared with observation. They allowed me to have access not only to the heard and verbal data but to non-verbal data as well (Cohen, 2011). This is to say that, the observations I made while visiting the schools in general and conducting the interviews in the staffrooms in particular, allowed me to notice how my participants were interacting with their colleagues, the kind of topics they chose to talk about which determined to some extent their relationship with each other. As part of my thesis considers the role of the communities of practice in shaping professional identity, these observations were considered important and were noted down in my field notes.

The main purpose of using interviews in this study goes back to the complexity of the phenomenon being studied. Understanding novice teachers' professional identity development requires interaction and a deep understanding of teachers' experiences. Moreover, using interviews in my study attracted my participants and made them more engaged in the research. Some of them recounted participating in previous research where the main data tool was questionnaire and felt restricted by the questions and the space provided to them. However, they felt excited to take part in the interview as it provided them with enough space to share their experiences. They proved to be highly motivated to tell me about their stories especially when something exciting happened to them.

I decided on semi-structured interviews as these provide the researcher with flexibility in terms of sequencing the questions (Denscombe 2010) and open up a gate for other questions to emerge during the interview. An interview guide (see Appendices E, F, G) which covers the main questions and topics was used. It is written in a way to be flexible regarding the grouping and the ordering of the questions (King and Horrocks 2010). This enabled the themes of discussion to be arranged and to include further questions while conducting the interviews. Thus, the researcher has the freedom to omit or add new questions in order to respond appropriately to the interviewee throughout the process. The ordering of the interview questions varied from one participant to another. I did not follow the questions as they were written in the interview guide, instead, the sequencing of the questions depended on the answers and the conversations between the interviewer and interviewee.

#### **4.5.1.1 Rationale behind using a series of interviews**

Since the topic being investigated in this study is a complex phenomenon that cannot be covered with one single interview (Richards 2003), and its understanding depends upon the participants' experiences, I believe that series of semi-structured interviews are considered as the appropriate data collection tool. First, it allowed me to know my participants and gain their trust. In other

words, it enabled me to “break the ice and develop reports with participants” (Dörnyei 2007, p.135). Building good relationships with my participants made them comfortable to share with me their experiences (Richards 2003, Mears 2009) and extend discussions about educational issues in general and professional identity in particular.

Second, understanding teacher professional identity entails interaction and negotiation. In other words, as professional identity involves both the internal state (knowledge and beliefs) and external side (how others see them) of a teacher, an understanding of their background and experiences was considered as an important point to look at throughout the interviews. In other words, open-ended questions in the interviews allowed my participants to talk about different topics and describe their experiences at length. Through the stories they share during the interviews, relevant data is likely to emerge.

Finally, follow up interviews were necessary as they provided me with invaluable opportunity to revisit some topics that I had already encountered in the previous interview and build a stronger image about the phenomenon being studied.

The rationale for interviewing the second year teachers only once was to gain an insight to other areas that I would not have a chance to discuss with novice teachers as they are in their early stages of teaching. The purpose here is not to generalise the findings but rather to build a broad scope of professional identity construction.

#### **4.5.1.2 Interviews schedule design**

Interviews were carried out with nine novice teachers and five second-year teachers. During the study, each novice teacher in the first group was interviewed three times, approximately once a month during this period (see table 5). Teachers in their second year were interviewed once during the research study (see table 6). To yield as much data as possible (Denscombe 2010), the participants were given the choice of the language (Arabic, Berber, French or English). Most of

them used English during the interviews and only two shifted to the use of other languages.

I started each interview by providing my participants with an overview of my study, its purpose and the expected length of the interview and asked the participants if they have any questions related to this. I then explained that I would remove any identifying detail from their interviews to protect their confidentiality. After that, I reminded my participants of their rights to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving me any reason. With the agreement of the participants, the interviews were audio-recorded for the sake of transcription and analysis (Merriam, 2009). After explaining this, the participants read the information sheet which contains the details of my research (see Appendix H) and signed the consent form (see Appendix I) to confirm their voluntary participation in the interviews.

During these interviews, my role was limited to asking questions and listening to the interviewees' answers without being judgmental and bringing my participants back to the context of the question, without being disrespectful (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). The interview questions were generated from my reading of the literature and were linked to the research questions and aims of the study.

First face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with the first group of novice teachers (nine teachers) in mid-October and beginning of November. Tables 5 and 6 below provide the details of each interview including participants' pseudonyms, the venue of the interview, its length and the date when the interview was conducted. Interviews in this phase uncovered general information related to novice teachers' motivation to teach and their historical background as students. This included: a) reasons for being a foreign language teacher b) their perceptions to what a good teacher is from their own experience as students c) people who might have helped them to choose the profession. These questions were designed to help me know the participants and familiarize them with the idea of interviews. However, an important research question emerged from the data collected in the first series of interviews. The research question

is:

RQ1). How does the personal background of novice teachers influence the construction of their professional identity?

In addition to these questions, I also asked them about their experience with regard to d) the practicum experience and how did it help them to teach in real life classes. All these questions can be seen in Appendix E.

Information that emerged from the first interview, provided data to address the first and third research questions. They supported the examination of novice teachers' professional identity from imagined identity (what they were expecting to find out at schools and their perceptions of teaching and themselves while they were students) to practised identity (real teaching experience where they start building an understanding of teaching in general and themselves in particular during the practicum). For instance, questions related to the practicum such as, how did the training help you, were designed to make novice teachers think and reflect about their expectations about what teaching meant to them at that time and make some distinctions between the two periods during their practicum and when they started teaching and what kind of a person they were during these two phases.

The second face-to-face interviews were conducted a month later (November 2016). At this stage, interviews were more about their current professional dialogues. During those interviews, novice teachers were asked about (a) their self-perception of their teaching and (b) their professional identity, (b) their relationships with both colleagues and students (c) their experiences at school so far. Additionally, I asked them whether (e) they felt any changes in their thinking and attitudes towards the teaching profession in general "Since becoming a teacher did your experience of teaching change your beliefs about teaching? This question, however, was not asked to all the participants because while they answered other questions regarding their experiences, they talked about their practices and beliefs.

These interviews provided data to mainly answering (RQ2) and partially (RQ4). In other words, data that emerged from these interviews revealed the role of teachers' communities in shaping their professional identity and helped me to some extent, to see the challenges that novice teachers experienced in their teaching since their first month of teaching as they were expected to comment on their self-development. Data emerging from these two research questions also highlighted the development, or otherwise, of their professional identity as language teachers as they were supposed to comment on their development with regards to both themselves and others in the school.

In the last face-to-face interviews, which were carried out in December 2016, novice teachers were asked about their (a) engagement with different school activities apart from teaching, (b) their professional identity development and (c) their future goals toward teaching. Data from the last interviews contributed to addressing the (RQ2) and (RQ4). They showed how their school communities contributed to their development (RQ2) and how they faced the various troubles and obstacles they experienced at school (RQ4).

With regard to the second group of participants which constitutes five female teachers, one interview was conducted during the whole period of data collection. Four interviews were conducted face-to-face and one was conducted via email as the teacher was too busy and could not find the time to participate in a face-to-face interview. One group interview was conducted with the participants Faiza and Kahina. Initially, the intention was to conduct the interviews separately, however, since both teachers work in the same school and had both a spare hour they suggested to take part in the interview together. I accepted to conduct the interview in this way since they both felt comfortable doing the interview collectively.

The individual interviews were conducted in different places according to my participants' preferences. Since my participants are teachers and they do not have a particular office, most of

the interviews took place at school, sometimes in an empty room and others in the staffroom. It was possible to record the interviews in the staffroom, as there was not much noise. My participants were not annoyed by the presence of other teachers and neither was I. They were relaxed. This enabled me to see how the teachers were behaving with other colleagues and staff inside the school. Other interviews took place in public areas such as library or university.

The interviews were conducted in a relaxing atmosphere. Each interview took between thirty minutes to an hour to conduct. However, it took around two hours with one second-year teacher, Imene. During the whole period, I had good relationships with my participants that resulted in mutual trust and respect (Cohen *et al.*, 2011).

The interview agenda was modified during the interviews. Some questions were simplified, for instance, I omitted technical and ambiguous words and replaced them with common concepts examples of these are; the trainer was replaced by the mentor and training was used instead of practicum. Moreover, other questions emerged during these interviews. Examples included questions about new reform which was introduced for middle school students, as well as questions about how they designed their exam papers.

<b>Novice Teachers: First interview phase October 2016</b>			
This interview encompasses a range of questions related to the background of the teachers, their training period and motivation to teaching			
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Date</b>
Dihia	At school (staff room)	45 minutes	19/10/2016
Salima	At school (staff room)	15 minutes	23/10/2016
Melissa	At school (laboratory)	30 minutes	26/10/2016
Amel	Public garden	30 minutes	27/10/2016
Samir	At university	50 minutes	31/10/2016
Thilleli	At school (staff room)	30 minutes	02/11/2016
Fatima	At school (staff room)	30 minutes	03/11/2016
<b>Novice Teachers: Second interview phase November 2016</b>			
The interview questions were about their teaching experience and their beliefs toward teaching.			
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Date</b>
Sonia	At school (courtyard)	50 minutes	16/11/2016
Dihia	At school (staffroom)	50 minutes	20/11/2016
Thilleli	At school (staffroom)	30 minutes	21/11/2016
Salima	At school (courtyard)	40 minutes	24/11/2016
Melissa	At school (amphitheater)	60 minutes	24/11/2016
Amel	At University	40 minutes	29/11/2016
Ali	At university	30 minutes	29/11/2016
Samir	At university	45 minutes	29/11/2016
Fatima	At school (staffroom)	30 minutes	01/12/2016
<b>Novice Teachers: Third interview December 2016</b>			
Questions during this phase were concerned with novice teachers' professional identity development and their engagement with the school community			
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Date</b>
Dihia	At school (staffroom)	60 minutes	11/12/2016
Ali	At university	50 minutes	13/12/2016
Thilleli	At school (staff room)	40 minutes	14/12/2016
Fatima	At school (staff room)	30 minutes	15/12/2016
Amel	At a public library	45 minutes	18/12/2016
Salima	At school (courtyard)	40 minutes	19/12/2016
Melissa	At school (the amphitheater )	55 minutes	19/12/2016
Samir	At school (empty room)	35 minutes	20/12/2016
Sonia	At school (empty room)	60 minutes	21/12/2016

Table 5: detailed explanation of the interviews.

<b>Second year teachers interviews schedule</b>				
<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of interview</b>
Faiza and Kahina	At school (empty room)	54 minutes	17/11/2016	Group
Safia	School (own class)	40 minutes	17/11/2016	Individual
Imene	School (empty room)	Two hours	05/11/2016	Individual

Hamida	/	/	04/01/2016	Email
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Table 6: details of the second year interviews.

#### **4.5.1.3 Pilot Study**

Prior to the interviews, a pilot study was carried out with two PhD students who agreed to take part in a 45-minute interview. The interviews took place in the library on two successive days. The reason why I decided to conduct them during two days was to allow me to listen to how the interview went so that I could work on the questions that were not clearly understood and clarify them for the next interview. Having them scheduled on different days helped me to generate other questions from the first interviewee's answers.

The main interest in carrying out these interviews was to test both my questions and the device that I was going to use. Though I did not have the chance to conduct many interviews, I learned some tips that helped me during my data collection. First, this experience gave me deeper insights into the process involved in interviewing people. It trained me to be a good listener to my participants' answers even if they were not saying what I was expecting to hear. Actually, this made me think about other perspectives that I have not considered before. Another aspect that I learned is to break up some of my questions in order to make them clearer to my interviewees. Moreover, the pilot study helped me to generate other important questions that I have used in my fieldwork (see Appendix J).

#### **4.5.2 Written reflections**

Another qualitative method used in the present study was novice teachers' weekly diaries. Krishnan and Hoon (2002, p.227) define journals or diaries as "entities which constitute the first-person observation of learning experience which is recorded over time". This method was used with the first group of participants only.

During my fieldwork, I asked my participants to reflect on their teaching experiences. I regularly informed them that the purpose of keeping a reflective journal is beneficial for them and me as well, to learn about the journey of becoming professional in the field of teaching and to trace their professional identity development.

The plan was to collect eight weekly journals for each participant. However, novice teachers schedule was too busy and they could not provide me with separate reflections for each week. Instead, they sent me one reflection each month, which included the subdivision of the weeks.

At the beginning of the research period, an explanation about the use of reflective journals was provided to the participants in this research. Those clarifications were given via phone and social media (Facebook). I provided the participants with general ideas about what should be incorporated in the reflections. Such as, what they have experienced at school during the week, how did their values and teaching beliefs changed and the challenges they faced while teaching. All these guidelines and others were provided to novice teachers in order to facilitate the task of writing and to direct their thoughts and ideas to the focus of the study.

These journals were a useful data-gathering tool in the present study. They provided me with further questions to ask during the interviews. For instance, I asked the participants about students' discipline as it appeared to be a major problem discussed in their reflections. Unlike interviews, teachers' reflections provided the participant with time and comfortable space to reflect on what happened to them during the week.

#### **4.5.3 Field notes**

Apart from interviews and participants' diaries, field notes were used. Field notes allow the researcher 'not only to see the data but to analyse it as well' (Silverman 2005, p.158). In other words, during my fieldwork, I could not record all that was happening at school, but I could reflect on how teachers behaved and what kind of activities they were taking part in inside the school. Throughout the entire process of data collection, I maintained an individual journal for each participant in the study. In these journals, I included my initial impression about novice teachers, what I have noticed during the interviews with regard to their relationship with colleagues and students, my own interpretations and reflection about the quality of the interview,

and aspects that have surprised or disappointed me. I also used the field notes to summarise the interviews and to take some notes during the interviews which helped me later in editing the interview guide. In addition to this, the field notes comprised the description of the school where my participants teach, the staffroom, and even their physical appearance. The reason behind keeping an individual journal was twofold. It helped me to recognise my own mistakes during the interviews so that I could avoid them later on. Moreover, it paved the way for me to trace and compare the changes that occurred in novice teachers' professional identities and their practices as well. I have also gathered photographs of classrooms decoration (see section 7.3.2.2.1).

#### 4.6 Procedures for collecting the data

This section summarises all the procedures for collecting data. It encompasses all the method used in this study and explains how each method contributed to answering research questions

Method	How it answers the research questions	Dates
<b>First round interviews</b>	As discussed in section (4.5.1), Verbal data in interviews revealed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of their personal background in constructing a professional identity (RQ1)</li> <li>• The effect of the practicum on their professional identity (RQ3).</li> </ul>	October 19 to November 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2016
<b>Second round interviews</b>	The challenges they go through to construct and re-construct their professional identity (RQ4). In addition to this, it partially highlighted the changes in their professional through their engagement with different school communities (RQ2).	November 16 <sup>th</sup> - to December 1 <sup>st</sup> 2016
<b>Third interviews</b>	The development of their professional identity in terms of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging in different school communities (RQ2).</li> <li>• Finally, their resilience toward those changes (RQ4).</li> </ul>	December 12- December 21 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Novice teachers' written reflections</b>	These reflections differed from one participants to another as each one reflected on the parameters I provided in different ways. Participants were asked to reflect on their experience in school as well as their expectations. Thus, data in this section revealed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their challenges with teaching in general (RQ4) and with</li> <li>• Becoming a part of an existing community (RQ2).</li> </ul>	From October until December

Table 7: Procedures for collecting the data (first group of participants)

Method	How it answered my research questions	Dates
Interviews	Interviews with second year teachers helped me in answering: The different challenges they went through during their first year of teaching (RQ4) and how this did help them in constructing their professional identities as well as the ways they followed to be recognised as part of the school community (RQ2). It provided partially some insights to their practicum (RQ3).	December 05 <sup>th</sup> - December 17 <sup>th</sup>

Table 8: Procedures for collecting the (second-year participants).

#### 4.7 Data analysis

Having collected my data I shall now move on to break it down into codes and themes. In order to do this, I applied thematic analysis which is a "method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.79). As was previously discussed in chapters 2 and 3, professional identity is a complex process which involves interaction with many factors such as, personal histories and teacher training experiences. Thus, the thematic analysis offered a helpful lens for understanding the complexity of this process as it provides a "rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.78). In this section, I describe the process through which I generated my themes and interpreted my findings. Although the data analysis was presented through different stages, the process was iterative where I moved backward and forward between data. This resonates with Holliday (2016, p.99) description of these phases

While it is very important to understand the conceptual differences between data collection, data analysis, and writing, these two major activities need to happen at the same time and feed off each other.

#### **4.7.1 Coding the data and generating themes**

Within qualitative research, data analysis is viewed as happening simultaneously with data collection (Holliday, 2016). The data collection phase can help the researcher to notice new themes, reflect on the research and add questions that might be relevant to her/his study. The data in this phase includes all what the researcher "sees and hears" (Holliday 2016, p99). In relation to this study, during this phase I was able to notice aspects which I did not consider prior to my visits to schools. An example of this would be taking pictures of one participant classroom (Safia) which added depth to my interpretations of the findings (see section 7.3.2.2.1). In addition to this, during my data collection, I listened to each interview prior to the next one. This enabled me to consider further questions in relation to interviews. For instance, "teacher status in Algeria", and the "new programme introduced for middle school teachers" emerged during data collection. These questions were then added to my interview list.

During this time of data collection, I was reading the participants' reflections and listening to their interviews and I was asking them for further explanations. Below are some examples which show that a preliminary analysis was taking place at the earliest stage of data collection.

- In your reflection you said that the headmaster was against your PhD plan, what was your reaction? (Thilleli, Reflection)
- Can you tell me more about how you overcame the decision of your parents when they pushed you toward teaching? (Fatima, Intv 2)

Having collected my data I then began analysing them. This step according to Holliday (2016) consists of "looking at the overall data" and start coding and characterizing it into small divisions. In doing this, the coding process in this study started with the familiarization with the data by "reading the interview transcripts, observational notes, or documents that are to be analysed" (Maxwell 2005, p.96). The data collected in this study involved a series of interviews with the participants, their written reflections and the researcher's field notes. The data were

coded inductively that is to say, the codes emerged from the data rather than arising from my reading of the literature.

The interviews were manually coded. Though coding in this way was "time consuming and messy", it enhanced my familiarity with the data (McLafferty and Farley 2006, p.88). I started first with reading all the interview transcripts to identify the common themes and I highlighted and assigned labels to the concepts that I considered important in the margin of word document (see appendix K for an example). This process enabled me to familiarize myself with the data and to capture the similarities and the differences in each participant interview. Once I finished this process I draw a table which I divided into codes, categories, main examples and initial interpretations. This process helped me to gather the data which I believed to be important under one theme and highlight the main examples as discussed by the participants in the interviews (see appendix L). For instance, as I read through the transcripts participants' expressions such as "I have been raised in a family of teachers" and "my father is a teacher" were coded as "family influence" and were categorized under the theme "choosing teaching motivation and preliminary thoughts" (see appendix L for more examples). I classified 'self-desire' 'transmitting knowledge and 'childhood experiences' under the theme 'thinking about being a teacher'. These initial themes were later on gathered together under a main theme 'identification with teaching preceding career entry'. I followed this process in coding all the interviews and this allowed me to "generate an initial list of ideas about what is in the data and what is interesting about them" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p.88). The reason why I started with interviews was because they form the main data tool in this study. I coded the first round interviews I then moved on to the second and third interviews. In terms of describing the participants in the findings chapters of this research, I abbreviated "interview" to "Intv" followed by the number of the interview. For example, an extract from Amel, second interview would be noted as (Amel, Intv 2). This method was used with the first group of participants only to show the number of interviews. For

instance, an extract from a second-year teacher Kahina would be described as (Kahina, Interview).

As the data analysis developed, themes began to emerge. The formation of themes represents "the necessary dialogue between data and researcher" and it enables the researcher to interpret and make sense of the data (Holliday 2016, p.103). In this phase, I developed a number of themes such as "interaction and relationship with students" and "professional community support". The table below demonstrates the initial themes. Under each theme, I had some sub-themes with some extracts from my interviews. I then illustrated the meaning of each theme and how it relates to my topic by assigning extracts from novice teachers' interviews.

Research questions	Initial themes
RQ1) How does the personal background of novice teachers influence the construction of their professional identities?	The role of family, teaching as a gendered profession, previous teacher influence. English as an international language, work opportunities.
RQ2) To what extent does their engagement with different professional communities within schools contribute to the development of their professional identity?	Interaction and relationship with colleagues interaction and relationship with students, Interaction and relationship with others (academic), virtual community Teacher identity and moral purpose autonomy, individualisation, and their influences on constructing a professional identity, teacher as an agent of change: Innovation and creativity in teaching. Teacher knowledge as a component of constructing a professional identity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' ideologies, beliefs and values about teaching.</li> <li>• Constructing a meaning of teaching. Teachers' knowledge of self</li> <li>• Professional strengths</li> <li>• Teachers' professional image. Sense of achievement.</li> </ul>
RQ3) What role did the practicum play in the formation of novice teachers' identities?	Positive encounters during teaching practice Negative encounters during teaching practice.
RQ4) How have their professional identities been affected by the challenges they faced during their teaching?	Professional conflicts: teachers Vs. institutions. Being an Algerian teacher: Status, respect and recognition.

	<p>Age differences and communication problems. Teaching conditions. Programme restrictions.</p> <p>Fitting into the school culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A growing love of the teaching job.</li> <li>• A growing sense of self-confidence. Emotional resilience</li> </ul> <p>Learning to be a teacher: identities in practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional community support.</li> <li>• Self-reflection and critical thinking.</li> <li>• Managing cultural differences and looking for a sense of belonging: case study.</li> </ul> <p>Teachers' future professional goals.</p>
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Table 9: Initial themes.

These initial themes were reviewed and modified through the whole process of theming and the interpretation of the data. In doing this, some themes were combined to form one theme, for example, "virtual community" and "broader community" fall under one theme "Alignment with the broader community". The development and re-arrangement of these themes continued into and during the writing process until no new theme emerged.

Having conducted the initial analysis from interviews, I then shifted my attention to analysing participants' written reflections. I used colour coding at this stage to highlight extracts that support my interview findings. I highlighted in blue participants' expressions and comments about their school community for example, "my colleagues, the other teacher of English, are super nice to me" (Ali, reflection). This was then used to triangulate the findings with the interviews. Regarding field notes, they were not given much weight in generating themes, however they enabled me to understand what was happening in the institutions. For instance, some incidents from my observations of the staffroom were recorded in my field notes and were used to triangulate data as well.

The final themes and the categorization of the data suggested that I should have three findings chapters. These chapters were chronologically organised to show the cyclical process of

professional identity formation. In other words, the first chapter looked at the construction of professional identity before joining the profession. This then included both prior experiences and the teaching practice. The two other chapters described how novice teachers' developed their professional identities within a real teaching community. The shape of the chapters can be seen in the table below (10).

Chapter titles	Themes	Sub-themes
Chapter 5: Identification as a process of becoming	Identification with teaching English preceding career entry	-The role of family. - Former teacher influence. - Teaching as a gendered profession. - Choosing English.
	Practicum as an initiation phase to teaching	- Positive encounters during teaching practice -Negative encounters during the teaching practice
	Teaching perceptions and beliefs carried into teaching	- Knowledge is everywhere but where are the teachers
Chapter 6: Challenges in the struggle to construct a professional identity	The impact of society's view on novice teacher identity	
	Issues of classroom management and disruptive students' behaviour	-Power relations and emotional resilience
	Managing cultural differences and looking for a sense of belonging: case study.	
	Working conditions and teacher identity construction	
	Lack of professional guidance	
Chapter 7: The role of individuality and community in constructing teachers' professional identity	Community membership and teachers' professional identities	-Relationships and interaction with colleagues. - Case study: "Trainee is just a title it is not who you are." - Alignment with broader communities. - Interaction and relationships with students.
	Being an Algerian EFL teacher: Teachers as multiple role agents	- Teacher identity and moral purposes. - Teachers as agents of change: Innovation and creativity in teaching. - Constructing the "new" teachers against the "traditional teachers". - Individuality and contribution

		to school communities.
	Teachers' professional image.	- Teachers' sense of achievement.
	Professional identity and novice teachers' future selves.	

Table 1: Final themes and findings chapter organization from 5-7.

#### 4.8 Trustworthiness

Issues of trustworthiness of research are central to both quantitative and qualitative research. The need to ensure that the findings are convincing, accurate and trustworthy is important in evaluating the worth of the study (Lincoln and Guba 1985). In terms of this study, various strategies were employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings.

To begin with, the use of triangulation helped to improve the validity and reliability of data (Creswell 2014, Morse 2015). This triangulation process according to Morse (2015, p.2116) "increases the scope or depth of the study". As was discussed previously, data was gathered through interviews, participants' reflections and were complimented by the researcher's field notes. Each of these tools captured interesting insights into understanding NQTs' identities. While interviews provided important explanations to the participants' lived experiences, written reflections and field notes added more validity and credibility to the interviews. This is to say that, data from the different sources yielded similar findings which indicate the validity of the study.

Moreover, though this research relies-heavily on data generated from interviews, each participant in the main group was interviewed three times in the course of my fieldwork (three months). During this time I was able to build up a strong relationship of trust and confidentiality with each one, and I was in a position to check on details of fact from one interview to the next, as well as on my own understanding of the various issues and events they raised in the course of the interviews (see section 4.5.1.1). In addition to that, I believe that the present research has provided a sufficient 'thick description' by applying various data tools, as explained in section

(4.5). It thus provided the reader with a full account of professional identity and with the procedures used within this research. The interpretations of how teacher identity developed were drawn from an analysis of the data obtained through the different tools used in this research.

The thick description which has been developed by Geertz (1993) enabled me to construct an understanding of my findings. Based on the works of Ryle (1971) Geertz (1993), Denzin (1989), Holloway (1997) and Schwandt (2001), Ponterotto (2006, p. 543) offers the following definition:

Thick description captures the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them. Thick description leads to thick interpretation, which in turn leads to thick meaning of the research findings for the researchers and participants themselves, and for the report's intended readership. Thick meaning of findings leads readers to a sense of verisimilitude, wherein they can cognitively and emotively 'place' themselves within the research context.

As this quote suggests, thick description provides a means for presenting both the inside and the outside views of the participants. It helped me as a researcher to highlight the different facets of NQTs' professional identities (Holliday, 2016) by looking at the phenomenon through a range of data tools. Each tool captured particular aspects of identity which resulted in a 'thick description' of how teacher identity developed in this particular context.

Furthermore, in line with Rallis and Rossman (2009, p.269) trustworthiness can be ensured through 'critical friend' and 'using your community of practice'. I consider my supervisors as 'critical friends' who were constantly reviewing the transcripts and the findings for consistency and accuracy. This strategy provided an opportunity for feedback and for criticising the findings. In addition to this, interactions and critical discussions with other fellow research students added

deeper and deferent perspective which helped to check and validate the data. Participating in seminars, conferences and workshops also enabled me to check my interpretations of the findings and enhanced my insights further into the data.

Finally, the findings were conveyed using rich and thick description to provide the reader with "an element of a shared experience" (Creswell, 2009, p.193). This strengthened the validity of the findings and allowed the results to be more realistic.

#### **4.9 Ethical considerations**

Prior to the beginning of this study, I filled in an application that contains information about my research participants and my topic. I submitted it to the research committee at my university (Creswell 2014). This step is compulsory in any research as it shows the intended plans that researchers would follow in their study, and reduce the risks over participants. After I received my approval letter, I started contacting my participants.

Before I collected any data, I asked for the permission of teachers in my study. They were happy to provide me with any source of data that would help in my study. I provided all the participants in this study with a letter that I received from the ethics committee at Canterbury Christ Church University, which explains the details of my research (see appendix H), and then they signed the consent form (see Appendix I), which protects identities from being revealed (Creswell 2013).

I promised my participants to use pseudonyms to assure their anonymity in the thesis and in any publication that might come out of this study (Sarantakos 2013). Participants were also informed about their rights to withdraw the research at any stage without being questioned (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). I have also informed them about the purpose of the study and their roles in it as well as their right to ask any further question about the research study. An explanation about the use of the recorder was provided to my participants, with the assurance that it was just a tool used in this study to record the data and transcribe it later on easily, and that no one will have access to it

apart from the researcher.

### **Gatekeeper**

Most of the headmasters in this study accepted my presence in their school. Two other headmasters did not agree to my conducting the interviews inside the school. They asked me to bring a letter from the Ministry of Education in Algeria. As a result, I had to conduct my interviews outside the school. Those who accepted my presence in their schools were informed about the aims and purposes of the research study. This approval was also supported by the compliance letter provided by the researcher's university. This process was formally addressed before starting the data collection (Dörnyei 2007).

### **4.10 Chapter summary**

In this chapter, I have discussed my choice of the research methodology beginning from research paradigms to the rationale behind the choices of the research methods. This chapter has explained that this research is situated within broad qualitative research and draws on the interpretivist paradigm. I have also established details of my field trip for collecting data in Algeria. The full procedures including selecting participants and deciding on the data tools were reported. This chapter also provided detailed explanations of how the data was approached and analysed inductively. The following three chapters will discuss the findings of this research.

## **Chapter 5: Identification as a process of becoming**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter is the first part of a series of findings chapters. It discusses data collected from interviews in relation to participants' identification with teaching and to becoming an English teacher. The process of identification for the participants in this study was dynamic and shifting throughout various stages in their life. They all went through a series of changes by negotiating the meaning of their lived experiences and themselves in various contexts. During these early stages, while they were children and students they received support from various communities that included families and schools. These communities allowed them, at each step, to orient themselves to their future goals. They provided them with "experimental identification", which resulted in building up expectations about their future selves (Erikson, 1968). These expectations then became part of their identities, which were shaped and developed over time, to form new beliefs and perceptions toward teaching.

The chapter is organized into three main themes that emerged from the interview data. These themes as previously stated might contribute to an understanding of the process of constructing a professional identity. These are:

- Identification with teaching preceding career entry
- Practicum as an initiation phase into teacher's professional identity
- Teaching beliefs and perceptions carried into teaching

These themes are intertwined and continually changing. How early-career teachers viewed themselves as teachers was evolving as their understanding of the profession was growing. Each theme captured particular aspects of the process of constructing an identity. Throughout this chapter, extracts from interview data are used to highlight early career teachers experiences.

## **5.2 Identification with teaching English preceding career entry**

As the primary purpose of this study is to understand the developmental process of teachers' professional identities, it is important to consider the role of their prior experiences of learning, that is, being the recipient of other people's teaching, or any other teaching that they may have done, however informal, prior to their embarking on a teacher training program. I am conscious that the identity of each participant in this study is continuous and had a unique learning trajectory. Novice teachers' own biographies and "apprenticeship of observation" played a significant role in "who they are" and who "they wished to become". Thus, It is argued in this study that these personal accounts, drawn from family, society and former teacher influence, contributed to the formation of an "imagined identities" before NQTs were officially enrolled in teaching. Therefore, it is necessary to examine the continuity and change within their established identities to create a sense of their professional identity transformation.

A number of studies agree that NQTs' initial motivation as well as their personal histories are

crucial factors in their decisions to remain or leave the profession (Hong 2010, Chong and Low 2009). Clarke (2008) argues that choosing teaching is an articulation of 'belonging'. The 'belonging' perspective in this study occurred before novice teachers' joined the profession as a result of *identification* with different communities such as family, schools and society. Both groups of participants in this study showed interests to join teaching as a career choice because of different reasons such as "raising generations" and "contributing to society" as well as the "nobility of teaching" as they described it. Moreover, the Algerian educational system has indirectly contributed to their decision to join the profession. As was shown in chapter 1, the Algerian education is divided into three main divisions and in middle school students have to decide whether they want to join the scientific stream or the literary stream. From my personal knowledge of the Algerian system, I can say that such early influences make students think about their career choice at an early stage. In addition to that, students take a baccalaureate exam which also guides their choices.

Moreover, regarding their decisions to become English teachers, early-career teachers' reported various aspects which encompassed both internal (self-desire) and external (family, teachers etc.) factors. For some novice teachers their decision to teach English was mainly because they identified with their families, previous teacher influence and their love of the language. Interview data conducted with the two groups of participants showed that eight teachers out of fourteen started with an initial desire to become language teachers since their childhood. This means that they had a clear vision regarding their future selves before they started their undergraduate studies, as Hamida explained when I asked her about how she decided to become an English teacher "It was not that hard for me, since teaching was what I wanted since my childhood". The remaining participants in this study (six out of fourteen) had not shown an interest in teaching English. In other words, teaching English was not a clear career choice made during their earlier school years or even during their undergraduate level. Those teachers did not

have a sense of identification with teaching but they were either persuaded to teach or had to think about their future careers such as securing a job. Mellissa for example wanted to become a teacher of German but her former teacher advised her to do English and join teachers' college to secure a job in the future. As I have explained in chapter 1, teachers can graduate from both public university and teachers' college. Graduating from university requires taking an exam at the end of the course to become a teacher, however, graduating from teachers' college guarantees the job as teachers are directly assigned to teach in schools. Thus it might be assumed that novice teachers who joined the teachers' college had a clear vision of who they want to become before starting their undergraduate studies at university.

Notwithstanding their different reasons for entry, data reveals that all the teachers in this study now show a high level of commitment toward being English teachers and have developed a strong sense of professional identity. I have organized the findings around four various reasons for becoming a teacher as reported by the participants. Those reasons as shown in the figure below are common in their stories. In the section below, I will discuss those motives and aspirations described by the participants.

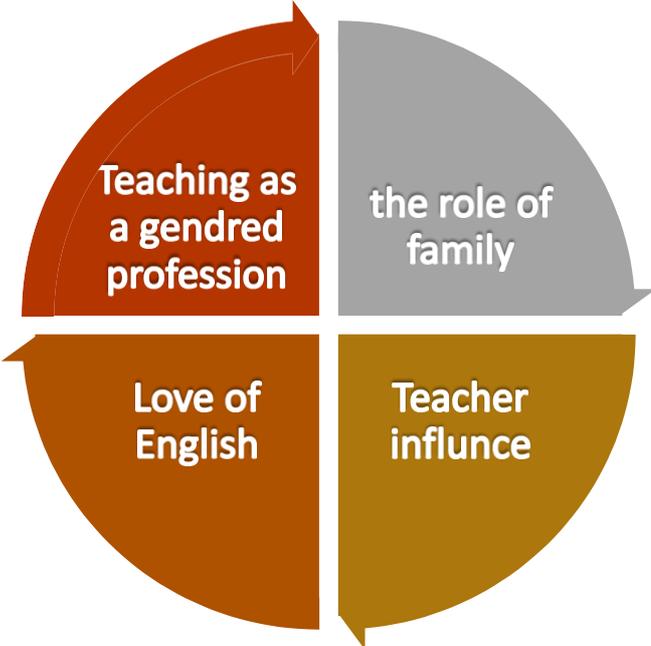


Figure 5: Reasons for entry.

### 5.2.1 The role of family

The influence of the family appeared to have a significant role in the construction of professional identities among novice teachers' in this study. This is to say that several early experiences affected their current selves. Encouragement, discouragement or disapproval and family members who were teachers, are identified in the data as recurrent aspects that affected participants' selves to become teachers (Clarke 2008).

Family members' involvement in teaching offered opportunities for novice teachers to grasp the meaning of teaching at an early stage and at the same time to reflect on the "kind of person" they want to be in the future. In other words, NQTs often exercised legitimate peripheral participation, which is access to practice without assuming a full responsibility (Lave and Wenger 1991). These early participations, though on the margins, were crucial for developing a sense of a teacher identity. Samir for example, who used to observe his father teaching, aligned with the profession at an early stage. In this case, Samir might have developed a sense of an imagined identity (Norton 2013).

My father is a retired teacher of French..... When I was a kid I used to attend with him ... at that time teaching came to my head and became my aim (Samir Intv 1)

He then provided additional information for his reasons to teach that was determined by his baccalaureate results. In short, what Samir seemed to be saying in the extract below, is that although he followed the scientific stream, he always bore in mind preferences in teaching as well as the love of the English language. The data here shows the role of his family in sustaining his professional orientation.

In high school I studied in a scientific stream, I based my first choices in the scientific field. The first one was medical, the second was dental surgery, the third and fourth was architecture in different cities and the fifth one was English.... though I studied scientific stream, I liked so much English. Actually, when I was in high school I did not have the intention to be a teacher of English but if I did not really want to be a teacher I would not have put English in my baccalaureate choices. (Samir Intv 1)

Families also played an important role in discouraging other professional aspiration. Findings of two female teachers' interview narratives illuminated the way their family options and decisions greatly affected their future choices. Extracts below from Fatima and Sonia explained their decision to teach.

.... My parents especially advised me and I don't have any regret for that kind of thing, they told me ... you are in Algeria you need to have a guaranteed job, I had to work for them I have to work for myself. (Sonia, Intv 1)

My family pushed me to choose teaching that is why I followed the way they draw for me (Fatima, Intv 1)

In the first extract above, Sonia illustrated in the entry interview her reasons for teaching. It is clear from the data that Sonia's parents did not directly discourage her from becoming a translator, but she valued their opinions. Data also shows that Sonia had a sense of responsibility to work for her parents' sake. Although Sonia wanted to pursue her studies in translation, she later clarified that it was her decision and had no regrets about it. For Sonia, the final decision to become a teacher was made right after she passed her baccalaureate exam.

On the other hand, data indicates that Fatima experienced parental pressure to enter the teaching

field. Her dream to become a journalist vanished right after her father insisted that she had to pursue her studies in teaching. Beginning her studies in English without any motivation to teach, Fatima had a difficult time articulating her identity as a teacher. The extract below shows how her identity has changed and how she finally has accepted teaching.

I was just crying, and I told them that I want to choose journalism, I told them that I hate teaching I will not be a teacher... During the first year I was not able to accept this idea I do not want to be a teacher really but now I feel sometimes that I regret choosing to teach just because of the hard work but now it's ok but I started to accept it it's my job. (Fatima, Intv 1)

One of the reasons why both Kahina and Amel decided to become teachers was the role model their parents presented as teachers. In the entry interview, they explained the reason why their fathers were so influential.

My father also influenced me, he has a big role in my life in any step in my life especially my father (Kahina Intv 1)

I like the job because my dad is a teacher.....he always says teaching is a good job, even he always provides me with advice, how to be a good teacher, how to behave with children especially with the age middle school, he helped me so much to choose this job. (Amel Intv 1)

Both Amel and Kahina's fathers' influence was not only limited to loving the job but to considering their future teaching style and the kind of behaviour they should adapt with their students. Data from the two extracts show the different encouragement those two novice teachers received from their fathers. It is clear from the data that though Kahina's father is not a teacher, he advised her to teach. Moreover, Amel's father, as a retired teacher, provided her with information on how to become a good teacher and aroused her interest in teaching.

Families seem to have a strong influence on novice teachers' formation of their professional identities. Even those who did not want to teach at the beginning have developed a teacher identity. That is to say that, the sense of teacher identity is instilled through NQTs' families and parents and their sense of agency and empowerment have been nurtured through their upbringing. Their sense of identity is not something acquired on the job (during teaching) but it has been developed through their childhood by exercising legitimate peripheral participation. Data here suggests that teachers' identities are not only shaped by who they are but also by who they are not (Wenger 1998) by negotiating and making sense of their experiences. Teachers do not define themselves by what is familiar (as the case of and Samir) but also by what is unfamiliar (Fatima and Sonia).

### **5.2.2. Former teacher influence**

Teachers' stories extracted from interviews, revealed the influence that positive images of former teachers have on constructing teacher identity. This relationship between teachers' influences and the desire to become a teacher seems to be strong in the literature (see Lortie 1975). It is apparent from the data that teachers' practices, their way of teaching, behaviour, contact with students and subject knowledge affected and inspired novice teachers either positively or negatively. These novice teachers identified models to either imitate or surpass. These influences had an impact on novice teachers' identities, at the time the decision to become a teacher was taken, as the extracts below demonstrate. Positive images of teachers contributed to a liking of the profession. Those images that both Sonia and Mellissa hold of their former teachers influenced them to become teachers. For Mellissa, her choice to become a language teacher was motivated by her secondary school English teacher. Her first contact with the English language was in her first year in middle school. At that time Mellissa liked both English and French languages. In the extract below from the entry interview, Mellissa was aware that her motivation to teach and her interests in English specifically arose from her secondary school

English teacher.

In middle school I had great teachers of English, even those teachers made me love English but at that time I loved French too... but I have chosen English as most preferable job in high school (Mellissa Intv 1)

Mellissa valued her previous teacher or her “idol” as she described her for loving her job and being committed to it "she was bringing us song and videos she seemed to like her job very much". Similarly, Sonia spoke highly of her former teacher and described her as an influential source of her character formation. The following comment in which she emphasised on her personal traits, illustrates her feelings.

I had a teacher who taught me western civilization and literature I was influenced by her way of speaking, of behaving, of clothing, of sitting, I have got really influenced by her I am trying to be like her (Sonia Intv 1)

For both Sonia and Mellissa teachers were more than those who taught them but those who helped them to become who they are. Their current philosophy of teaching as well as their way of teaching were based on those images they constructed from their previous teachers (see section 5.4). Extract below from Mellissa's interview show how this experience affected her teaching.

I was thinking of rewards because I remember when I was in high school my teacher of English hmm... That was the best thing ever that happened to me the three students who got best mark were rewarded in front of all students can you imagine

It was the great thing it was the first time I get rewarded in my life (laughs).  
(Mellissa Intv 2)

In other cases, teachers' negative experiences had an impact on their decisions to become language teachers. Safia for example, who is a second-year English teacher, explained in the entry interview that her main reason to become an English teacher derived from her negative personal experience as a student. Safia disliked her middle school English teacher because he used to "explain a lesson to clever students". It is apparent from the data that Safia's unfulfilled aspiration to speak English well in the middle school resulted in a passion for teaching and a hope to make students speak English fluently. Her ambition to "form new Algerian students" became part of her personal identity that influenced her professional practice.

The first thing that attracted me to teaching was students...I had an ambition to form new Algerian students who are able to speak English that was my not the case for me.... I did not really have this chance to practice English when I was in the middle school... I had a bad experience with my teacher, a bad teaching methods. (Safia Intv1)

In the extract below, Safia provided more insights for her final decision to become a language teacher. During her secondary school, Safia had a different experience. Her English teacher attracted her more to learn English. Her conceptualization of a teacher revealed the target language proficiency as the main reason for her alignment with teaching.

It was her (previous teacher) way of teaching she used to teach only in English no Berber, no Arabic (Safia Intv 1)

From Safia's comparison between her two English teachers, data suggests that the concept of communicative competence is related to the nature of becoming a teacher. Former teachers provided an example to either follow or surpass. Safia here seemed to construct a clear image of her secondary school teacher as a role model.

When I went to high school in three months I could have a level in English, in four years (in middle school) I could not do it... I could not even make a

sentence in English (Safia Intv 1).

The findings presented here show the impact that images of former teachers have in influencing how participants in this study perceived teaching and how they chose to present themselves as teachers to their students. The importance of identification with teaching through novice teachers' imagination of the role of teachers helped them to construct the meaning of teaching. Their ideas might change and shift over time as they gain more experience in the field, but may nevertheless remain an influential aspect in shaping their professional identities. Teachers' commitment, language proficiency and teachers' personalities seem to be the main characteristics to be followed. The way those models affected novice teachers' in their teaching practice will be discussed in other sections throughout the thesis. The section below will look at the third driving force for choosing to teach.

### **5.2.3 Teaching as a gendered profession**

Female teachers in this study reported the role of gender in their decisions to become teachers. I acknowledge that there is potential gender bias as 12 participants out of 14 are females. However, I find this theme a relevant factor explaining their decision to teach as well as it sheds light on how it affects their professional identities. Three main themes on gender influences for these teachers' reasons for entry emerged from the data: playing teacher as a child, cultural discourses on gender and the compatibility of teaching (Olsen 2008, Clarke 2008). Extracts below explore female teachers' comments.

The notion of teaching as an appropriate career for women in this study is related to the discourses of culture in the Algerian context. Basically, as a female who lived in the Algerian context, I can say that before building any career in a particular field, the majority of women consider their families' views and think about their future lives. This is not, however, a gender analysis of how females are treated in teaching or research. Instead, gender is a theme that emerged in relation to how females identified themselves with teaching through their personal

histories, which would provide deeper discussion into the process of identity construction. Two female teachers in the entry interview made an explicit reference to the role of society in constructing those discourses. Amel for instance, linked her choice of teaching to women's position in society and precisely in the Algerian context.

I prefer teaching because I am a woman and women in Algeria are preferable to work as teachers because it is a place where women are respected. (Amel Intv 1)

She then clarified that females are more respected in teaching than other jobs like "factories". Similarly, Fatima claimed that the Algerian society imposed on females this discourse of gender "In Algeria in our country the best job for women is teaching, I do not know why men think this way..." She then added that she could have been another person if she lived in another country where they do not have such discourses, "in other countries maybe it is not the same". Both female teachers above indicate that their choices to teach were affected by the context and culture where they have grown up. Their self-image and their self-representation of who they should become were related and constructed through the discourse of culture.

Another component that emerged from the data is "playing teacher" as a child. Dihia was a young girl mimicking images of teachers she saw in cartoons and educative movies, "I also remember that my mother always lets me watch cartoons that were about teachers and learner". Her mother here played a role in encouraging this form of play. In the entry interview, Dihia explained how she enjoyed teaching her cousins when she was a young girl and how confident she felt to teach others who were elder than her. The extract below suggests that Dihia developed an identity of participation while teaching her neighbours. She could partly project who she wants to become in her future.

I ask all my neighbours and even they were older than me, to sit in the yard and I start writing on the wall. (Dihia Intv 1)

In another case, Mellissa viewed teaching as a "suitable job for women" because of the

flexibility of the job. This perception regarding the flexibility of teaching is very likely based on the school hours that teachers in many Algerian schools have. They sometimes have a day off during the week in addition to school holidays which enable teachers to relax and have some time with their families. Mellissa considered her future life as a mother and tried to balance motherhood with teaching: "I guess teachers have time for their children". Yet in the following extract, Mellissa's career choice may involve sacrifices to wifely duty: "teachers have time for their homes and taking care of their kids more than other jobs". Her consideration and analysis of her future role as an Algerian female pushed her to take the decision to teach.

Gender appeared to play an important role in female teachers' choices to teach. Embedded cultural discourses, playing teacher and the flexibility of the job are identified in the data as the main components of gender. These early representations of teaching may very well have affected their developing identities of who teaches, how and why. The section below looks at the role of English language in becoming a teacher.

#### **5.2.4 Choosing English**

With regard to the reasons behind choosing English as a professional career instead of other subjects or professions, most NQTs referred to the status of English in the world and in their context. They showed an awareness concerning the role of English as an important mean for communication and as the language of media and technology (Kiely 2015). The data showed that the position of the English language in the world was an influential attribute for NQTs' decision to teach. Examples from the data show how the English language influenced their professional choices.

Learning English was an early discovery for Sonia. Her motivation to learn the language emerged from her favourite western singer "I was really influenced by a certain singer whose name is Celine Dion It's thanks to her that I learned English". From the data in the entry

interview, Sonia demonstrated her engagement with teaching English which later developed into a passion for teaching. Sonia's initial goal to learn the language started as a self-challenge which then resulted in love and fluency in the English language at an early stage.

She (the singer) is not a native speaker of English... I said to myself no matter how I can learn English as she did...when I was in middle school believe me I was speaking English correctly. (Sonia Intv 1)

Her classmates in the secondary school acknowledged her commitment and asked her for learning assistance "I used to teach some certain students with specific needs". Thus, her language learning abilities developed into a process of self-engagement and self-discovery in the teaching field. Olsen (2008, p.31) suggests that "children and young adults may decide what teaching is, as they are simultaneously deciding what they are good at, allowing for self-confirming circle of reciprocal reinforcement". In this example, Sonia showed that she was good at explaining to her classmates as they acknowledged that. By devoting some time for her classmates, Sonia was developing her teaching approach and was strengthening her understanding of what makes a teacher good. In other words, Sonia seemed to care and showed patience toward this particular group of students which reinforced her sense of self as a "caring teacher" with her students when she started teaching (see section 7.2.3).

They were not able to study in groups... they are some students who do not ask questions in front of an audience... they needed to have a particular corner for them. (Sonia Intv 1)

Data here suggests that Sonia aligned herself with teaching at an early stage of her life. She developed a sense of identification with teaching before even becoming a formal teacher. This is to say that, valuing the role of English language in the Algerian context pushed many participants in this study to become more innovative in their teaching methodologies and became agent of change in their schools (see chapter 7).

Most of my participants studied foreign languages in High school. Thus, they presented a certain interest in learning foreign languages. Amel, Thilleli and Ali reflected on the importance of English as an international language "English is important in nowadays as an international language". In my second interview with Amel, she mentioned that being a teacher of English gave her a certain status and value in society "I think that being a teacher of English has some prestige... being an English teacher is a great thing for me". Data here suggests that the position that Amel has in society defined her in a certain way and became part of her personal identity. In other words, the recognition of a "significant other" is important in defining and recognising oneself.

Ali and Thilleli were both attracted to learning French and English languages. Here choosing the language was a matter of preference "I was very attracted to foreign languages but I loved English most". However, in the case of Faiza, who is a second year teacher, becoming an English teacher happened by accident "I chose the German language because I liked it". Because the university where she studied was far from her home, Faiza decided to change the university.

I had some troubles like environment conditions so I have decided to change the university but I had no chance to do German there so I did English. (Faiza Interview).

Faiza was obliged to study English as there was no other way to pursue her study in the German language. Did this change affect Faiza's perceptions toward teaching? Although the answer cannot be conclusive, as Faiza did not provide more insights into this, the findings from the interview suggest that Faiza developed a sense of teacher identity as she carried on talking about her teaching practice. This shift from imagined to practiced identities is tackled in details in other chapters throughout the thesis.

These findings show that family, previous teachers, gender and the English language influenced teachers in this study to become language teachers. The next section will present the role of the

practicum in teachers' choices to teach.

### **5.3 Practicum as an initiation phase to teaching**

In the previous section, I discussed the drivers and attractants that determined novice teachers' decision to join the teaching profession. Teachers' personal career histories served as a background to who they are and who they want to become. This section considers the training experience that beginning teachers had as part of their university studies. Findings from teachers' interviews indicate that both the context of the training and the relationship with mentors were significant factors in mediating professional identities (Flores and Day 2006, Danielewicz 2001, Yuan 2016). In addition to that, the practicum influenced research participants' in terms of becoming fully aware of their roles and promoted their "state of readiness" Kiely and Askham (2012, p.14). Though novice teachers claimed that the training period was not enough, data showed important influential factors on teachers' identities.

Below I summarize the findings from teachers' interviews with regard to their practicum experiences and show how these positive or negative experiences might have influenced teachers' identities.

#### **5.3.1 Positive encounters during the teaching practice**

The practicum is the first teaching experience for novice teachers in this study. NQTs were assigned by their universities to teach in different schools for three months under the guidance of mentors. Samir and Imene were the only teachers who did not do the teaching practice because they were enrolled in a different educational system, classical system (see section 1.8). Nine participants described their first teaching experience as a mixture of highly enjoyable experience and at the same time being tiring.

For these novice teachers, teaching practice was a great experience they had, regardless of the nature and the culture of the institution in which they had their training. They described their practicum in an emotional way and their pleasure to teach was apparent in their use of words

and phrases like "exciting", "amazing", "successful trainee".

These positive attitudes toward their teaching practice were basically the result of good and supportive mentoring. Interview data reveals that supportive and positive mentoring is important in developing a teacher identity as "interaction with authority figures powerfully affect who we become and how we think about ourselves" Danielewicz (2001, p.77). This was evident in the following extract from Sonia's, who was influenced by her mentor:

My mentor was really wonderful she had 32 years of experience... She is really good in terms of pedagogy she knows everything. I adopted this personality from her, she is cool because English is cool. Sonia (Intv 1)

She further demonstrated the significance of supportive mentoring in developing her sense of self, she said:

I needed someone to tell me you are so good I needed someone to raise my self-esteem, that is a bit high, but I needed someone to make it higher and my mentor did so because it is important to have high self-esteem. (Sonia, Intv 1).

Data here shows that the guidance and the support that Sonia received from her mentor made her feel more confident about herself as a future teacher. Similarly, and in another example, Dihia explained how her mentor boosted her confidence and increased her motivation to teach. As the practicum was her first opportunity to teach, Dihia was more concerned about her emotional and psychological side. As is shown in the extract below, Dihia's mentor provided her with all the support needed, and which impacted positively on her teacher identity (Mann and Tang 2012).

My training and my teacher trainer was very helpful and she helps us and gave us everything ... she is not the kind of teacher who gives you each time negative point. She all the time gives us positive points... she always smile and, believe me, the psychological side plays an interesting way she made me love what I did in the

training [i.e. during the TP], and now [i.e. at her school] (Dihia Intv1)

Moreover, findings highlight that affirmation from mentors was a significant aspect in developing a "collective identity" that is being recognised as a teacher by others, (Danielewicz, 2001). The extract below illustrates this finding.

The support I needed I found it with the teacher trainer. She did her best with us and she always told us that she learned from us (trainees). So, it was kind of exchange. (Hamida Interview)

This extract shows that the relationship between Hamida and her mentor was not characterised by power relation. Instead, it seems from the data that her mentor considered her as a teacher and a colleague. Thus, Hamida was considered as an insider within this community which enabled her to develop her teacher identity (Danielewicz 2001).

For Mellissa, the teaching practice was a challenging endeavour. She was struggling in maintaining a balance between her studies at teachers' college and her practicum. In the entry interview, Mellissa mentioned the troubles she encountered about the classroom management.

The first week, was a catastrophe I never finished a lesson I was barely able to finish one activity in one hour because of the noise. I used to start a lesson and then the teacher will finish it (Mellissa Intv 1)

After two weeks of training, Mellissa was able to develop new ways of teaching through her reading about classroom management as it was her major concern. She implemented games in her teaching and she stated that it was successful.

In the second semester, I brought new ideas of teaching like using games especially in lessons of vocabulary and grammar... my mentor allowed me to use it as a way for managing my classroom (Mellissa Intv 1).

Data here shows that despite this constraint, Mellissa demonstrated a self-agency in constructing her desired identity (Yuan 2016). By negotiating with her mentor the possibility of implementing

games in her teaching in order to deal with students' discipline, Mellissa was able to project her preferred identity as a "creative teacher" which was more strengthened during her first year of teaching (see appendix S). Likewise, the relationship between Melissa and her mentor helped her to practice her own identity without being obliged to imitate her mentor. The extract shows that her mentor valued her work and encouraged Mellissa to use her own methods of teaching.

In addition to mentors' support and encouragement the context of the practicum reinforced and shaped NQTs' identities (Flores and Day 2006). All the participants stated that their training experience took place in cities. They reported that students' language proficiency was good which enabled them to enact their language teacher identities, unlike their actual teaching placements where students' level was weak (see chapter 6). In other words, NQTs argued that in their training they could use the English language with all their students however when they started their actual teaching in regional areas, they could not do the same as students' proficiency level was weak. The extracts below show these findings.

In Algiers, they do not speak with them other languages they speak only in English. I like this point because even the first year they manage to speak with you in English. But here [her actual teaching] the students are weak... they always complain...I say I am a teacher of English I have to speak in English... but sometimes I use other languages I am obliged otherwise I will stay in the same point (Amel, Intv1)

I guess that my training was much better than what I am encountering now [in the actual school] in my secondary school...people there [place of the training] have contact with languages, culture, TV and internet but in the place where I am working now it is a kind of remote place and learners do not really have access to such things. (Ali, Intv 1)

During these two years of teaching my ideas about teaching changed because my training in Algiers was with excellent and average learners whereas in X school, my learners are average and slow learners which requires more efforts. So, I have to adapt my teaching strategies according to my learners' level. I found myself in a great challenge. (Hamida Interview)

These examples provided by Amel, Ali and Hamida were typical of all the participants in this study. As it is shown above, both Ali and Amel claimed that the teaching practice validated their language teacher identity by positioning themselves as English language teachers. Instead, during their first year of teaching they found difficulties in enacting their language teacher identity because of the students' level. In addition to that, Hamida's extract reveals that the practicum does not necessarily provide teachers with the realities of the classroom (Veenman, 1984) as the context may have a great impact on how novice teachers' position and build an understanding about themselves.

It is clear from those examples that when teachers are encouraged to teach in their own way and to view teaching as a formative experience, they are more likely to take more responsibility for their future professional development and develop a positive teacher identity.

### **5.3.2 Negative encounters during the teaching practice**

Teaching practice did not have the same importance for all teachers in this study. In this section, I consider extracts from three female teachers who had another perspective regarding the teaching practice experience. The practicum showed clearly their "struggle of voice" Britzman (2003, p.20) in the process of negotiating and making meaning of their teacher identity. Extracts from Thilleli, Fatima and Safia's interviews are used to illustrate the other side of the practicum.

The major problem of these female teachers was their desire to exercise their agency yet have some support and guidance on how to prepare lesson plans. Although Safia was satisfied with

her training experience, in terms of her mentor's support for instance on how to teach reading lessons, she was also concerned about doing her "personal work".

We [trainees] tried to do a personal work but she [the mentor] did not like it. She said this is the programme she used to follow the old methods. She said we need to use these methods because students cannot understand we are not in America.

(Safia Interview)

This extract clearly shows that Safia's mentor was exerting some degree of control on her style of teaching (Yuan 2016). In the same vein, Thilleli who graduated from a public university and who did the training twice during her study journey (license and master degrees), expressed a similar interest. She described the practicum as an "empty programme" and as a "waste of time". According to the interview data, Thilleli did not get enough attention and professional guidance from her mentor as she reported that her mentor was worried about finishing the programme. She said:

If the mentor for example, has no time he would say "I am sorry I am late with the programme I cannot let you present" (Thilleli Intv 1)

She then added that the teaching practice was more about observing how her mentor teach than practicing teaching and she confirmed that her real training started when she was officially placed to teach.

Training is like empty it is not like you make efforts... you want to attend come you do not want you are free so I don't see it as training it is until I started teaching that I trained myself (Thilleli Intv 1)

In another example, Fatima reported in the entry interview the lack of support from her mentor. She claimed that the only importance of the training lay in losing fear while teaching. She had troubles making lesson plans and her mentor was imposing on her his ready-made lesson plans.

During the training I made a lot of mistakes, so I needed advice from teachers to tell me about how to use materials and so on, the teacher was just asking me to do this and that (Fatima Intv 1)

Though Thilleli, Fatima and Safia had not received enough support during that period, they did not think about leaving the profession as some studies suggest (such as Hong 2010) and they demonstrated an awareness regarding their teaching practice by critically reflecting on their experiences (Yuan 2016). These two sections show that novice teachers need support from their mentors in terms of providing them with some techniques. However, it is also important for them to have space to practice their imagined identities and interpret the meaning of their experiences. As Danielewicz (2001, p.113) argues "it is not the experience itself that makes us who we are, rather it is the way we talk about and represent the experience that constructs identities". Thus, it is of paramount importance to provide some space for novices to perform their desired identities.

#### **5.4 Teaching perceptions and beliefs carried into teaching**

Having previously explored novice teachers' decision to teach prior to embarking to the field, follow up questions were considered regarding NQTs' perceptions about the characteristics and the role of a good teacher. This section describes and illustrates the professional attributes that early career teachers aspire to enact during their first year of teaching. The process of becoming a teacher is linked to teachers' perceptions about the profession in general as well as their roles in particular. Given the fact that participants in this study have either one-year teaching experience or no experience at all, their conceptualizations and understandings of the teaching field were therefore derived from their personal histories as students and their pre-service teaching. The beliefs they held about teaching became then central to their practices and to the way they identified themselves with teaching. Within this section I consider the primary ideas about the role of a good teacher as described by the participants. This is further discussed in

chapter 7 as I consider this an important point mentioned by novice teachers.

#### **5.4.1 "Knowledge is everywhere but where are the teachers"**

While reading my participants' interviews with regard to their teaching philosophy and their stated beliefs I was struck by this phrase by one of my participants "knowledge is everywhere but where are the teachers", which for me captures the whole idea surrounding their perceptions toward teaching. This phrase suggests that teaching goes beyond delivering knowledge, which was a common belief among all the participants. This is to say that their perceptions about the teacher's role is not just limited to delivering knowledge but to create and facilitate the conditions in which knowledge is acquired. Novice teachers highlighted many characteristics regarding their perceptions of a good teacher such as, "flexibility, sensitivity, sense of humour, knowledgeable, motivator, facilitator and innovative".

These positive characteristics are important in their understanding of who they are and who they wish to become. As was shown in the previous section, early-career teachers were influenced by a particular teacher during their study journey, and these characteristics derived from observing their previous teachers. The professional attributes witnessed throughout their own schooling were often replicated and applied in their teaching practices. Dihia, for example, clarified her views about the teaching methods she adopted, through the memories of her previous teacher who used to focus on developing learners' thinking. She said,

In the exam, even the book is in front of us but the answers are not there they are in your mind". (Dihia, Intv 1)

Over time, these characteristics were reinforced within herself and were reflected in her behaviour as a teacher. In other words, Dihia' belief that giving space to her learners to share their thoughts even if they are not related to the topic shows the influence of her previous teacher. She said:

I do let my learners give their critical thinking I do not impose my way on them. Almost all of the time I let them give me their comments even though it is not related to my lesson I just try to understand their thinking" (Dihia, Intv 1)

By integrating and adopting the characteristics of a good teacher, as they perceived them to be, into their teaching persona, the participants were strengthening their understanding of the profession. Their observations and reflections on what they believe a good teacher is, shaped their self-concepts of themselves as teachers. Their major priority was often to create and nurture a good relationship with their learners.

After the experience of taking the role of a teacher during the practicum, Sonia reinforced her beliefs about the role of a teacher in building good relationships with students. In the entry interview, Sonia provided insights into her teaching philosophy. She seemed to have a clear notion of herself and of who she wants to become. Her critiques of other teachers and the Algerian pedagogy, in general, shows an awareness of what she wants to adopt in her teaching and what she wants to surpass.

I feel I am different because I don't want to become a slave of the Algerian context, you do not have to touch the learner, do not give too much, you need to be a teacher it is forbidden to be close to the learner....I don't do that, I do tell them stories, I do motivate them, I do fall dawn on purpose to make them laugh .... I do buy gifts for them I love them so much. I want them to trust me I don't want to be a teacher giving knowledge because knowledge is everywhere but where are teachers (Sonia, Intv 1)

In the exit interview, Sonia provided additional information about her relationship with her students. Teaching for Sonia was about the care and the interpersonal support she provided to

her learners. Her teaching philosophy is evolving around the idea of caring and understanding learners. For her, a teacher should be an “open-minded” professional whose responsibility goes beyond the pedagogical duties “I don’t want to be just a teacher chalk and talk it is more than this”. The extract below shows her full awareness about the meaning of being teacher.

I am playing the role of the poor and I am poor, I am playing the role of a rich,  
I am playing the role of Christian, I am playing the role of a Muslim and I am  
Muslim but I am playing the role of being open-minded too much..... (Sonia  
Intv 1)

Her use of the metaphorical expressions ‘Christian, Muslim, poor and rich’ show her understanding that a teacher should be an expert in various aspects. Moreover, these explanations of the role of a teacher as more than a knowledge giver seem to have a great impact on her professional identity. The way she views herself is not only limited to delivering the message to her students, teaching for her is more than that. The findings in relation to teacher-student relationships and its impact on novice teacher identities are further discussed in other chapters.

Other participants saw the purpose of teaching as an opportunity to focus on the personal values. Kahina, for instance, stated a clear belief of what she considered her role "I am more of an educator in my class each time I give them (her students) moral lessons". In the extract below from the interview, Kahina seems to attach huge importance to forming learners' identities who would be able to deal with their lives in general.

I want them to have a strong personality. I tell them do not give up....each time  
I tell them you have to know what you want and what you do not

Similarly, Imene discussed the importance of inspiring and influencing her learners by telling them motivational stories of previous weak learners who succeeded in their careers. She viewed teaching as a "mission" that she needs to accomplish (Korthagen 2004).

I want them to see me as their model... I try to motivate them all the time and I try to tell them stories of others.... Sometimes I tell them fake stories in order to motivate them to learn. (Imene, Intv 1)

This section looked at the connection between teachers' beliefs and their identities development. Early-career teachers constructed their views and beliefs about teaching through their personal histories. Their teaching philosophies were constructed around the idea of building good relationships with their students as well as teaching them how to be good citizens before being good learners. These elements are going to be discussed further in the next two chapters.

## **5.5 Chapter summary**

This chapter has discussed the complex stories behind NQTs' decision to join the profession. The findings highlighted in this chapter showed that early career teachers' had a clear decision about their future selves before joining the profession. Their identifications with their families, former teacher and the love of the job were among the motivators which oriented them toward building a career in English language teaching. In addition to that, social discourses regarding the role of women in society dominated female participants' decision to teach. It was also found in this chapter that the teaching practice was a place of strengthening a teacher identity through interaction with colleagues and exercising their agency. Though some NQTs stated that they did not have a space to teach the way they wanted, they did not consider to leave the profession as was found in some studies (Hong, 2010).

Thus central to the findings in this chapter is the idea that the journey of becoming a teacher is a continuum process which starts before joining the teaching profession as imagined identities (Xu 2012). These identities are then reconstructed through a process of negotiating the meaning of

their experiences.

## **Chapter 06: Challenges in the struggle to construct a professional identity**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter I considered findings from my research in relation to participants' identification with teaching and its influence on their professional identity construction. In the light of this chapter, I consider findings from novice teachers' interviews as well as their reflections with regards to the struggles and challenges they encountered during their initial phase of teaching. These challenges though are not particular to novice teachers, for instance: the status of teachers which concerns both experienced and novice teachers, affected their motivation to teach as well as the way they talked about themselves. This situation, however, did not last long as novice teachers began to familiarize with their work they could overcome these troubles. In other words, both self-support and community support (see chapter 7) facilitated the process of transition from students to full time teachers and forged novice teachers' professional identity (Izadinia, 2014). As a result, novice teachers developed multiple identities and usually conflicting identities, which existed in an unstable state of construction and re-construction. Findings of the present study highlight some factors that influenced the development of early-career teachers' professional identities. The following section examines these factors and sheds light on its implication for their professional growth as well as their teaching practices. The themes that emerged from my research are: classroom management issues and disruptive students' behaviour, teachers' status, teaching conditions and ethical differences. In the following section I illustrate the impact of recognition on early-career teachers' selves.

## **6.2 The impact of society's view on novice teacher identity**

Novice teachers in this study indicated a lack of recognition according to their perception of how others from non-educational contexts see them. They claimed that there was a decrease in the status and an absence of respect and recognition of teachers within the Algerian context. Consequently, this impacted on novice teachers' emotions and attitudes toward teaching.

The view of a low status was further enhanced during the strike in 2016. During my fieldwork, teachers in both middle and secondary schools were on strike. Some of the early career teachers

joined the strike while others did not. The reasons for the strike were numerous and among them the changes that the Ministry of education has made in terms of the retirement conditions and the reduction of teachers' holidays.

Participants in this study experienced a reality shock (Veenman, 1984) between their beliefs about the highest position they attributed to teachers and the low status they actually have in society. They believed that there was a shift in the position and the status of teachers in society when compared to the time they were students. Ali said: “our generation witnessed that change we used to respect our teachers and we are still respecting them till now, but now in your classroom, you are not respected” (Ali, Intv 3). Furthermore, as discussed in the previous chapter, early-career teachers’ values and moral purposes underpinned their decisions and motivations to teach. Experiencing a lack of respect and being recognised as “materialistic individuals” (Ali, Intv 1) was like an insult for novice teachers. In a meeting with parents, Ali felt deceived by the way parents behaved with teachers as he positioned the role of a teacher in an equal way with a parent. Ali left the meeting because he “was not respected as a teacher” (Ali, Intv 2). The extract below from Ali’s interview highlights the findings.

Lately, there was a strike on the behalf of the students and they were complaining about the bad treatment of the teachers toward them....when parents were asked to come for a meeting, they were aggressively attacking us (teachers). I said how come a teacher who is an educator and who is at the same level as a parent is being assaulted this way by a parent this is weird...I felt this is not my place (Ali, Interview 1).

Findings also suggest that Ali began to question his alignment with teaching “I felt this is not my place” and at some point regretted the fact of joining the profession. It seems from the data that Ali’s contact with parents resulted in what Pennington (2016) called “identity stress” or “identity

crisis” in which a person “feels unsure about her/his identity and questions who she/he is” Pennington (2016, p.7). This identity could be achieved by the rejection or acceptance of others. In this case, parents’ mistreatment impacted on Ali’s perception of himself. His identity is open to change as he started to reflect on this situation as is shown in the extract below.

I am really disappointed by how worst our educational system has gone...we became no more knowledge giver but rather subject of criticism. Teachers are seen like only people who seek for money because of the strike mainly. Students do not anymore owe you respect...this is not teaching this is as if you are in the kindergarten .... (Ali, Intv 1)

He then further discussed the view of teachers as people who seek for money and believed that some teachers in his institution think this way as they only discuss matters related to money. In the extract below, Ali projects an understanding that teachers should be devoting more importance to knowledge and research rather than focusing on income.

When I am in the teachers’ room I feel that some teachers have really to do with this view because they do not discuss academic aspects they just discuss the dualities of common life and money (Ali, Intv 1)

Moreover, most of the participants in this study used expressions like "enemies” (Mellissa) and “materialistic individuals” (Ali) to unveil the perceptions held by the public sphere. It is apparent from the data that novice teachers' use of such expressions derived from the lack of respect that they witnessed during the strike. While claiming for their rights, teachers were arrested and treated like "drug dealers and criminal" (Dihia, Intv 3). Though early-career teachers clearly explained that they are comfortable in joining the teaching community, they also expressed an urge to distinguish themselves from the perception they felt to be held by outsiders. Mellissa's comment below illustrates the findings.

I do not like to think that my motivation is related to society because as you know that parents and society as a whole do not have a good picture about teachers. They do not see those teachers as noble people they see us as enemies. (Mellissa, Intv 3)

Unlike Ali who seemed to be disappointed by the views of the parents, Mellissa tried to separate and distance her motivation from these negative views as she asserted above. Thus, dissatisfaction with these situations did not impinge on her teaching practice, commitment or even on how she viewed herself as a teacher.

This section looked at the views surrounding teachers in the Algerian context. It particularly examined the low status of teachers and its effect on early-career teachers' professional identities. Despite the fact that early career teachers consider the future of teachers in Algeria as a "question mark" (Amel, Intv 3), "going to hell" (Thilleli, Intv 3) and goes from "worst to worst" (Samir, Intv 3) they still work hard and try to contribute to the education in Algeria as a whole (see section 7.3.1). Novice teachers were shaping their professional identities through the conflicting situation they were experiencing at the time they joined teaching. While some novice teachers expressed disappointment regarding the status accorded to teachers in their context as was shown in the example of Ali, others preferred to overcome this situation by distancing themselves from the society's view as was shown in Mellissa's example. In the next chapter, I discuss how they overcame those troubles and found new ways to reach who they want to become.

### **6.3. Issues of classroom management and disruptive students' behaviour**

All the participants in this study experienced various troubles and challenges during their first-year of teaching. While students' disruption was a common problem for early-career teachers, second-year teachers were more concerned with the issue of recognition and belonging to their school culture (see section 6.4). In this section, I first examine the effect of classroom

management on novice teachers' identity development. Then, I move on to highlight the impact of lack of support from the administration [principal and supervisors] on novice teachers' professional identities. Finally, I provide examples of the various ways novice teachers adapted to face and overcome the struggles mentioned in this section.

To begin with, the research findings indicated that out of nine participants, six highlighted that ill-disciplined students was a disconcerting challenge and acknowledged that their weaknesses in teaching were more related to this issue. They reported various forms of disruption including inappropriate language within the classroom (Thilleli, Intv 2), lack of respect (Ali, Intv 2), low-proficiency level (Salima Intv 2, Fatima Intv 2), lack of engagement (Mellissa Intv 2, Amel Intv 2). These examples of disruption caused a high level of frustration and disappointment among novice teachers as is evident in their interviews and reflections. The following extract from Thilleli's interview highlights the findings.

I experienced some situations that make me deceived and I feel demotivated and do not want to work anymore. To overcome this a teacher should be strong and I am not that kind of a person I am very sensitive and facing this situation makes me feel demotivated and somehow want to leave the work. (Thilleli, Intv 2)

It is clear from the above extract that a teacher identity, emotion and motivation to work are interrelated. Emotions are part of teacher identity and are socially constructed through interactions with students, colleagues and administrators (Hong, 2010). In the case of Thilleli, the negative emotion she experienced affected her beliefs about teaching and started to think about leaving the job. This also affected her professional identity (Hong, 2010). Thilleli seemed to be experiencing an identity crisis in terms of how she sees herself as a sensitive person and the need to be somehow different and project a tougher persona in the classroom in order to maintain students' discipline, which opposes with her own personal style. Similarly, Amel

believed that teaching requires a teacher to have a "strong personality" (Amel, Intv 2). Thus, according to both participants, the construction of professional identity may involve constructing an identity, which might addle or conflict with teachers own personalities.

Both Ali and Thilleli faced problems of respect within their classes. Ali reflected on an incident when a student in his class used a mobile phone. When He refused to give her the phone back and informed her that she will collect it after the weekend, the student yelled "*Jamais*" [French word meaning never but used in this context as synonymous to impossible]. Ali reported feeling vulnerable "I could hardly retain myself from slapping her because that way was very humiliating to me" (Ali, Intv 2). Similarly, Thilleli experienced a lack of respect in terms of students using inappropriate language while talking to her. In the extract below Thilleli described how she felt when a student talked to her inappropriately.

I would say that classroom management is the grand concern for new teachers. I would talk about my third year class, which has the issue of discipline. Most of them are not disciplined. During one of my sessions in the classroom, I have experienced and faced a difficult situation with one of my pupils who misbehaved and said inappropriate words to me. I was shocked at that time and I did not expect something like that and I did not know how to react and to deal with such issue. (Thilleli, reflection)

As is shown in this study, early-career teachers measured their success and development in teaching through their personal commitment to the teaching practice (see chapter 7 for further discussion). In addition to that, students' feedback and relationships with both students and colleagues were also identified in the data as significant attributes that identify individuals as good and successful teachers. By the same token, any failure in managing students' behaviour and raising their interest to learning the language impacted badly on both their motivation to teach and emotional state "I felt like sad and was demotivated me to finish the lesson" (Thilleli,

Intv 2).

Moreover, students' behaviour and lack of discipline also impacted on the way beginning teachers identified themselves in relation to their teaching. Mellissa for instance showed a closer link between her self-image as a teacher and students' discipline. When asked to describe her feelings about being a teacher, Mellissa said:

I can answer this question into two parts. When I talk about teaching with my first year students, it seems an amazing thing. They are good students they are working hard, they are making great homework and great projects ... They are well disciplined they participate they are just great. So teaching with first year students is an amazing job. But with third year students with lack of discipline and noise and being obliged to scream in order to make sure that my voice can be heard from the back of the classroom since they are overcrowded it is really something tiring and demotivating and makes me hate teaching. (Mellissa Intv 2)

Data here suggests that though novice teachers in this study strongly identified with their students they also wanted to be taken seriously. Thus, ill-disciplined students affected teachers' enthusiasm to teach and reduced their love and passion toward the profession (Salifu, 2013) which then impedes their professional identity construction.

After discussing the issue of students' behaviour, I now turn to discuss the role of the administration with regard to teachers' identity. Novice teachers attributed their struggle to manage students' behaviour to their administrations [the head of school and supervisors]. The common argument reported by novice teachers was the lack of assistance and support provided to them in their institutions. They claimed that whenever they suspend a student from their classes the administration would not react and contact their parents instead, in some cases, they ask them to stay in the administration until the hour of that teacher is over. The comment of

Mellissa was typical of the five other beginning teachers who raised this concern.

Administration is not really strict they are not really helping us whenever you punish someone by sending him to the administration they make him sit in a chair for one hour, having rest using his mobile and chatting on Facebook for one hour then he goes back to his classroom as nothing happened. Whenever I send someone to the administration it means I need him to be punished, this is it but they are not punishing them... I think we need support from the administration they are not really doing their job (Mellissa, Intv 3).

The power relationship between the principal and teachers was apparent in the data. Further discussion would be considered in the section (6.3.1). Ali described the relationship between teachers and administration as "Tom and Jerry" show (Ali, Intv 2). His use of the metaphorical expression "Tom and Jerry" shows the conflicting relationship between teachers and administration. He believed that the headmaster does not take into consideration teachers' views "whatever teachers say it was denied by the administration" (Ali, Intv 3). In addition to that, Ali in his reflection provided additional insight into the relationship between teachers and administration.

I begin to feel sorry regarding the relationship between teachers and the administration. It's too conflicting and complex. I also noticed that we novice teachers were not seen as fully responsible. For the administration as well as teachers, we are still believed to be in need of assistance from others. I am personally encouraged by my colleagues to do what I myself see as appropriate (Ali, Reflection)

It is apparent from the above extract that Ali was dealing with issues of recognition particularly in terms of the administration. In other words, Ali did not feel a sense of belonging to the whole

school. However, in the comment “do what I myself see appropriate...encouraged by my colleagues”, Ali’s strong sense of individual identity and the collegial support helped him to survive and overcome the troubles of recognition caused by the administration.

In other cases and with regard to the lack of support from supervisors, Amel complained about the absence of assistance concerning students' discipline "when you ask a student to go out they [supervisors] send them back to the classroom" (Amel, Intv 3). Amel considered this behaviour as inappropriate as she claimed that students' would not respect her. She said:

I told them next time when I send someone please do not tell him to come back because students won't respect me in this way. (Amel, Intv 3)

Data here suggests that Amel's sense of identity as someone who can maintain discipline in her classroom was threatened at a very vulnerable stage in her professional development.

Finally, in terms of managing disruptive students' behaviour novice teachers stressed on the importance of implementing technology in their classes. As Mellissa affirmed

I have alternatives, I have ways to teach in a better way but the problem is that they are not available now I cannot use them....everything is related to ICTs and using data show (projectors) (Mellissa, Intv 2)

Despite these concerns, some novice teachers employed specific strategies to minimise the problems of students' discipline. These strategies included building good relationships with students as Thilleli explained, "I try several time to talk to him alone [her learner] because I do not like to embarrass him in front of the pupils" (Thilleli, Intv 2). In addition to that, accepting the use of the required punishment like writing report to parents, as Mellissa said, "I know that punishment is not the right thing to do.... But it is the only solution left". (Mellissa, Intv 2).

To sum up, constructing a professional identity for new teachers in this study is closely bound to

the issue of gaining the respect of students and their ability to exercise authority in order to maintain classroom discipline. Novice teachers worried because they did not only find this aspect of their work difficult, but also because they felt that the administration (e.g. the supervisors) were not supporting them in their efforts (by not punishing the students adequately in their view). Thus, novice teachers had to deal with this issue on their own ways. Their ability to do so becomes a mark of success, and the failure to do so can lead to doubts about their fitness for the job, as the interviews with Mellissa and Thilleli show. The data shows that the view of a ‘teacher as an authority figure’ who needs to be respected by his/her students is quite an interesting, and very understandable, facet of some of the novice teachers’ sense of their identity as they experience the challenges of teaching.

### **6.3.1 Power relations and emotional resilience (Illustrative examples)**

Following the above discussion on the conflicting relations between teachers and institutions, this section considers the position of novice teachers within their institutions in the light of these conflicts. This section shows how novice teachers demonstrated a sense of resilience toward certain struggles. Three novice teachers in this study reported having problematic relationships with their head of schools. This section will shed light on how these female teachers reacted to these situations.

During a meeting organised by colleagues in order to complain about the timetables, Mellissa had an argument with the head of the school for opposing his way of structuring the timetable. When Mellissa's colleagues handed back their timetables, she did the same thing as an “act of solidarity” with the other teachers (Mellissa, Intv 2). She explained that her headmaster questioned her professional decision as a new teacher and told her “you are novice teacher and you do not know anything” (Mellissa, reflection). Telling her this in front of her colleagues, made Mellissa upset and feeling down. She said:

I really felt sorry for myself because I really know maybe better than him... it's something obvious it's something crystal clear that my timetable was not good. So he was not supposed to tell me you don't know anything and you're a novice teacher. This is a humiliation in front of other teachers because we had a meeting. I felt ashamed and sorry. (Mellissa, Intv 2)

Despite the fact that this incident created a negative emotion at that time in the way Mellissa recognised herself, she felt the urge to share her views regarding the headmaster's response.

I could not stay quiet I felt in a great need to talk and to pour my anger on him. I said "since I'm a novice teacher like you're saying so I'm supposed to follow the majority of teachers"...I know that I'm a novice teacher and I don't have the right to complain ... but I did it as an act of solidarity... I am not supposed to be on the side of the headmaster, I am supposed to be on the side of teachers (Mellissa, Intv 2)

The data here suggests that there is a kind of hierarchical structure within the institution, where teachers align themselves with their colleagues rather than with the head of school. In other words, Mellissa's dispute with the principal shows a strong act of projecting her identity as belonging to a particular community, which in her case is her colleagues. Moreover, the last two lines of Mellissa's quote reveal the conflicting relation between the headmaster and teachers. This kind of power relation might become a threat for novice teachers' identities and could restrict them from sharing their views and exercising their autonomy. Particularly in the case of Mellissa, who did not feel herself at the beginning part of the school community (see section, 7.2.1.1).

In a different scenario, Dihia reported that it was common for the headmaster in her school to visit teachers and observe their teaching, particularly when they first begun working at school. Dihia's principal and another English teacher attended her class, which was about the exam

correction. Dihia planned to make her learners correct their own mistakes; however, she had to change the plan, as her learners were not comfortable with the presence of the headmaster

I wanted my learners to come to the board and to correct themselves but when he came, I changed my programme. I had to stand up and write everything (Dihia, Intv 2).

After the lesson was over, Dihia had a meeting with both the English teacher and the principal. The remarks provided by her principal, as Dihia stated were not helpful as he focused on tiny things related to writing the *date and the use of the abbreviations*. Dihia was "annoyed" as she was expecting him to reward her and provide her with constructive feedback on her teaching. She said:

I was waiting to tell me about my interaction with the learners how I responded to them and how I rewarded them by saying good, very good. He did not tell me anything about this but my inspector on the contrary insisted on this... The most important thing for him [the principal] was the date and the abbreviation... He annoyed me. (Dihia, Intv 2)

Dihia was hoping to learn from her headmaster, who was a former English teacher "as a novice teacher he had to talk about things that can help me in my lesson" (Dihia, Intv 2). Data here suggests that principal's negative feedback and lack of professional encouragement could have a strong effect on how teachers perceive themselves and their teaching (Mann and Tang, 2012).

Finally, Thilleli wanted to take part in a PhD test organised by her previous university in order to carry on her studies. However, when she asked her headmaster for a permission, he refused her request and asked her to choose between her job and the contest. Thilleli was disappointed "I was crying" (Thilleli, Intv3). In the extract below from her reflection, Thilleli reflected on this incident.

Another unexpected situation which happened to me was when I wanted to subscribe to pass the PhD contest. I was so excited to do higher studies in my field which is language science and didactics but what surprised me was that the headmaster of the school faced me with his rejection of my request to go and pass the exam. Even though I am protected by law he told me to choose between my work and doing higher studies I was really disappointed because this studies will only help me to develop my skills and competencies as an EFL teacher (Thilleli, reflection)

As is shown in the above extract, Thilleli believes that furthering education is a sign of professionalism. Though the headmaster refused to support her, she managed to find a way to take the exam without telling the headmaster "I visited a doctor and asked for a sick leave" that she later on presented to her school. Data here suggests that the teacher was willing to better herself and work on the aspects that she believes can add new knowledge to her.

In summary, this section demonstrated the power relation between the school leaders and novice teachers. The three examples given in this section explain the problematic issues that some teachers had to deal with in their quest for identity. This shows that re-constructing a teacher identity involves struggle and emotional resilience.

#### **6.4. Managing cultural differences and looking for a sense of belonging: case study.**

This section discusses the self-perception and reaction of one young female teacher regarding the cultural differences she experienced during her first year as an English teacher in a small Arab village. I have used the term "case study" to show that the data in this section is drawn exclusively from Kahina. Other examples of case studies are found in the next chapter. As explained in the methodology chapter, participants in this study are both first-year and second-year teachers. All the participants of the second-year taught in Arab villages. They all mentioned that students did not like foreign languages as they considered these languages as "Jewish

languages” (Kahina, Interview) and its natives as “colonisers” (Safia Interview).

Even though teaching in an Arab village was a different and a tough experience for second-year teachers in this study, Kahina was the only teacher who experienced humiliation and marginalization within the society as a whole and the school in particular. By sharing with me her experience in both school and society, Kahina revealed how she negotiated her beliefs, values and identity as a teacher and as a person. In this section, I explain how Kahina overcame this situation and became the person she wanted to be. While, Mellissa, a first-year teacher, felt marginalised from her colleagues at school (see section 7.2.1.1), her case was different from Kahina as what happened to Mellissa related to her own positioning as a trainee teacher which hindered her from enacting her teacher identity.

Kahina is a Berber female teacher who speaks “Kabyle language” which is one of the dialects of Tamazight (see section 1.6). After she passed the teachers’ examination, Kahina was allocated to teach in an Arab school. One of the tricky situations she faced was the fact of being lonely in that place: “the first challenge was to go far from home and stay there the whole week and come back just during the weekend” (Kahina, Interview). Unlike other countries in the world, where females can live separately from their families, in Algeria females do not move out to live in separate houses unless they are married or in other cases during their university studies where they stay in females’ accommodation.

Another challenge that Kahina faced was the fact of being the only female who is not wearing hijab in an unfamiliar context. In Islam Hijab is mandatory however, not all females wear hijab in the Algerian context and Kahina was one of them. She was not respected by the society, her students and her colleagues. All of them treated her badly and criticised her for not wearing hijab. The extract below from Kahina’s interview shows the finding.

To be between Arab people who were judging me because I was not wearing hijab.... I can say segregation, marginalised because I am not wearing veil. Even at school, they have a bad idea about those who do not wear veil. I was the only woman at school without veil... they did not respect me at all, I faced so many difficulties with my learners they dislike foreign languages... any time I go out to buy something they throw stones on me (Kahina, Interview)

The extract here suggests that in an unfamiliar environment, Kahina experienced threats and insecurity which might have resulted in an "identity crisis" (Pennington, 2016). The school community did not accept her and did not want to mutually engage with her. To be part of that community Kahina needed to change her appearance as she stood out as unusual in that community "I changed my way of clothing...I tied my hair, I opted for large clothes and I do not put make-up" (Kahina, Interview).

Furthermore, Kahina believed that she was treated differently from others within her school, as she is Berber. Her headmaster assigned her seven classes to teach and reduced her salary on days when she arrived late. In the extract below, Kahina shared her story.

I had seven classes because the headmaster marginalised me as I am Berber. I was working 24 hours and I had no free day... the headmaster was reducing my salary because each Sunday I do not arrive at 8:00 am as I lived far from the school (Kahina, Interview).

These troubles and challenges lead her to seek out a sense of belonging "I had to become like them or leave" (Kahina, Interview). Although she was a non-participant in her community (Wenger, 1998), Kahina tried to find a solution to become a member of that community. Through time, Kahina managed to gain the respect of people and colleagues in that context.

I have gained their [colleagues] respect and the situation became completely different, my pupils say "good morning" to me whenever they see me outside. But

as I said it was so hard (Kahina, Interview).

To sum up, Kahina's experience was difficult as she experienced rejection from the school culture as well as the society. She was devastated and she enacted different identities in her school and with her family "I was disappointed but when I go home I try to forget all what happened to me and become another person" (Kahina, Interview)

It seems from the data that cultural boundaries and ethnicity had an impact on teachers belonging to a particular community. This means that, in some cases becoming a full member of a particular community does not only entail sharing mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire (Wenger, 1998). It goes beyond that to encompass the cultural differences which includes race, gender and ethnicity. Kahina's individual identity pushed her forward to achieve her goals and make that place appropriate for her "I made my place there" (Kahina, Interview).

### **6.5. Working conditions and teacher identity construction**

Teaching conditions represent another reoccurring thread in novice teachers' interviews and journals. Working conditions might be seen as having and creating a positive atmosphere to teach. However, in this study I use this concept to cover both aspects of "physical and material environment" (Salifu, 2013, p .64). In this context, the physical environment includes gaining professional recognition from both students and colleagues. Further discussion on recognition and belonging will be considered in the next chapter (chapter 7). By material conditions, I refer to the availability of enough teaching and learning resources. Data reveals that these conditions impacted on novice teachers' identities. Each aspect is illustrated separately below with extracts from the data.

Most of the early-career teachers identified the limited use of resources as a challenge in their teaching. Both Ali and Dihia mentioned this struggle in their interviews. The extract below from

Ali's interview shows the finding.

I need to work more on innovation and creativity. This is not because of me as a teacher but because of the means, we are given in the school. When you go to the classroom and you find no socket for electric alimentation while you have already prepared something with data show you get discouraged. I started to be kind of a textbook slave.... I need to get rid of this behaviour. (Ali, Intv 1)

It seems from the data that Ali wanted to implement various methods and approaches to his teaching. However, the lack of resources inhibited his creativity and affected his professional identity. In other words, by adapting a particular method a teacher is projecting and enacting his teacher identity. These methods may vary from one teacher to another, as each individual is unique and each teacher presents his/her identity through his/her own understanding of the teaching philosophy. For this reason, a teacher who is required to teach according to a particular syllabus may experience an "identity stress" while trying to adapt the imposed constraints (Pennington 2016, p.9). It appears from the data that Ali experienced an "identity stress" as he presented his role as a "textbook slave" while trying to accommodate with the constraints. However, it would also appear that this struggle offered him an opportunity to think about new methods to solve this problem "I need to get rid of this behaviour".

In other cases, novice teachers claimed that being the youngest teachers at school was both an advantage and a disadvantage. For them being young means being "creative, active" (Amel, Intv 3), being treated in "a special way" (Ali, Intv 2) and being recognised as a "successful teacher" (Mellissa, Intv 3). Moreover, Thilleli made a clear distinction between being *young, incompetent and unexperienced*. In the extract below, Thilleli voices an understanding of the fundamental principles of being a teacher by refusing the idea of recognising a *new comer* as an *incompetent* individual in the professional community. She said:

Since I am a new teacher, I cannot compete with an experienced teacher...but even I am young and new I do not like to be seen as incompetent because there is a difference between being incompetent and unexperienced. If I do not have experience, it does not mean I am not competent in my field (Thilleli, Intv 3)

Data here suggests that although Thilleli shows a self-awareness about her position as a *new teacher*, she rejects the idea of being seen and recognised as *incompetent* just because she has not enough experience as her colleagues do. This means that, for her, identifying with teaching does not involve experience but knowledge of the field. Similarly, Dihia's struggle for recognition from her colleagues was apparent in her reflection.

In the domain [in teaching], I faced some challenges. I am the youngest teacher among many experienced ones. I have to work very hard to impose myself as a good teacher or as the best one among the others. This gave me a push to give the best of me to teach my learners. (Dihia, reflection)

It seems from the findings that the fact of being young might result in working hard to impose oneself within the community. Though both Thilleli and Dihia did not mention any feeling of rejection from their professional community, they both voiced a need to be recognised as a teacher. This might mean that novice teachers have a feeling of insecurity, which threatened their identities. This then pushed them to work harder and project their teacher identities to be accepted.

In addition to that, Dihia explained how she turned her fears from being seen by her students as a "very young teacher" to a strength. She reported that she was nervous and anxious during her first session. She said:

What I felt at the time I met my students was that I am very young and I seem

very young....I was scared that they would say: "she is very young and we can do everything we want"...but right from the beginning I set up rules for the whole year. (Dihia, Intv 1)

The fears that Dihia had when she first met her students vanished right after she projected a tougher personality and an adopted an authoritative figure.

To sum up, this section highlighted the role of the teaching conditions in the journey of becoming. Both physical and material conditions were apparent in the data. As I have explained throughout this chapter novice teachers identity was evolving and re-constructing through the obstacles and struggles they faced in their practice. Though the lack of resources hindered teachers' from being creative, it allowed them to explore other possibilities in teaching and develop their identities. Furthermore, the fact of being young also impacted on their recognition and their position within their schools. Early-career teachers accepted the idea that they are young and new to the field but they also refused to be seen as incompetent teachers.

#### **6.6. Lack of professional guidance**

Early-career teachers in this study complained about the lack of professional assistance. Professional guidance here refers to the challenges that novice teachers faced with regard to the limited academic guidance in their teaching. This section looks at the impact of the reform on middle school teachers' identities and the challenge of being the only English teacher at school.

The ministry of education launched a new reform in 2017 for middle school teachers. They designed a new curriculum for first year students only. According to the participants in this study, teachers in their institutions either novice or experienced had a limited knowledge about it. Thus, the Ministry of education planned a series of seminars to help teachers understand the objectives and aims of the new curriculum. Participants in this study (middle school teachers) claimed that the new curriculum is beneficial for both teachers and students. In the extract below Amel explains how she in effect enacts different identities with her two different classes' levels

New programme is a new preparation, a new thinking, a new creativity so when you do that you will feel yourself another teacher different from the old one of course. So I feel a difference when teaching my second year students and my first year students... (Amel, Intv 3)

As discussed in section (6.5) a teacher who feels restricted to a particular programme or syllabus could experience an identity stress. Similarly, Amel expressed the difference between teaching with a "complicated programme" (Amel, Intv 3) as the one of second year students, and working with a well-designed programme with "simple activities" like the new curriculum. The data suggests that the new programme provided an opportunity for Amel to enact her teacher identity using the methods and the approaches she wants. In other words, Amel provided a different image of herself whenever she teaches first year students and other levels. However, novice teachers also claimed that they were not well informed about the new programme. They reported that even their inspectors, who were in charge of the seminars, have little or limited knowledge about it. Thilleli said:

Let's be honest even experienced teachers do not have a lot of ideas about the second generation [the reform]. Even during seminars, inspectors were confused about the programme. I cannot tell much about second generation. I am empty minded (Thilleli, Intv 2).

Thilleli then elaborated more on the lack of tutoring. As illustrated in the extract below, Thilleli believed that as a new comer she needed more academic guidance from the inspector.

As a new EFL teacher and as a newcomer to the field of teaching I was supposed to do training sessions and workshops with the inspector... But unfortunately there was unexpected thing is that the inspector in charge of the training was always absent he didn't come at all and this shows the lack of responsibility and that he didn't take it as a serious work. (Thilleli, Reflection)

With regard to being the only English teacher at school, Fatima believed that teaching English for all the levels in her institution was challenging. She discussed the importance of collaborating with other English teachers with whom she shares the same repertoire (Wenger, 1998). She said:

We have some lessons that are difficult to do and I am alone I need some support I need someone to help me... at each time I deal with the difficult lesson I feel like I am not satisfied at all because I did not do my work perfectly. (Fatima, Intv2)

This extract shows the role of the community in developing a solid identity. Fatima felt unsatisfied with her work, as she could not discuss it with other English teachers. She further explained in the exit interview how "lucky" she was for being the only English teacher at her school. She said:

I was afraid at the beginning because I did not know how to deal with students... now I feel lucky because I use the ways and the methods I want and I did not need to use others [English teachers] methods. (Fatima, Intv 3)

Data suggests that Fatima started to feel confident toward her teaching and for being the only English teacher at her school as she could exercise her sense of autonomy by applying her own teaching methods without being obliged to reify them according to other teachers' perspective. In addition to that, the findings reveal the importance both personal identity and collective identity in teachers' journey of becoming.

This section discussed the role of the academic guidance in cultivating novice teachers' identities. It looked at the role of professional community in shaping teachers' identity (see chapter 07).

### **6.7. Chapter summary**

This chapter demonstrated the way novice teachers developed their identities through struggle. Students' behaviour was a common trouble that threatened early-career teachers' identities and reduced their motivation to teach. Moreover, the lack of support from the principals and supervisors influenced negatively on novice teachers growth. This chapter also illustrated the role of the sociocultural environment in identity construction. Society as whole and parents in particular had a direct effect on teachers' views of themselves. Despite the fact that these struggles affected on novice teachers identities, it at the same time helped them through negotiating those experiences (Wenger, 1998). In the next chapter I discuss the role of individuality and community in supporting and shaping novice teachers' identities to overcome these struggles and to build a solid identity.

## **Chapter 07: The role of individuality and community in constructing teachers' professional identity**

### **7.1. Introduction**

In the previous chapter, I provided findings in relation to professional identity re-construction in the light of NQTs' challenges and struggles. I now turn to findings related to the process of re-constructing professional identities within different school communities. I have argued that teacher professional identity is socially constructed and that teachers shape their professional identities through engaging in various professional communities (Wenger, 1998). However, my findings also pointed to the importance of individuality that drives early-career teachers to make decisions in their teaching practices, which often are not compatible with their communities. The identification with teaching (see chapter 5) that preceded novice teachers' decision to teach had a major impact on the various identities they projected in their schools. In other words, teachers' embedded beliefs and ideologies about who a teacher is and the role of a teacher, which they acquired during their study journey, were consciously adopted in their teaching. This is not, however, to deny the role of the teachers' communities and the importance of the social connection in professional identity construction. The professional communities in this study had an interesting role in terms of providing early-career teachers with psychological and emotional support (Mann and Tang, 2012). This means that novice teachers joined their communities but they were also keen to retain their individuality and develop their autonomy and sense of independence within their professional communities. This means that, though the participants in this study joined their communities and tried to fit in the school culture, they also kept their beliefs and ideologies, obtained from their identification period, as a basis for their teaching philosophy.

This chapter is organised into two main themes that emerged from interviews, novice teachers' reflections and researcher field notes. These themes are:

- Community membership and teachers' professional identities
- Being an Algerian EFL teacher: teachers as multiple role agents

These two themes lead to an understanding of the identity construction from two different perspectives: from the teacher as a member of the professional community and from the teacher as an individual agent playing multiple roles within the community by examining the role of the individual's self as the point of departure in constructing an identity. This would somehow contradict with the notion of COP, that views individuality as part of the social construction and perceives identity as a "process of their mutual construction" (Wenger 1998, p.146). Data then would shed light on the process of professional identity re-construction from participants' side and the community's perspective. The term agent will be discussed in details in section (7.3.2)

## **7.2 Community membership and teachers' professional identities**

This section considers teacher identity as (re) constructed through collectiveness, and consciousness of belonging to, or not belonging to, particular communities. Sociocultural perspectives perceive identity as a collective phenomenon. They emphasise the power of interaction and negotiation of meaning in developing an identity (Wenger 1998, Miller 2009). Thus teachers' identities are an ongoing process of interaction between individuals' personal experiences and the environment. It is a negotiation of one's history including values, beliefs and ideologies and one's current sociocultural and socio-historical context (Tsui 2007).

Novice teachers in this study, who joined the profession with a strong sense of agency and individuality, found themselves joining a different and pre-existing professional community in a position of newcomers. Within a community membership, members continuously create an identity by engaging and contributing to the practices of these communities. In this section, I explore the various professional communities that participants in this study felt, to a greater or lesser extent, part of. These communities encompass colleagues and students. Data also

highlighted other professional communities outside the school that had a significant role in shaping teachers' professional identities. These communities included alignment with broader communities such as virtual community, where participants maintained contact with their friends from the university through electronic communication and taking part in conferences and seminars.

### **7.2.1 Relationships and interaction with colleagues**

This section considers the formation of professional identity through interaction with colleagues. It looks at how novice teachers in this study formed and re-formed new positions through interactions with others inside their schools. Their responses to their environment identify their interpretations of their participation and experiences. The concept of "colleagues" in this section includes both fellow teachers and teachers of other subjects.

Early-career teachers demonstrated the complexity and challenges of belonging to existing communities. Stories extracted from interview data reveal that becoming a member of a community is not a smooth process. Though some participants were welcomed and accepted in the school community, others struggled to become part of that community as their expectations about teaching did not match with the realities of the school (see chapter 6). The following quote characterises the comment made by Amel:

In fact, I am disappointed because I did not imagine I will teach in such school.

What we have seen in Algiers and what we see now in school is totally different.

(Amel, Intv 3)

Thus, to overcome these challenges and feel part of the school community collegial support is considered an important aspect in this study. Some novice teachers described their relationships with others as being good and often limited to professional aspects "my colleagues are very nice...we have fun together we discuss professional matters ...." (Ali, Intv 3), however, other

NQTs had a strong relationship with their colleagues (see Dihia's extract below). Basically, these interactions occur in areas such as staffrooms. The staffroom of the school where teachers gather and talk with each other had a pivotal role in promoting a collaborative culture in which relationships with colleagues are built on trust and positive communication. During my visits to my participants' schools, I noticed that the physical setting of the furniture facilitated interaction with other colleagues (Mann and Tang, 2012). In both Thilleli and Dihia's schools, staffrooms were small with a table in the middle of the room where female teachers gathered.

All the female teachers were sitting together around the table and were talking to each other...they were all talking together and they were not forming groups instead they were talking about everything with each other (Researcher field note, Thilleli school)

Dihia also described the importance of the staffroom in developing relationships with her colleagues, stating that "...with colleagues sitting here [in the staffroom] around this table and drinking coffee (laughs) from 12 to 13:30 and chatting about personal and professional matters"(Dihia, Intv 2). However, In Salima's school, the staffroom was too large with a huge table in the middle which I believe hindered interaction with other colleagues. The extract below from my field notes shows the findings.

The staffroom is large and teachers were sitting in different places either separately or forming groups. There was not much communication between the teachers....the room was quiet (Researcher field note).

Data also suggests that early-career teachers in this study considered the staffroom as a place for learning. Ali mentioned being cautious in his relationships and interaction with others. Ali spent considerable time trying to understand the new landscape. He observed his colleagues' behaviour and interactions with each other to understand and find out more about the school culture.

I observe how my colleagues are dealing with each other, dealing with their students I am trying to observe every aspect in the school, the administration for example how does it work, how does it deal with teachers mainly, so in order not to be put in embarrassing situation I like to observe first and then act. (Ali, Intv 2)

Through the process of self-reflection and peripheral participation (Lave and Wenger, 1991) Ali learnt how to interact and behave with others and could accommodate to the new setting. These social interactions regulated what was accepted and appropriate within a particular context and created opportunities for teachers to understand their positions as teachers. Therefore, Ali's colleagues contributed to how he learnt to behave as a teacher in his school. Similarly, Dihia's observation of another novice mathematics teacher increased her motivation to work harder and produce more. Connecting with someone with whom she shares the same experience helped her development "both of us are novice we share things". The extract below provides more information on Dihia's observations.

My colleagues, for example the teacher of mathematics she is working very hard and she gave me the inspiration to work from my heart. When I look at her correcting the copybooks for example doing everything so I do the same...all my colleagues are older than me so I don't see them working or preparing lesson plans because they did everything before. Seeing myself as the only teacher working all the time, searching for new thing, being tired and sometimes I cannot sleep at night if I don't prepare my lesson and seeing another one who is working like me so I will be fine (laughs). (Dihia, Intv 2)

Samir, on the other hand, felt professionally isolated from others. Being the only male teacher in his school limited his visits to the staffroom and thus limited his interaction with his colleagues.

When I started teaching in that middle school, I was the only male teacher there, so I often don't even enter to the teachers' room, but I get in [the staffroom] to write on the logbook or to check things in my lessons when there is not many teachers in the staffroom. But when they sent the teacher of mathematics and the sport's teacher (Males) I felt at ease, because I felt as if I have got company then we got used to meet in the teachers' room. (Samir, Reflection)

It might appear from the above extract that Samir did not feel a sense of belonging because he considered teaching as a gendered profession. However, from my personal knowledge of the Algerian context, I would say that Samir distanced himself from the female teachers by virtue of the culture and religion. This means that Samir was following the norms and traditions established by the Algerian culture. Isolating himself from the female teachers might be because of their status for example, married or engaged, which reduces the degree of interaction between the two genders. In addition to this, during my visits to Thilleli's school, I noticed that the male teacher was not frequently using the staffroom instead, he stays outside with other male staff members and the principal during his breaks.

The staffroom was full of teachers and most of them were females. There was only one male teacher and he left the room right after he dropped his bag  
(Researcher's field notes)

Moreover, the reciprocal dimensions of these relationships were highlighted in this study. Ali, for example, valued all the people he worked with. His colleagues and headmaster also aligned themselves with him in a similar way. The opportunity for teaching exam classes was a reflection of mutual alignment.

Today I asked the vice principal why I was given final year classes to teach. Her answer comforted me and made me proud as she said that they do trust ENS

[teachers college] graduates and have complete confidence on my competences.

(Ali, Reflection)

Affirmation from colleagues is highly valued. In some cases, early-career teachers felt more confident when their ideas were adopted by their colleagues who are more experienced than them. This made them feel that they contributed to their colleagues and provided affirmation that their relationship is reciprocal.

Concerning the professional side my colleagues choose my exams, ask me questions, I have been asked a question by a female teacher lately on whether this was right or wrong, she had consulted my opinion and this was very nice....since September till now some improvements were there thanks to positive or negative points..... I was pleased with teachers who accepted my comments. It was kind of I had a contribution. (Ali, Intv 2)

It is apparent from the data that this kind of encouragement and support made Ali feel part of the community and enabled him to fully engage in the relationship. Thus, Ali was affirmed by the feedback he received from his colleagues which might have helped him to assess and evaluate his teaching capacities.

These relationships were further developed and maintained when colleagues were happy to assess early career teachers' way of teaching through attending their classes and providing them with feedback. Reflecting on her experience, Safia mentioned the importance of receiving feedback from more experienced teachers. Though having someone to observe her was intimidating, it helped her ameliorate her way of teaching.

When you observe someone you will pay attention to the things that you used to do like, for example, how to teach vocabulary but once you are observed you will not be comfortable. (Safia, Interview)

Finally, inspectors' feedback had great importance in the development of novice teachers' professional identities. During my first meeting with Dihia, she was very pleased with the feedback and the comments provided by her inspector. Similarly Ali, also mentioned that his inspector was pleased with his work especially that he is teaching in a "modern way". Such affirmations impacted on their motivation to teach and on their sense of confidence.

In summary, novice teachers experienced positive and supportive school culture which included good communication with colleagues. These interactions had positive outcomes on their abilities to cope with different challenges inside the school (see chapter 6). These interactions also helped them to make sense of their teaching by observing and comparing it to other colleagues.

#### **7.2.1.1 Case study: "Trainee is just a title it is not who you are"**

In light of the previous comment, a teacher's sense of identity might be developed through acceptance and belonging to school communities. "Trainee is just a title it is not who you are" is a phrase used by Mellissa while reflecting on her relationships with her colleagues which seems to capture the essence of belonging. It shows a degree of recognition from her colleagues which fostered her sense of belonging. I chose Mellissa as an example to provide more illustrations on the influence that belonging might have on teachers' identities. Mellissa is a novice secondary-school teacher. Unlike other participants in this study who felt excited to meet their learners, Mellissa expressed insecurity and lack of confidence in her teaching capacities, which resulted in a breakdown one day before meeting her students: "the first meeting with my students, I remember that I was so nervous and I was crying the whole night". Her parents, who are teachers, helped her to overcome this situation and feel comfortable.

My parents started giving me pieces of advice about how to deal with students in the first time so they were telling me about their experiences and the thing that influenced them the most during each first meeting with their students and I loved

it. We laughed a lot and it was fine. The first meeting with my students was a great one. (Mellissa, Intv 1)

This feeling of insecurity and self-doubt developed more once Mellissa met with her colleagues. Her perception of herself as a "trainee" isolated her from others. She experienced a shift in her identity through the support she received from all teachers at school. She struggled to identify herself with other teachers at school and she felt lonely and marginalised as she thought that she did not belong to that community. Mellissa suggested that the roots of her confusion might be her own self and her age.

Well, at the beginning I used to feel this way but nothing happened. It was just a feeling I had without any reason. I was feeling that I am isolated from them and that I'm not part of them because they are older than me so the only one who has less experience than me has 14 or 15 years of experience... There is a big gap between our ages. I used to feel alone I was even afraid talking to them because I was afraid they would say this is a childish teacher (laughs). Because I am too young so maybe they will find my ideas as childish. (Mellissa, Intv 3)

Data here highlights the destabilised emotional side of Mellissa during her first months of teaching and more particularly the high degree of self-doubt, confusion and uncertainty. The fact of being young and inexperienced made her think that she has no position within the school and she has to "agree with the majority of teachers" concerning school matters. The findings also suggest that Mellissa needed external help and support to develop her self-image as a teacher. In social identity theory, Turner (1987) asserted that the self can categorise or classify itself in relation to other social categories and this process is called self-categorization which affects the development of identity. Based on this theory, it can be argued that Mellissa failed to classify and categorise herself among her colleagues within her institution. In other words, having a

difficulty of recognising her rights as a teacher prevented her to classify herself within the teachers' community and thus impeded the process of identity formation.

Over time, her frustrations decreased as her colleagues encouraged her and provided her with support through both formal and informal conversations. The following extract demonstrates an example of an informal discussion that took place in the staffroom.

Whenever I go to ask them I say " I am just a trainee I am not a teacher yet" they say "no you are a teacher you are like us...trainee is just a title it's not who you are".... They encouraged me....I was feeling like I do not have the same rights like other teachers....I was feeling like I'm still a student especially that I don't have the salary (laughs). (Mellissa, Intv 2)

Mellissa made an interesting point in the above extract. The label of "trainee" that she assigned for herself derived from her beliefs about identification. For her to be identified and aligned with others she needed to share things with them or what Wenger (1998) called a shared repertoire. Given the fact that she was not paid for her teaching yet, Mellissa considered herself as an outsider. The findings here highlight the importance of the shared repertoire as an element in developing a sense of professional identity. However, interacting with her colleagues and making connections increased Mellissa's level of confidence and awareness about her rights and her position at school. Her initial ideas about herself as a "trainee" started to vanish once she engaged in more formal discussions with other colleagues. In her reflections, Mellissa provided formal conversation that occurred during a school meeting. In the following extract, Mellissa's colleagues provided her with opportunities to discuss her opinions during school meetings.

I loved it when they [her colleagues] were giving me the opportunity to talk first about my remarks about the class as a whole, the results, behavior and students' performance, since I was the youngest one I felt like they wanted to evaluate my

critical thinking...I loved it when they agreed with me about most of the remarks and critics (Mellissa, Reflection)

It is apparent from the data that Mellissa was able to feel part of the community and develop her perception of her self-image as a teacher. She became more confident and stronger which enabled her to feel more empowered "the fears have disappeared, I'm not afraid now of my reactions I'm not afraid of what others think of me and I'm not afraid of failing sometimes" (Mellissa, Intv 2). This suggests that the shaping of a professional identity takes place as a result of interactions with other members of the school community. Mellissa's recognition that she is part of the community and her realisation that she is no longer a "trainee" is likely to contribute to a different construction of herself as a teacher.

I mean whenever I think of myself as a trainee I feel like I don't have rights at all but whenever they say "you're a teacher like us" it makes me feel strong because it's like we are all the same. For example, when I'm a trainee I feel like I'm alone they are all teachers they are all been confirmed it's just me the trainee it's really a bad feeling. Feeling alone like I don't have the same right. (Mellissa, Intv 2)

It seems that Mellissa might have developed her identity and more particularly her self-image as a teacher. At the beginning, Mellissa was referring to herself as a "trainee" and a "student". However, the encouragement she received from her colleagues strengthened her perceptions of herself as a teacher and started to identify with other teachers.

### **7.2.2 Alignment with broader communities**

In the previous section, I described the role of cooperating colleagues, sharing knowledge and supportive relationships in sustaining and developing novice teachers' professional identities. In this section, I consider other connections that NQTs established beyond their immediate teaching context which are: virtual community, participating in conferences and workshops, and attending

seminars which are organised by their institutions. This relates to the concept of alignment described by Wenger (1998). Borrowing the words of Wenger (1998, p.179) these alignments are of huge importance in developing an identity, as novice teachers "become part of something big and do what it takes to play their parts".

To begin with, early-career teachers in this study considered online networking as another avenue to debrief about aspects related to their work. For teachers who struggled to make connections with others inside the school, Facebook was their alternative. Amel, for example, as mentioned in the previous section, struggled to collaborate with her colleagues as they used "old teaching methods" that were different from what she learnt at teachers' college. Facebook was her alternative for sharing ideas with her friends who are teachers.

All my friends are teachers each time we find something that we share between us.

In Facebook for example we have a group, we exchange ideas and lesson plans.

(Amel, Intv 2)

Despite the amount of encouragement and support that novice teachers received in their schools, they felt connected and supported by their online contacts as well. Dihia who described her colleagues as her "second family" also mentioned the importance of social media like Facebook in developing her teaching practice.

I am working especially with other teachers via social media like Facebook, I joined many teachers' group and they are very helpful especially one group I find many interesting things on how to teach, pictures all the visual aids that we should use especially for novice teachers its very good. (Dihia, Intv 1)

In other cases, the need to join social networking resulted from the lack of professional guidance as some early career teachers were the only English teachers in their schools. Samir, for

example, who joined teaching without any previous training, felt overwhelmed by the daily demands of the classroom, lack of time and commuting. These conditions made him think of leaving the profession.

In the first weeks, it was a little bit hard to me because I am teaching four levels (the whole middle school), so I was terribly mentally tired, even if it was only the beginning, I even thought about leaving teaching. (Samir, Reflection)

However, these ideas did not last long and started to disappear when Samir joined Facebook groups. He received the professional support that he lacked at his school.

In the first weeks, I was a little bit lost as if I'm walking with eyes blinded but now with time and thanks to Facebook (laughs) and other colleagues from other different regions I feel that I am better than I was in the first times. (Samir, Intv 3)

It seems from the data that social media played a crucial role in restoring novice teachers' confidence and sense of belonging to the profession when these were under threat as was the case with (Amel). Besides, these online communities extend Lave and Wenger's (1991) and Wenger's (1998) notion of peripheral participation and communities of practice to embrace participation in virtual communities. In other words, this space promotes interactions and reduces barriers between individuals. It is considered a professional community in which everyone has equal rights to join regardless of their gender (see section 8.6), their ethnicity (see section 6.4) and of their years of experience.

Moreover, in other cases, participants showed a high ambition toward teaching and willingness to develop their language proficiency and teaching capacities as Hamida said "I attend the different workshops delivered by the British Council and AELTT [Algerian English Teacher Training]"(Hamida, Interview). Similarly, Sonia reflected on the role of her personal initiative in

developing her sense of self. In the extract below, Sonia demonstrated an awareness of the importance of professional development for her job satisfaction and her sense of identity as a professional person. She positioned herself as a professional who needs to attend professional development courses and workshops.

I do go to Tlemcen to Constantine to Sahara [regions in Algeria] and I do attend pedagogical meetings... I learned so much... because we are building ourselves I don't want to die here, I want to go up there to bring something new to my learners (Sonia, Intv 1)

It appears from this extract that Sonia's commitment toward teaching is strong and her desire and ambition to become a better teacher are illustrated through her self-engagement in these activities. Though these regions are far from her hometown, Sonia's desire to contribute to her students and willingness to develop herself helped her to overcome these challenges. Sonia added that she works in the embassy and highlighted the importance of this experience in developing her sense of intercultural awareness. She said:

I am working in the embassy right now, this means that I am developing my language I am developing my teaching philosophy too...I am learning how to deal with other cultures because there [in the embassy] are Americans, British and Algerians. (Sonia, Intv 2)

The data here shows that language proficiency matters for Sonia, and her job in the embassy helped her to develop her language teacher identity. In addition to that Sonia, related the experience of being around other people from different cultures to her students within the classroom. For Sonia, working in the embassy is an opportunity which helped her to understand her students as she had "atheist and Christian learners" in her school.

On the other hand, inspectors also organised seminars to support NQTs in their journey of learning to teach. Most participants believed that the content of the seminars is not something new for them as they have already dealt with it in their universities. The extract below from Mellissa's reflection highlights the finding.

The inspector delivered a presentation about grammar in context I felt super happy because nothing of what she said was new to me I knew every single detail she mentioned because we have dealt with grammar in context in a very detailed way in ENS [Teachers' college] (Mellissa, Reflection)

Though the seminar did not add new knowledge for Mellissa, it strengthened and raised her confidence in her background knowledge "this made me feel like flying in cloud nine ...I don't know why but it seemed like feeling confident and knowledgeable about it" (Mellissa, Reflection). It also appeared from the data that these seminars were a site of developing critical thinking. In the example below it seems from the data that by assessing other teachers' presentations, Mellissa was able to develop her ideas regarding the characteristics of good teaching and to reflect on her beliefs and teaching philosophy. By doing that, her sense of professional identity was strengthened and shaped as she was able to clearly understand her views toward teaching which enabled her to position herself as a teacher.

one teacher brought her students and presented a MODAL lesson about passive and active voice for us. I hated the fact that the lesson was obviously prepared before ...it was obvious in the way her students gave answers ....her performance wasn't really that good because she didn't let time for students to write. She didn't take in consideration slow learners and the obstacles that might occur during the lesson. She gave a lesson where she over-used teaching materials videos and pictures. (Mellissa, Reflection)

Finally, these seminars were also a place for interacting with other teachers from different places, exchanging documents and ideas on how to teach.

We exchange some documents with other teachers like lesson plans and videos ...

I am still in contact with one teacher on Facebook we exchange lesson plan and ideas (Amel, Intv 2)

This section highlighted the importance of alignment with broader communities in developing novice teachers' professional identities. It also showed the degree of commitment and desire to become better teachers through self-engagement in various learning communities. Though NQTs experienced some difficulties within their school community (see chapter 6) their alignment with other COP which they undertook on their initiatives shows a willingness to look "beyond the boundaries of their community" Clarke (2008, p.92) and to exercise their sense of agency.

### **7.2.3 Interaction and relationships with students**

The relationship between teachers and their students is perhaps the most important social interaction that affects their professional identities. In this study, all beginning teachers reported the importance of building positive relationships with their students. This section considers early career teachers' interpretations of how these relationships impacted on themselves as teachers. The findings indicated that these relationships increased novice teachers' feeling of self-worth and self-image and provided them with energy and joy which fuelled their passion to teach. Their desire to make an impact and inspire their learners resulted in their professional growth. Furthermore, these forms of interactions were also considered as indicators of the effectiveness and success of their teaching philosophy. The comments below from Amel and Sonia mirror the feelings of all participants when asked to describe their relationships with their students.

I start loving my students to the extent that I consider them as my brothers and sisters. (Amel, Intv 3)

I think that they love me. Until now I don't have any problems with them. (Sonia, Intv 2)

Moreover, the notion of being loved by students emerged from the data as a significant component which impacted upon early-career teachers' perceptions of themselves. There was a widespread agreement among novice teachers in this study that it was important for them to gain the respect and trust of their students from the first session "there is law in pedagogy which says that if you lose your learners the first time you won't gain them again and I guess I won them" (Sonia, Intv 1). These teachers expressed a strong desire to establish positive relationships with their students on both professional level such as students' success and personal level like caring about students' personal troubles and problems.

Data reveals that students' success contributed to the way early career teachers described and viewed themselves. Dihia, for example, felt pleased when other teachers told her what their children think of her. Being rewarded and praised for her teaching increased Dihia's confidence to teach.

The majority of my learners love me and as a result they love the language. Especially when my colleagues told me that their children like the subject because of me. I am very proud. (Dihia, Reflection)

In the exit interview, Dihia provided additional information on the impact of students' relationships about her feeling of pride and success. She felt a sense of accomplishment and fulfilment when students who, find difficulties in learning, understand the lesson.

I think that all students love me. Especially when having a comment from a repetitive learner he told me "miss you are a good teacher and you know how to make us understand ". I think I have succeeded ... having positive comments from weak and repetitive learners makes me feel motivated and encouraged to work. (Dihia, Intv 3)

Another facet of student-teacher relationships that seems to have a positive impact on novice teachers' identities is the respect of students. In other words, positive relationships were also a sign of acceptance and recognition to novice teachers. As explained by Ali in the exit interview, being called "Chikh" by his students was a way of showing respect. The extract below highlights the findings:

The fact that everyone calls me "Sir" learners as well as staff members...I am neither called by my name nor my first name but rather my title so being called "Chick" is something respectful... (Ali, Intv 2)

In the Algerian context and particularly in relation to Islam religion a "Chikh" is the one who is "all-knowing, wise and unchallengeable" Miliani (2012, p.221). The concept of "Chikh" is also assigned to Imam, who is the leader of the mosque and Muslim community. Thus, being called like that shows the highest position of respect that teachers have in society which then results in a sense of pride as was shown in Ali's example. In other instances, teachers felt happy when their students check on them. Dihia for example, recalled on an incident when her students came to the staffroom to see her and brought her chocolates and drawing. She said:

Last time during the exams I did not see them [her students] they came to the staffroom they brought me chocolate and told me "miss we missed you". And another students draw me with my hijab and blue eyes she transformed me (laughs) and she said this is for you. She sees me beautiful so she draws me in a good way. (Dihia, Intv 3)

These instances contributed to strengthening novice teachers' self-confidence and at the same time nurtured their sense of being a teacher. In the case of Dihia, her students used drawing (see Appendix U) as a mediational tool to express their love. Dihia, as is shown above, was pleased by the love and care she received from her students. These two examples show that these acts of

acceptance and recognition by students affect novice teachers' identities.

Early-career teachers believed that being aware of the students' personal problems might help them to build a healthy and positive relationship. Thus, novice teachers expressed a high level of care and affection toward their students. Sonia's use of the metaphorical expression "queen, princesses and kings" shows the high status she attached to her students and the extent to which she valued them. Her perceptions of herself as a "queen" surrounded by "princesses and kings" might have resulted in a high level of self-confidence and positive self-image. Moreover, in the extract below, Sonia expressed her disagreement toward the belief that teachers should not be close to students. Her teaching philosophy seemed to focus on building mutual trust with her students.

In Algeria a teacher should not be too close to the learner. For instance when you give a good answer the teacher use to say good, excellent but I don't do that I go closer to the learner and I ask him or her to give me five [slapping palms together as a greeting gesture] it means I am going to touch the learner. (Sonia, Intv 1)

Sonia provided more details in the exit interview about her relationships with her students. When asked about her strengths as a teacher, Sonia mentioned the close and strong relationship with students. Being close to students resulted in developing an effective relationship with them in a few months which increased her enthusiasm to teach.

I do play with my learners.....I love coming every morning here... I do love teaching. I do love seeing my learners, I do really care about them, and I know all their problems. I know all the learners who smoke and I know all of those who are taking drugs and all this stuff...this is a strength I guess. (Sonia, Intv 2)

However, the opposite also occurred. Mellissa struggled to build a good relationship with some students and in some cases felt that her students are not engaging in a successful learning

process which had a negative impact on her perception of herself.

With third year students with lack of discipline and a noise and being obliged to scream in order to make sure that my voice can be heard especially from the back of the classroom since they are overcrowded, it's really something tiring and demotivating and makes me hate teaching... I'm seeing myself like a failure the human version of failure. (Mellissa, Intv 2)

Data here shows that teachers-students relationships might affect novice teachers positively or negatively. Thus, beginning teachers' identities are intertwined with their emotional state.

To sum up, it is clear from the data that developing positive relationships with their students is a crucial element in developing teachers' professional identity. These relationships resulted in a high level of satisfaction and fulfilment. The success of their students affected novice teachers in the way they perceived and defined themselves as teachers. On the other hand, however, failure to build good relationship with students resulted in a feeling of vulnerability which constrained early-career teachers' perceptions of themselves (see section 6.3).

### **7.3 Being an Algerian EFL teacher: Teachers as multiple role agents**

In chapter 5, I discussed the perceptions of newly qualified teachers toward the role of a good teacher. They all mentioned different and complex roles that teachers perform such as, being facilitator, guide educator and innovator. Most of these roles were adopted during their teaching and were adjusted through interactions with the professional communities. I have used the term "agent" because I want to emphasise the role of teachers' agency in these roles that they are playing and this will be particularly important when considering the teachers' role as an innovator and agent of change in the school see (7.3.2).

In addition to the roles that teachers' enacted within their classrooms, they also had other roles

within their institutions. They were invigilating during exams, volunteering to be the head of the class (responsible teacher for his students and other duties) and participating in school activities. Both Ali and Mellissa shared their experiences of being good invigilators during students' exam. This experience allowed Ali to discover part of himself and his roles as being a strict invigilator. Similarly, this experience filled Mellissa with joy and pride for being successful in her role as invigilator. Extracts below highlight the results.

I did it last year in my training. This time I was alone and fully responsible. I succeeded in it... I surprised myself by being very vigilant and severe with those who tried to cheat. (Ali, reflection)

On the third day of the exam one teacher said that she heard one of the students invigilated that day saying: "OMG that teacher was so severe that even if you learn everything by heart you will forget". This teacher kept praising me all day and it made me feel proud and successful especially that she confessed that some teachers older than me unable to do what I did. (Mellissa, Reflection)

Moreover, despite the amount of work that novice teachers dealt with every day, they devoted some time to integrate into their communities by volunteering in some school activities. Dihia offered to be the head of one of her classes "I have chosen to be the head of the class" (Dihia, Intv 3). Basically, this position has a lot of work, as teachers have to deal with students' problems and be responsible for discussing students' scores with all teachers of other subjects. She said:

Being also the head of one class I have papers to fill with all students' marks each teacher will give his own marks of tests and exams and making the percentage of the class so I do collaborate with other teachers. (Dihia, Intv 3)

The data here shows that this role helped Dihia to cooperate more with her colleagues, interact

with them and build strong relationships which would strengthen her professional identity. Dihia also added that she took part in school activities. Her school organised leisure activities for students during their break from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm. Generally, during this break teachers and students have their lunch and rest for some time before afternoon sessions start. However, Dihia decided to take part in these activities as they enabled her to become closer to her learners.

I have chosen to be part of these clubs. We have one of music, I teach learners to play and sing songs. The other of reading, we make learners read in all languages then we analyse what they have read. I am happy being part of these clubs because this makes me know the other side of my learners and we encourage their hobbies instead of hiding it (Dihia, Intv 3)

The data reveals that NQTs' engagement in other roles within their school communities helped them to recognise new aspects of their professional identities as well as to assess their abilities and competencies as teachers. In addition to that, engaging in these activities enhanced NQTs' self-confidence and strengthened their self-positioning as being part of the school culture. When asked about their freedom to express their views regarding important school matters, all novices showed that they make suggestions during these school meetings. However, the extent to which their voices are taken into account remains questionable as final decisions are made by their principal. Extracts from Dihia and Fatima highlight the findings.

Yes of course, I have to. I am part of the school, I am a teacher and I know my learners and how they think so I have to (Dihia, Intv 3)

And I am responsible of one class as each teacher is responsible of one class so I can speak about their problems (Fatima, Intv 3)

Fatima's example shows how taking another role in the school apart from teaching her students could strengthen her position with regard to the school culture in general and her self-perception in particular.

In the coming sections, I will describe the features of professional identity as illustrated by the participants in this study. I also consider the parameters of professional identity that are related to their individual selves. This section captures the idea of individuality as a major component in their professional identities. I start with a discussion about the influence of their moral purposes in shaping their professional identities. Extracts from interviews and teachers' written reflections are used.

### **7.3.1 Teacher identity and moral purposes**

As discussed in chapter five, early-career teachers joined the teaching field with a set of expectations and beliefs regarding how they should teach (See section 5.4). One central element of these beliefs refers to their role as moral educators which was rooted in the cultural expectations that teachers are educators.

The status of teachers in our society is good, teachers are educators, so we have to be ideals. (Amel, Intv 3)

Furthermore, findings also illustrate the role of personal experiences in strengthening the view of the teacher as a moral educator. Since her childhood, Mellissa, for instance, perceived teaching as a moral mission which is full of sacrifices. This view derived from seeing her mother, who was a teacher, being rewarded by her former students who became teachers and doctors. These incidents resulted in her feeling a sense of pride toward teaching. She said:

When I go out with my mother and she meets her students who became father and mothers... someone is a pharmacist they tell me your mother was my teacher  
.....it's an amazing feeling (Mellissa, Intv 2)

As is shown in this extract, being an educator implies that teachers' responsibilities go beyond their classroom duties (see section 5.4.1). There is no wonder that novice teachers' personal attributes are part of their professional identities.

According to some participants, teaching in Algeria has benefited from considerable public trust and respect, but in the last few years, teachers' status and recognition declined. The findings of this study revealed these two perceptions of the teaching profession. On the one hand, early-career teachers felt a sense of "pride" for having such a position in society and described teaching as a "noble job". The extract below summarises the shared view of the participants.

I am proud of being a teacher... the status of teachers is good in our society... I feel comfortable when someone says, "she is a teacher" (Amel, Intv 2)

However, on the other hand, participants mentioned the continuous criticism and mistreatment they received from parents and the government (see chapter 6.2). Even though their status in society declined, their moral purposes to do good and make a change in Algeria was always present (Mockler, 2011). Early-career teachers considered teaching as a "basis for any developed country" (Thilleli, Intv 1). Inspiring their learners and influencing them was a key feature for contributing to their country. Sonia for example, as she mentioned in the interview, used my presence at school as a way to inspire her learners. During the first interview, Sonia introduced me to her students as a "PhD student who lives in the UK". For her doing, something like this would motivate her learners to study more and inspire them. In addition to that, her learners as she said, would trust her more which would increase her feeling of achievement and fulfilment.

I want to bring something new to my learners. For me you [the researcher] are something new I brought for my learners I need to impress them... there is a PhD student coming she is studying in England and she is doing research.... It would be amazing for them they would trust me more they would believe that I am the

good teacher in the world. (Sonia, Intv 1)

Similarly, Safia highlighted another example of her future goals to make a change in the Algerian education. During my data collection period, Safia was processing her visa to study abroad. She wanted to carry on her master degree in France. When I asked her whether she is planning to come back to Algeria or not, she said that this experience of travelling abroad would help her in learning new ideas to implement in the Algerian context.

Yes, of course having these new ideas and adding them to the Algerian programme to change it .... (Safia, Interview)

Moreover, in this study, teachers' moral purposes are also bound with and inextricable from their emotions. As was discussed in section (7.2.3) participants shared the view that teachers should care about their students. In developing her teacher identity, Sonia refers back to the moral values that she views as important in her teaching. The extract below from the first interview shows this connection.

Being a teacher means crying all the time. I do weep all the time I do shed tears for my learners because I do have some learners who have specific physical needs so each time I correct their papers I say: "Oh my god I do not have to give them under the average because they have specific needs". I need to help them I am always put in a struggle in a dilemma (Sonia, Intv 1)

Findings here suggest that the moral values of Sonia seem to evoke a high level of emotions of caring and treating her students according to their needs. The identity that she is projecting is a result of the interaction between her inner beliefs and the social situation she encountered in the workplace. Similarly, Samir in his reflection linked his happiness as a teacher to students' achievement in their lives. Data here suggests that Samir's emotion of happiness might affect the

way he views and positions himself. In other words, his profession paved him the way to make a change in students' lives and inspire them.

I really want my pupils to study hard and harder to succeed in their life in order to get out from that village and explore the world, and be open to the world ... And I wish one day, I would say: I was part in raising them and I participated in cultivating them and gave them all what I had as knowledge. *That's what I call: Happiness.* (Samir, Reflection)

Findings also highlighted the impact of teachers' moral purposes on the way they distinguish themselves from other colleagues at school. In relation to students' punishments, Mellissa's thinking and caring about how a student might feel distinguished her from other teachers. She defined her moral values in contradiction to what she witnessed in her school, which affected the way she identified herself as different from others.

Well, the other teachers here are being kind of severe and rude with them. They like to blame students in front of other students (classmates)... and say you are just a poor student you don't know anything you don't have the level etc. The other teachers are using this ,but I cannot use it I don't want to use it because I know this is destroying students especially in the case of shy students it will destroy them and I don't want to use it. (Mellissa, Intv 2)

This section looked at novice teachers' moral purpose and its relation to their identities construction. It examined the role of their values to make a change in students' lives and thus their country as a whole. The way they perceived and identified themselves were in congruence with their moral values.

### **7.3.2. Teachers as agents of change: Innovation and creativity in teaching.**

In practice, novice teachers developed some teaching materials and lesson plans in order to follow in their teaching. All early career teachers in this study expressed a high level of enthusiasm and joy toward teaching. Though in some cases they felt vulnerable and questioned their teacher identity (see chapter 6), their love, passion and commitment for teaching maintained their motivation to teach and contribute to the field. As soon as they started to think of ways to create some teaching materials, their “enacted identities” (Kanno & Stuart, 2011) as innovative and creative teachers who pour efforts into the creation of new teaching materials were developed and shaped.

Early career teachers in this study tried to apply new ideas either to establish themselves in the school community or to be innovative and creative. They viewed teaching as a creative activity where they can share knowledge in an innovative way. This section sheds light on the different ways that teachers adopted to reify their practice. Extracts from interviews are used to illustrate the findings.

### **7.3.2.1 Constructing the "new" teachers against the "traditional teachers"**

Early-career teachers tried to implement their teaching philosophies within their practice. These teaching philosophies, as explained in chapter 5 were the result of their apprenticeship as students (Lortie, 1975) and were later on developed during their studies at university. Their beliefs about how to teach were then expressed in their teaching practice through the use of games (see example of Mellissa). Though some novice teachers in this study struggled to align themselves with their colleagues because of the age difference, they considered the fact of being young as a professional advantage as they are "energetic, dynamic" (Dihia, Intv 2) and "creative, active" (Amel, Intvs 2 and 3)

One of the shared agreements among all beginning teachers was the need to move toward a "modern, American" (Ali, Intv 1), "innovative" (Sonia, Intv 2) ways of teaching. NQTs claimed that their colleagues within their schools are using "traditional" (Safia, Intv) and "old" (Amel,

Intv 2) strategies which contradicted their stated beliefs. Novice teachers defined "traditional teaching" in terms of teachers "monopolizing the talk" (Ali, Intv 1). On the other hand, the modern way of teaching was defined in terms of applying properly the CBA (competency-based approach). Basically, this approach considers learners as active individuals within the class who are responsible for their learning (see section 1.9). The extract below summarizes this view.

I really want to apply the learner-centered approach because even though the Algerian educational system has adopted the CBA approach, which is learner-centered, we still find ourselves as teachers only interacting with only one or two students. I really want to implement the learner-centered principles, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, learning strategies, I want to involve my learners more, rather than being the one who monopolizes the talk. This is my objective (Ali, Intv 1).

Findings in the above extract show that Ali could not align himself with the "old" teaching methods. His imagined identity of how a teacher should be did not resonate with the actual practice he observed in his school. In the exit interview, Ali provided more insights into the role of a teacher. When I asked Ali to talk about something that he did in his classes and reflected who he is, he directly referred back to a lesson he did with his third-year class in which he performed the role of "facilitator and a guide" (Ali, Intv 2).

I made a kind of workshop I brought a video the lesson was about ethics in business and I brought a video about a child labour. I divided the class into groups and as I said, I am very keen in collaborative learning, learner centeredness. When I did that, I found positive responses from students they worked on their own and I was just like a facilitator and the guide providing them with extra information with the linguistic competence that they need. I was just like an evaluator by the end so I liked that way it is a modern way, it is an American way I liked it that's what I wanted to implement in all my classrooms (Ali, Intv 2)

It appears from the data that Ali was trying to perform his imagined identity in a real context. He was looking for new ways of teaching to project his teacher identity. This might mean that Ali could not enact his teacher identity by applying the "old" teaching methods.

Findings also showed that early-career teachers were applying many strategies and methods which they learned during their studies mainly with regard to the teaching practice. Dihia, for instance, used games as a legitimate means to enhance students' understanding. She was supported by her inspector and headmaster to make changes in her lesson plans. Dihia mentioned that the new programme strengthened her professional development as it provided her with more "freedom to be creative" (Dihia, Intv 3). The Pictures below are examples of the games that Dihia used inside her class. She also developed a way of rewarding students by printing certificates for the best learner in each class. This might reinforce the relationship with her students whom she considers a source of her professional development and success as a teacher "my learners helped me to develop more" (Dihia, Intv 3) which then might boost her confidence and develop her teacher identity.



Dave

This is Dave,

and these are his family members.



Susan

mother



Paul

father



Sandy

sister



John

brother



Victoria

baby sister



Figure 6: Dihia's methods in teaching

All novice teachers in this study were not financially supported. They all depended on their own money. They were not even paid as it was their first year of teaching and generally they get their salary by the end of the year. Fatima who had no income was not able to implement creative ideas. However, she enacted her identity as a teacher through drawing. She used limited resources and her abilities in drawing to add something new to her students and attract them to study.

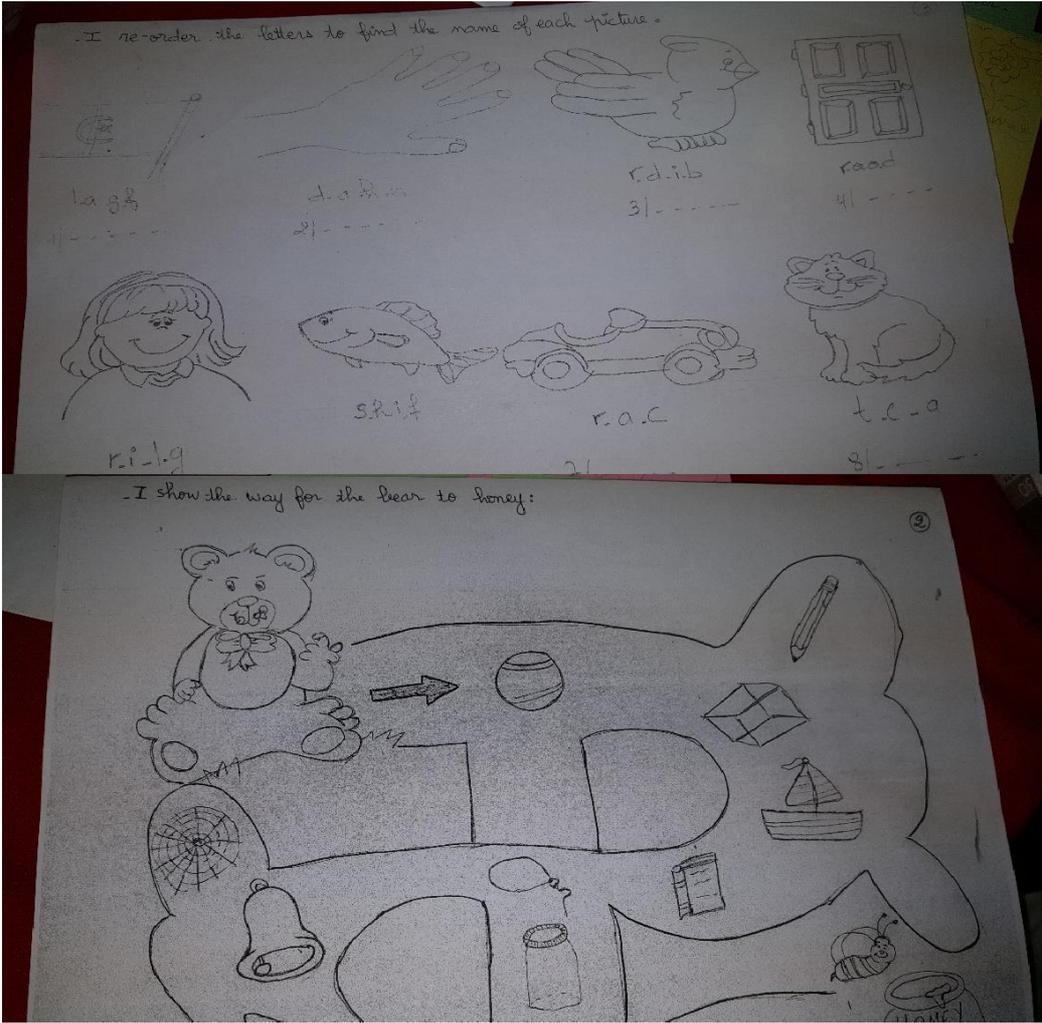


Figure 7: Fatima’s methods in teaching

### **7.3.2.2 Individuality and contribution to school communities**

In the previous section (7.3.2.1) I discussed the agentic position that NQTs played in their teaching. This section complements the previous one and adds more details on how participants' described their contribution to their schools, students and colleagues.

While all novice teachers in this study described being a teacher as a "tiring profession" (Dihia, Amel) "difficult and full of responsibilities" (Ali, Fatima), Sonia preferred to describe teaching as a challenging profession.

I guess that teaching is like amazing it is not that something difficult, you know almost all teachers say that teaching is difficult and it is not that easy thing but I guess that it is not difficult but I would say challenging. I have never thought that it would be like this. I mean you need really to work hard, I thought it's an easy job (Sonia, Intv 2)

Despite the problems and the hard work that NQTs do daily, their commitment and motivation to teach was always present as Ali said " my motivation to teach is from inside before all " (Intv, 2). Similarly, Sonia shared the same perspective.

I am always motivated. I am the kind of a learner and a teacher who do really have this kind of self-motivation. I do not wait for anyone to motivate me (Sonia, Intv 2)

These findings show that while the role of professional communities in this study is important to support them in their journey and increase their self-confidence, their commitment to teaching and their motivation to stay in the job was essentially intrinsic and self-driven rather than dependent on their colleagues.

Moreover, findings also showed that participants believed that their work would contribute to both their students and schools. Sonia for instance, believed that her work would generate a different perception toward the ways teachers treat students. Her teacher identity was then

reinforced by her strong sense of confidence as a professional. Similarly, Ali claimed that his work might introduce current strategies for teaching through the use of ICTs. Extracts below from Sonia and Ali's interview show the findings.

I strongly believe that I am going to bring changes to this school. A new way of thinking and a new way of seeing learners they are not slaves and I will bring new methods for them (Sonia, Intv 3).

Most of my colleagues lack the use of technology ... me and other teachers could improve this side of the school.....we can bring a new technological breath to the school because we are moving toward the development and the use of ICTs is a plus for the school (Ali, Intv 2)

It appears from the data that both Ali and Sonia demonstrated a sense of affiliation with teaching. They expressed a desire toward creating "new" teaching environment to facilitate the learning process to their students. Moreover, data suggests that their alignment with the school culture might have reinforced the idea of becoming a teacher. In other words, novice teachers included the improvement that the school might gain as a result of their own contribution, as a new responsibility in their teaching. This was further discussed by Sonia who claimed that she helped her colleagues in preparing "PowerPoint presentation". Sonia also added that

My colleagues are always telling me that I am teaching them... They [colleagues] have been taught at university which is different from ENS [Teachers' college]. They are not made for teaching I am made for teaching. I do have a lacking thing is that the experience, it plays an important role (Sonia, Intv 2)

It is interesting to note from the findings that novice teachers' sense of self-image also depends on whether they graduated from public university or teachers' college. It seems from the extract above that graduating from teachers' college gives a particular status and a recognition of others.

It is beyond the scope of this study to further explore and compare the process of professional identity formation between NQTs graduated from public university and teachers' college, partially due to the limitation of the data collected.

#### **7.3.2.2.1 Case study: Safia's story**

In the above section, I considered novice teachers' desire and beliefs toward contributing to the profession. In this section, I provide an example of a second-year teacher who made a contribution to the school. During her first year of teaching, Safia wanted to make her own space as an English language teacher. She wanted to have her own class and make it particular for her and her learners. She said:

I used to be fond of the English classes so I want to do something like this in Algeria why not they deserve this will attract our students to learn English (Safia, Interview)

In her former school, during her first year of teaching, Safia was not able to implement her idea as there was not "enough classes" to create her own space. Safia, however, did not give up on this project and she did her own class as soon as she changed her school. During her second year Safia was assigned to teach in another new school which has many classes. She suggested the idea to her headmaster and he was supportive and appreciated her efforts. The images below show how Safia changed her classroom.

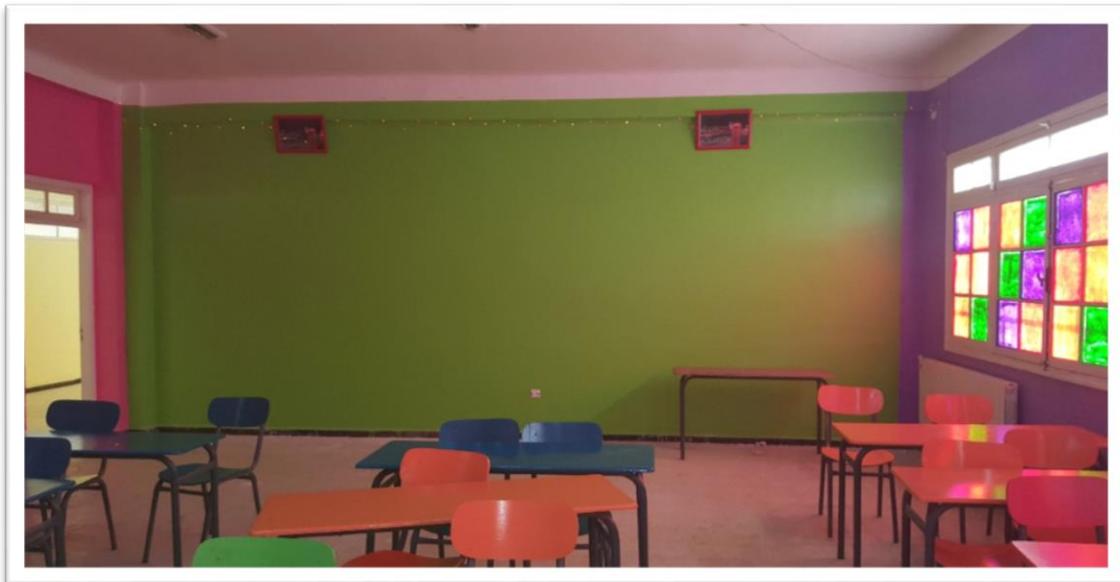


Figure 8 Safia's classroom

Safia believed that doing something like this attracted her learners to study English "they are excited about the idea of studying and learning in this class" she was also involving her learners in deciding on the things they wanted to see in their classroom. She said:

I am just taking their points of view into consideration for example I asked them about the stickers some of them said Miss I would like to have Barbie others said Miss I prefer Spiderman etc. so I think this will motivate them to learn English (Safia, Interview)

As the pictures show, Safia painted the class and tried to make it an English language classroom by hanging frames related to London city. By making her own class with her own money, Safia inspired and influenced her colleagues to do the same thing. During our interview, a teacher came into her classroom to take photos of the classroom to show them to other colleagues. She seemed to like the idea.

Safia seemed to spend too much time in her classroom "I spend most of my time here". Would this sense of individuality have negative impact on her sense of belonging to the school community as she isolates herself from other colleagues? Although this study does not focus on the possible effect of teachers' individuality to their sense of collective identity (Danielewicz, 2001), it might be subject for further research.

Moreover, Safia also mentioned her efforts to add new teaching methods during her first year of teaching by implementing portfolios. In these portfolio teachers include "all the games that are related to the Algerian programme" (Safia, Interview). Safia stated that her colleagues during her first year of teaching liked the idea and adapted it in their teaching "my colleagues also tried to do it with other levels 1st year and 3rd. year ". Safia carried on with this idea during her second year of teaching, though the inspector asked her to stop doing it with exam classes.

I used to teach his daughter he said its time consuming and my daughter is all the time talking about English and writing English and she does not pay attention to other subjects (Safia, Interview)

Though the inspector did not seem to value Safia's creative work, she continued to do this with her other classes. The picture below is part of her portfolio.



To sum up, findings presented in these two sections, show that newcomers are not necessarily novices with limited skills and knowledge who participate legitimately on the periphery of a community (Wenger, 198). However, novice teachers showed a high level of understanding for the teaching practice. They developed their professional identities in a short period of time by relying on their beliefs, values and previous theoretical knowledge.

**7.4 Teachers' professional image.**

One significant aspect that emerged from the data was the extent to which early-career teachers felt comfortable as a person in their roles as a teacher. That is to say, their perceptions and recognition of their work influenced the way they identified themselves. In the present study where early-career teachers expressed a high level of self-awareness and a sense of agency, their professional identity appeared to be developed. This, in turn, sustained their recognition of themselves as English teachers.

After teaching almost for a period of four months, novice teachers portrayed their professional image in terms of being "successful" (Amel, Intv 2) "progressing" (Thilleli, Intv 2), "good teacher" (Hamida, Interview) and "acceptable" (Fatima, Intv2). In addition to that Samir described being a teacher as a "weird and new feeling" (Samir, Intv 2). Furthermore, other participants showed a degree of self-awareness about their position as "Beginner teachers" (Kahina and Faiza, Intv), "novice teacher" (Salima, Intv 2).

Through participation in their schools either through their teaching performances or through interactions with colleagues, early-career teachers developed various ways to talk about themselves as teachers (Lee, 2013). Mellissa for instance, identified herself as a teacher through her performance in the classroom which in turn differed from one classroom to another. She struggled to define herself as a teacher as she perceived that she was enacting multiple identities with her first and third year students. When I asked Mellissa to describe her image as a teacher she preferred to divide her answer into two different parts. She said:

With first year students and there I am seeing myself as a great teacher, they all love me and some of them say I am the best teacher and they have never been taught English in this way. And some students from this class of third year scientific stream say "we never got English until this year, we don't understand English but your English we understand it". But with the two other classes of Economics and Mathematics [teaching English to other streams] I'm seeing myself like a failure the human version of failure. (Mellissa, Intv 2)

Data here suggests that Mellissa developed two teacher identities which are emotionally driven. On the one hand, she considered herself a "great teacher" as she gained students' respect, care and love. On the other hand, her self-image as a teacher decreased with other classes and this was due to students' results. Her passion to be "successful like I am with first-year classes" affected her sense of professional identity as she believed that she was "doing the same efforts" with all her classes. In another case, Sonia strongly believed that she "deserved to be a teacher" (Sonia, Intv 2) and described herself as a "soldier" as she works hard at school and at home. She said:

Look, I do believe in myself so very much I do have a kind of high self-esteem. I don't know if this is good or not but I myself do believe that I deserve to be a here...I do see myself doing my job properly. I do think about my learners so very much. I do bear the burden I mean I do always feel like I'm tiring myself a little bit... I think I would say I really deserve to be a teacher and I really think that I've reached my aims... I guess that this has really succeeded at a certain point. (Sonia, Intv 2)

This self-driven motivation as is shown in the extract above was also part of Sonia's desire and willingness to prove for herself that she deserves to be a teacher. In other words, in the first interview, Sonia expressed her willingness to become a teacher and she described studying at teachers' college for five years as a sacrifice " I sacrificed I was spending two months in Algiers without seeing my parents " (Sonia, Intv 1). Similarly, Dihia expressed that succeeding in her job would make her forget the sacrifices she made when she was a student at teachers' college.

In this way I can prove something to myself and I have succeeded in my job. The job that I dreamed to be part of it and scarified to be far from my family and stay at university for three to four months. Being in a strict school like ENS especially English department.... succeeding in my job will help me to forget all these things. (Dihia, Intv 3)

Moreover, early-career teachers expressed positive expectations toward their future selves. When asked about how they would see themselves in five years' time they showed a positive hope toward their professional development. Extracts below show their answers.

"Better than now, more experienced, and maybe successful" (Samir, Intv 3)

I will gain more strengths in comparison to the strengths I do have right now. I'm going to have more confidence in comparison to the confidence I do have right now I will be more disciplined than I am today. I will be better than today. (Sonia, Intv 2)

“More experienced and fluent.....” (Amel, Intv 3)

It appears from these extracts that early career teachers have developed an understanding of teaching particularly of their understanding of the aspects that they should work on in their future to become a teacher they want. Though they experienced many challenges, they maintained their desire and passion to teach and make a change in the educational field.

#### **7.4.1 Teachers' sense of achievement**

Novice teachers expressed their sense of achievement and fulfilment in terms of perceptions related to preparing exams and students' progress. Findings here shed light on the impact of these experiences on novice teachers' professional identity development.

All novice teachers in this study felt a sense of pride and accomplishment when they managed to prepare exam papers alone. Mellissa claimed that preparing her exams was “something hard” however she felt a sense of satisfaction once she completed it “once it was done I was feeling happy and proud” (Mellissa, Intv 3). Comparing herself to other teachers in social media who used previous exams designed by other teachers, Mellissa felt more confident and competent in her teaching.

Some teachers in the Algerian association of teachers (group on Facebook) were looking for already made subjects and they just print them.....it means that they are not making efforts to prepare new subjects. I have prepared them on my own.

(Mellissa, Intv 3)

Data here shows that Mellissa assesses her growth through comparing herself to other colleagues and teachers (Danielewicz, 2001). This suggests that novice teachers’ sense of achievement affects their personal identities which then motivates them to work harder and enact these identities in their teaching practices.

Furthermore, the sense of achievement which is linked to early career teachers personal identities and self-worth was further enhanced when colleagues in the institution affirmed their practices when they meet in order to select the exam paper.

This week, we were asked to prepare exams. I prepared three accordingly to the levels I had. My colleagues were sure to find some lacks in my subjects, but they were surprised at my good job. Two of them were chosen to be official. This really pleased and comforted me. Their positive comments were so warm to my heart.

(Ali, reflection)

There was a widespread agreement among novice teachers that students’ success provided them with a sense of pride. They were pleased when their students had good marks in their exams compared to their colleagues.

I felt happy that some of my classes scored in English better than other school subjects they had higher averages in English than others. (Mellissa, reflection)

Similarly, Samir and Amel were satisfied with students' progress especially as their level was weak at the beginning of the year. They reported that their students were inspired to learn English in a short period of time. They considered students' use of English in other modules as an achievement. Extracts below from Samir and Amel's interviews illustrate the findings.

In these three months I think I taught them something for instance how to count, how to say things in English. In the first weeks they say in French "bonjour Monsieur" but now they say "Good morning Sir".... It is as if I improved something in them and I am doing this more and more. (Samir, Intv 2)

When I hear my first year students say "hi miss how are you" I appreciate that because they are first year and they started to speak in English that's an achievement. Even with other teachers they speak with them in English... the teacher of Arabic told me that each time they want to go out they ask in English. (Amel, Intv 2)

To conclude, this section examined the relation between teachers' sense of achievement and the development of their professional identities. Examples here show the importance of feedback provided by colleagues and students in strengthening novice teachers' sense of achievement in their job. Moreover, NQTs' hard work was also an important aspect in feeling positive and confident.

### **7.5 Professional identity and novice teachers' future selves.**

The previous sections described the various roles that teachers enacted in their institutions and how they described their understandings of themselves as teachers through participation with others. This section explores the possible effect of their teaching experience on their future selves. Teacher identity is generally described as a journey which incorporates the past, present

and the future of the individual (Wenger 1998, Kiely and Askham 2012).

Novice teachers expressed a desire to stay in the profession and carry on teaching. It seems from the data that, although all participants viewed the profession as a tiring job, they did not express any desire to leave the profession. Interestingly, as data showed in chapter 5, female teachers claimed that they joined teaching because of the flexibility of the job. Yet, realizing the relentless nature of teachers' roles and responsibility, female teachers did not change their intentions to be a teacher. When I asked novice teachers to express their future goals they all showed a high level of commitment and desire to stay in the profession. They described their future roles as follows: 'successful, perfect, controller, inspiring, guide'. Some of them were expressed in section (5.4).

Moreover, NQTs' voiced their need for furthering studies and become professional in their field. During my data collection, Ali had already engaged in a Master degree as he claimed that he wants to become a lecturer at university. It is perhaps interesting to note that novice teachers considered their professional growth as an endless process. Extracts below show some of these findings.

My long term is to become a teacher at the university (Sonia, Intv 2)

I want to carry on my studies. I want to work in middle school to gain more experience especially with those innocent learners (Dihia, Intv 3)

I would like to carry on my studies... I would like to enroll in a PhD, do research and become a lecturer in the university. (Ali, Intv 2)

In summary, this section analysed NQTs' sense of professional affiliation with teaching which was described by the participants through their expectations regarding furthering their studies and enhancing their academic qualifications. The source of their commitment as expressed in chapter 5, was a result of their identification with others and was further developed through their teaching experiences.

## **7.6 Chapter summary**

This chapter has illustrated two dimensions of teacher identity which are individual or personal identity and collective identity. The individual and personal identity refer to the role of individuality and teachers' roles as agents of change in developing their teacher identities. The collective identity refers to the role of the support and feedback of the COP which sustain and strengthens novice teachers' identities.

This chapter explored the role of COP as well as NQTs' sense of agency in sustaining their professional identities. Belonging to various professional communities, regardless of the challenges listed in the previous chapter (6), was considered an influential factor in shaping NQTs' identities through participation and practice (Wenger, 1998). Cooperation, feedback as well as reward and affirmation provided by their colleagues were considered of a paramount importance in sustaining NQTs identities. On the other hand, novice teachers' commitment and desire to become good teachers were reflected in their sense of individuality and agency to contribute to their learners, colleagues and school. They showed a degree of resistance toward various obstacles as was shown in the example of Safia (7.3.2.2) and toward the practices of their colleagues as was the case with Ali and Amel (7.3.2.1). Moreover, it was clear from the chapter that the source of their commitment to become good teacher derived from personal histories and was strengthened during their teaching. Finally, expressing their future goals was considered as an act of commitment and desire to develop professionally as a teacher. The next chapter discusses the findings in relation to previous and current research on teacher identity.

## Chapter 8: Discussion

### 8.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out to provide a discussion of the findings that have been revealed in this research and their significance to the relevant literature conducted in the field of teacher education. The chapter reflects upon the main findings, which were fully presented and analysed in the previous analysis chapters, built upon four sub-sections where each section is devoted to provide a deeper understanding of the research questions.

The main purpose of this research was to explore and understand the construction of professional identity among novice teachers during their transition from student teachers to novice teachers. However, throughout the analysis of the findings of this research other factors, such as the personal experiences that sustain professional identity have emerged. In this manner, this research does not only seek to understand professional identity during this period but it also considers novice teachers' personal experiences before entering the profession and their future aspirations as part of the development of their professional identity.

This chapter includes a summary of the major findings and addresses the research questions (8.2). It then revisits the concept of the communities of practice (8.3) in the light of the context-specific aspects of the findings, the construction of professional identity through imagination (8.4), a shift from imagined to practiced identities (8.5), and finally it looks at the importance of tensions and struggles in maintaining teachers' identities (8.6). Before proceeding to a discussion, it would be helpful to present again the research questions that guided this study:

**RQ1).** How does the personal background of novice teachers influence the construction of their professional identities?

**RQ2).** To what extent does their engagement with different professional communities the

within school contribute to the development of their professional identities?

**RQ3).** What role did the practicum play in the formation of novice teachers' identities?

**RQ4).** How have their professional identities been affected by the challenges they face during their first year of teaching?

## 8.2 Revisiting the research questions and an examination of the major findings

All the participants in this study had different and unique learning trajectories. Their motivation and reasons to teach were various and differed from one participant to another. In addition to that, their teaching experiences differed from one year to two years. Despite all these differences, findings show that teacher identity which has been defined in chapter 2 as “being recognized as a certain kind of an EFL novice teacher with regard to oneself and others and being dynamic and mediated by the interplay between personal, professional and political dimensions ...”, is a complex entity that is dependent upon an intricate array of factors. This study has identified three main phases in which teacher identity is constructed and re-constructed over time, these are, as is shown in the diagram below: past, present and future.

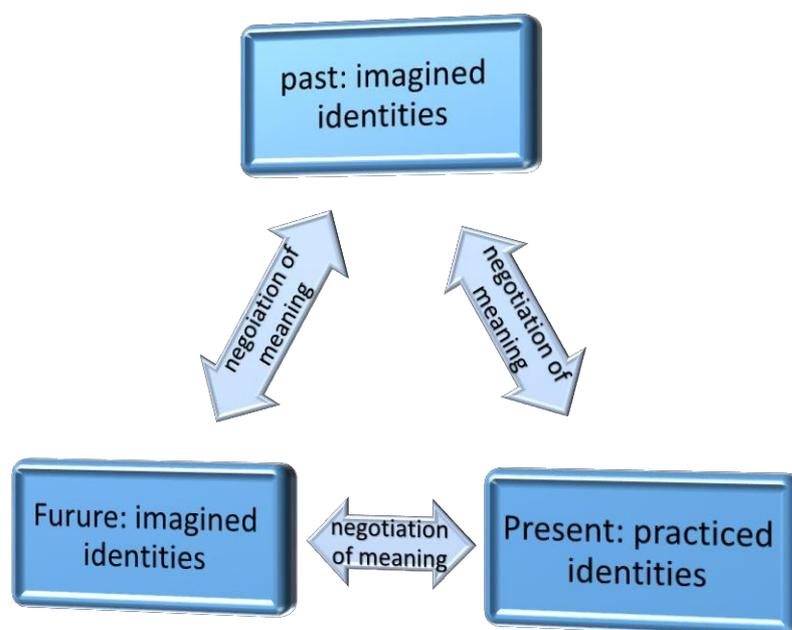


Figure 9: The process of identity construction.

Most studies on teacher identity have tended to focus on the way that teacher identity is developed within the training and the role of the practicum in shaping professional identity (Izadinia 2012) or the role of the communities of practice in nurturing teacher identity (Clarke 2008, Nagatomo 2012). The construction and the development of professional identity in this study have emerged as a cyclical process which encompasses different phases and which goes back long before novice teachers joined the teaching profession. Clearly, the role of the practicum and the community of practice are very important in sustaining that development. However, data also highlighted that teacher identity begins before that with the process of identification with a significant other. This study depicts a more complex view on how teacher identity is being developed that takes into account family structure and school influences prior to entering the profession.

Early-career teachers in this study constructed their professional identities through negotiating the meaning of their previous experiences with the present and future experiences. Thus teacher identity shifted through time from imagined to practiced identities. This is to say, novice teachers' image of "who they want to become" is never an accomplished process as novice teachers reify their meaning through interacting with others in different communities. The rest of this section will address the research questions in light of the findings and will summarize the main findings related to the construction of the participants' professional identities.

**RQ1:** How does the personal background of novice teachers influence the construction of their professional identities?

This research question was addressed in chapter 5. This study reveals that the construction of participants' professional identities is inseparable from their previous personal experiences. Prior experiences paved a way for early-career teachers to construct imagined identities through self-identification with others. Part of their personal biography included the role of a former teacher, family influence, love of the language and gender identity. For instance, the positive or negative

experiences that novice teachers held about their former teachers played a crucial role in how they perceived teaching and how they chose to project their identities. Moreover, their understanding of themselves as English teachers was also shaped by their moral values toward the profession. That is to say that, interacting with and observing their family members who were teachers introduced them to other teachers' roles which go beyond transmitting knowledge to incorporating aspects about moral values and being agents of change (see section 7.3). These experiences did not only create a sense of affiliation and belonging to teaching (Clarke, 2008) but helped them to construct imagined identities regarding the kind of a person they want to become. In other words, novice teachers' imagined identities were not limited to understanding the role of a teacher but also included a vision regarding their future professional selves. It is not surprising that these early-career teachers draw on their personal experiences to make sense of their practices and construct their professional identities as these experiences are still fresh in their minds given the fact that they do not have enough experience to rely on. However, these experiences are important in this study as they formed a solid base for participants' professional identities. Thus, the images and the meaning that novice teachers constructed either through their apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) or through any other factors cited above, contributed to the construction of their "core identities" (Gee, 2000) that maintained their sense of selves. In other words, as was shown in chapter five, the negative experiences that participants in this study faced during their practicum did not affect their future selves. The identification through imagination established deep understanding about who they want to become, that was not easily affected by conflicts and struggles.

**RQ2:** To what extent does their engagement with their professional communities contribute to the development of their professional identities?

This research question is addressed in chapter 7. Findings highlight the importance of communities of practice in shaping novice teachers' understanding of themselves as English

language teachers. The communities that were identified in this study are: the colleagues' community, administration, students and broader community. Engaging in teaching and interacting with students, colleagues and administrators offered participants opportunities to shape their professional identities and their understandings of their positions within the school culture. Colleagues' community helped novice teachers to boost their confidence in themselves through affirmation, positive feedback and emotional support. NQTs' professional identities were also shaped through the recognition and the respect of their students as well as through the positive feedback and good exam scores of their students. NQTs' interactions and self-engagement in various activities within and beyond their school communities (virtual and broader communities) proved to be of paramount importance in their professional development.

In addition to that, findings provided important insights into the role of individuality in constructing professional identity. This was reflected through exercising their agency and making decisions on their teaching which often contradicted with their colleagues' way of teaching. This was illustrated by being "creative and innovative" in their teaching in contrast with their colleagues who used "old teaching methods" (chapter 7.3.2.1). In other words, the findings revealed an alternative understanding of individual experiences within the communities of practice where novice teachers had a high level of autonomy and demonstrated a highly individual approach toward their professional development. Looking at identity development through the lenses of newcomers provided more insights into how learning and identity emerge within communities of practice.

**RQ3:** What role did the practicum play in novice teachers' professional identity development?

As was shown in chapter 5, the practicum was significant in developing a sense of professional identity. It helped novice teachers to negotiate the meaning of their experiences in a real teaching context. Positive feedback, support and interactions with mentors contributed to an understanding of their imagined identities and enhanced their confidence toward teaching.

However, beginning teachers at that time were also given little space and were exercising minimal power toward the choices of their teaching as was the case with Safia. Although some novice teachers could not exercise their agency during this period, their sense of becoming a teacher was not affected by this experience. In other words, novice teachers' desire to become teachers and their self-determination toward teaching were not affected by the negative side of the training.

**RQ4:** How have their professional identities been affected by the challenges they face during their first year of teaching?

This research question was addressed in chapters 6 and 7. Although participants acknowledged the role of their colleagues in sustaining their professional identity and boosting their confidence, they also reported a lack of support from their principals, school supervisors and society as a whole. Novice teachers' identities were undermined by their school authorities (see chapter 6). However, novice teachers overcame these troubles through the support they received from their colleagues and their intrinsic motivation. Novice teachers relished the opportunity to confront and find solutions to challenges for example Safia painted her own class and made it particular for her. By doing this, Safia felt a sense of satisfaction and achievement which strengthened her teacher identity as somebody who can overcome the problems and struggles on her own and contribute to her school.

### **8.3. Revisiting the concept of communities of practice**

The notion of communities of practice has been criticised by its limited conceptualisation of power relations within a given community (see section 3.3.1). I partly agree with this point as it emerged from the findings of the present study. Wenger (1998) acknowledged this limitation and explained that his views about learning and identity are constructed through mutual engagement within COP. A similar perspective has been afforded by Carden *et al.*, (2019) who focused on creating a COP where the students' perspective is considered important. Looking at the COP

from Carden *et al.*, perspective means breaking the boundaries between experienced and less-experienced practitioners and between newcomers and old-timers. In their presentation, they tried to focus on the importance of COP which lies in the centrality of learning through mutual engagement.

The present study looked at the concept of COP through the newcomers' perspective. I do acknowledge the limitation of my study in terms of not incorporating the views of the old-timers in the construction of a professional identity. Thus, viewing the COP from one side lead to the emergence of power relationships within the school. A school in itself is a big community which constitutes of different sub-communities and which are hierarchically structured. In this study three biggest communities emerged, within the school that are students' community, colleagues' community and administration community. Outside school there are the virtual community and the academic community (see section 8.5.1).

Apart from the critique of communities of practice as lacking power relationships, the findings from this study suggest that the notion of COP needs broadening to take account of the different cultural practices that operate within different professional contexts. The present study highlighted some context-specific aspects of the findings, to take an example, it was clear in this research that the wider culture beyond the COP impacted on the mutual engagement between female and male teachers. Wenger (1998) characterizes mutual engagement as a significant component of the belonging process (see section 3.3.1). However, though this study illustrated a range of instances where NQTs and their colleagues worked together, it also highlighted the role of the culture in restricting such engagement. In the example of Samir being the only male teacher in his institution restricted his engagement with the other gender, and thus resulted in taking a position of 'illegitimate participation'. In addition to that, ethnicity was found in this study to cause an absence of mutual engagement between Berber and Arab teachers. Second-year teachers' findings revealed that COP are context-dependent and goes beyond the actual

practices. Unlike Minfang in Tsui's (2007) study who was marginalised because of his English language proficiency, Kahina was experiencing an identity of marginality because of the ethnic differences. This is to say that coming from a different ethnic background and speaking in Kabyle language was a source of marginalisation for Kahina whose colleagues were from a different ethnic group, where almost all females wear Hijab unlike her. For Minfang being marginalised in his teaching community was tied up with his low English competence. His teacher identity was related to developing competences. However, kahina's rejection was related to the social context and differences between groups.

This shows that a community of practice is more complex and needs to consider aspects of gender and culture in general as important components in its existence and in the way it operates in educational contexts in different parts of the world. In other words, though mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire are crucial aspects in the existence of a community, it could be strengthened if aspects of culture and gender are taken into account in Wenger's theory. Thus this study suggests that for an identity to develop within a particular institution, the institution needs to be considered as a "small culture" which has its norms and traditions that might differ from one school to another (Holliday, 2013). Moreover, it is also important to acknowledge that both newcomers and old-timers could learn from each other. In this study, it was clear that novice teachers joined the teaching profession with a high sense of individuality and strong sense of agency and autonomy. They contributed to their school communities and they made change within their schools as well by widening the scope of their professional learning. This study highlighted many examples where novice teachers joined both virtual and academic communities beyond their school culture to strengthen and develop their English teaching competencies. Their love of the English language and their desire to become experts in the teaching field enabled them to seek for more ways to become professional in the field. This study then revealed a broader community which consists of virtual community

(Facebook groups) and academic community such as, joining seminars and conferences, had an impact on novice teachers' identity development.

#### **8.4. Identification through imagination**

It has been argued in this study that novice teachers construct and shape their professional identities by identifying and interacting with others in different communities. As Wenger (1998) notes identification includes both being "identifying and identified as" and "identified with" something or someone. For early-career teachers, the process of affiliation to teaching started at an early stage by identifying with their families and by observing their former teachers. This previous experience represents an early mode of belonging to teaching. There is a close link between the formation of a teacher identity and personal experiences, which is in line with previous studies on teacher identity (Olsen 2008, Clarke 2008). Though these studies illuminated and highlighted the relationship between personal identity and professional identity, the process of identity formation during previous experiences was not deeply investigated. Thus, as the main aim of this study was to understand the process of professional identity formation, a detailed explanation of this process is needed.

In the present study, identification had a great impact in constructing NQTs' professional identities. As was explained in chapter 2, identification was first introduced in psychology (Erikson, 1968) to refer to the relationships between specific people. In social identity theory, Wenger (1998) uses the concept of identification with some adjustments. He associated the concept of identification with the modes of belonging which are engagement, imagination and alignment, claiming that identification refers to "the constitutive character of our communities and our forms of memberships and non-memberships for our identities" (Wenger 1998, p.192). As I am using identification with regard to prior experiences where the negotiation of meaning was limited, as there was no practice (teaching practice), I opt for identification through imagination (Wenger, 1998) to understand the process of professional identity formation during

that period.

To begin with, findings show that novice teachers in this study joined the teaching profession with a set of beliefs that were mainly constructed through their interaction with their sociocultural background which mostly includes their parents, former teachers, and their love and association with English language. In addition to that gender had a significant role in female teachers' decision to teach. During this phase novice teachers constructed an imagined identity that was not only derived from their self-desire to become a teacher (Pavlinko 2003, Norton 2013) but it was also the outcome of parents' pressure or gender preferences. Thus during that period novice teachers constructed both assigned and claimed identities. This earlier process of identification paved the way for novice teachers to construct imagined identities (Norton, 2013) of who a teacher should be. However, these ideas might be limited as they are "derived from a student perspective, not a teacher perspective, and thus they are very likely to be inaccurate, inappropriate or incomplete" Kubler LaBoskey (1993, p.23). During this pre-teaching phase, participants in this study developed imagined identities which are considered as a dominant identity that is shaped by other identities. For example, some participants constructed an imagined identity of being an "inspiring teacher", as was revealed in the data, through their early identification with their families and previous teachers. Moreover, imagined identities in this study were shaped and strengthened by both "assigned identities" which are imposed by others and "claimed identities" which refers to an identity that an individual claim for oneself (Buzzelli & Johnston, 2002).

It was seen through analysing data that not all novice teachers wished to build a career in teaching. Their identification with their families, more particularly with parents, and their gender identity resulted in the emergence of assigned identities. As was shown in the findings, the family had a significant role either implicitly or explicitly in directing novice teachers' decision toward teaching. Most female teachers shared the view that their parents either encouraged them

to teach as was in the cases of Dihia, Sonia and Amel or obliged them to build a career in teaching as was the case with Fatima and Salima. The findings of this study appeared to confirm Wenger's (1998) categorization of identification as being both "positive and negative in the sense that it includes relations that shape what we are and what we are not" (Wenger 1998, p.191). Fatima, for example, has experienced a negative identification when she expressed to her family her interest in building a career in journalism. Thus, identifying herself with another community was an expression of what she does not want to become. By articulating what she does not want to become (a teacher), Fatima was shaping her identity through negative identification (Wenger, 1998).

Assigned identities here emerged as a result of family pressure or gender identity and dominated mostly the cases of the female teachers. In other words, the discourses surrounding the role of women in society directed female participants to choose teaching in the belief that "teaching is the suitable job for women in Algeria" (see section 5.2.3). Although, I acknowledge that I do not have an equal number of male and females participants in my study to make such claims, based on my experience and observations as a cultural insider I believe that families have more power upon females than males. This might be related to the cultural values and religion of a given country.

Moreover, claimed identities were shaped and developed through positive identification with previous teachers as well as the love of the English language. Findings highlighted models of teachers who were respected because of their love and commitment to teaching (Mellissa) as well as their personality (Sonia). These findings are in line with previous research on teacher education which suggests that students spend thousands of hours with their teachers which make them familiar with teaching (Lortie, 1975). I agree with this point to a certain level, however, I would add that novice teachers in this study though relying on their previous knowledge as students, have also used their creativity and innovation to make changes in their teaching and

applied methods that were different from those of their colleagues and sometimes their previous teachers as well. This means that novice teachers reify and adjust their previous knowledge to match their teaching practices.

Finally, findings also suggest that novice teachers' identification with English was a salient aspect in defining their future careers. As Algeria is a multilingual context, novice teachers were interested to study languages more particularly English and French. The data revealed how one participant (Sonia) challenged herself to learn English and speak it fluently when she was a student in middle school. She was also highly committed to helping disabled classmates to study when she was a student at secondary school. This finding is in accordance with previous literature such as (Clarke, 2008).

To sum up, early-career teachers identified with the teaching profession either during their childhood or through their apprenticeship of observation which included their journey at the University as well. During their studies at university and through identifying with their teachers and teaching, beginning teachers shaped their imagined identities by constructing and reifying their knowledge about teaching. In other words, when the participants joined the university they already have "identified themselves as teachers" as was the case with Sonia, Ali and Dihia. For others like Salima, Fatima and Samir who did not want to build a career in teaching, joining the university was the beginning of their acceptance of teaching. Thus, through identification, novice teachers constructed imagined identities of who they wanted to become. They may have attached different meanings to being a teacher but they all showed commitment toward teaching. Thus the central idea of this section considered imagined identities as a dominant identity that was shaped through assigned and claimed identities. The figure below summarises the findings.

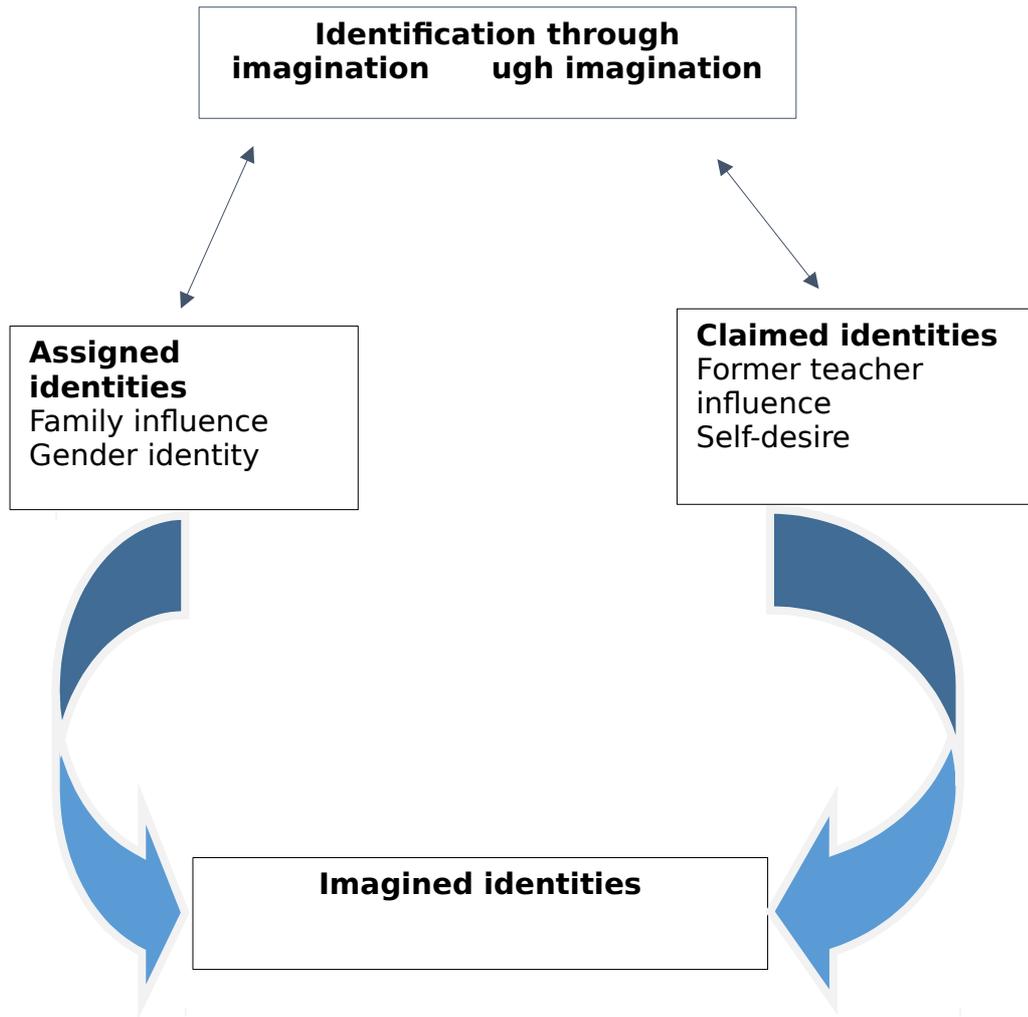


Figure 10: Novice teachers' imagined identities

### 8.5 The negotiation process

The findings of this study support the argument that the practicum promotes novice teachers' identification with teaching and contributes to the development of their professional identities (Danielewicz 2001, Le Huu Nghia, and Ngoc Tai 2017). During teaching practice, early career teachers engaged in the negotiation of their understandings as well as their own conceptualizations regarding being a teacher, acting like a teacher and understanding their position within their professional communities (Sachs, 2005). During the teaching practice, novice teachers' identities started to shift from imagined identities to practiced identities through participating in real communities and negotiating the meaning of their experiences. These two

types of identities are different as the "former stem from imagination and the latter from real-world interaction in communities of practice" (Xu 2012, p.80).

To begin with, during the practicum participants' imagined identities about the role of a teacher were replaced. Beginning teachers challenged their previous experiences and expectations about the notion of being a teacher that derived from their own observations of their previous teachers or through interaction with their families. They all admitted that teaching is not an "easy job" and it requires more than the theoretical knowledge to be a teacher. By engaging with the professional communities they discovered that teaching was not only a matter of being well prepared and being knowledgeable about the lesson (see section 5.4). In the same way, Danielewicz (2001, p.3) claimed that becoming a good teacher "requires engagement with identity, the individuals conceive themselves so that teaching is the state of being, not merely ways of acting or behaving". In the case of novice teachers at this stage "engagement with identity" entailed the dual process of identification as an EFL teacher and the negotiation of meaning of being an EFL teacher. In other words, by investing in teaching they negotiated their understanding of what an EFL teacher "should be, act, and think like" Yazan (2018, p.223). In addition to that, findings showed that during the practicum novice teachers began to think and act from a teacher standpoint rather than a student perspective. Thus their imagined identities started to shift to more practiced identities. They began to handle difficult situations as members of the teaching community instead of imagining those situations. Mellissa for example, had a difficult time managing students' behaviours during the practicum however, after time she managed to handle the situation by incorporating games to her teaching.

Furthermore, as Mellissa's example cited above shows, the findings corroborate the argument that the power relationship between mentors and pre-service teachers is a salient aspect contributing to professional identity development (Yuan 2016, Mukeredzi 2016). In other words, when Mellissa (see section 5.3.1) persuaded her mentor to allow her to be innovative in her

teaching and introduce games she was exercising her power and autonomy with her mentor which helped her to strengthen her self-confidence as a teacher and to develop her identity as a teacher. It appeared from the findings that Mellissa and many other novice teachers like Ali, Dihia and Amel, who described the practicum as a positive experience, were confident in the knowledge they brought with them to the practicum "though the skills may have been raw, and knowledge fragile they had a clear and confident sense of what good practice involves" (Kiely and Askham 2012, p.508). Thus, findings suggest that mentors' support and feedback was highly important for novice teachers to teach the way they imagined and expected before joining the profession.

Early-career teachers used their power to negotiate the meaning of their practices. Their source of power related to the theoretical knowledge they received from their previous learning experience as well as their university courses. Their need to exercise autonomy and do something of their own was another source of power as is evidenced in Danielewicz study (2001). In addition to that, gaining the love and respect of their students during the practicum impacted positively on their professional identities as reported by Sonia in the first interview.

On the other hand, this was not the case for all participants in this study. As was shown in chapter 5, not all novice teachers were satisfied with their practicum. Most of those who described the practicum as a bad experience were not supported by their mentors. Thus, findings here suggest that the difficulties that novice teachers experienced could be attributed to the fact that beginning teachers and their mentors interpreted the meaning of the practicum differently. For early-career teachers the practicum meant, as they described it in the interviews, testing their theoretical knowledge and having good relationships with their students. However, as explained by the participants, their mentors were not providing them with enough space to practice their teaching the way they viewed it. This is not to dismiss the role of the support provided by their mentors, however, beginning teachers needed "a safe zone in which to try out the techniques and

extend their skills" (Kiely and Askham 2012, p.508). In the cases of Thilleli and Fatima, their mentors asked them to follow their lesson plans rather than designing one of their own. Novice teachers in this case, were given a minimal role in the negotiation of meaning and were accepting the meaning given by their mentors. They were adopting the lesson plans and strategies given by their mentors and they were aligning themselves with the meaning defined by them. This means that the relationship between mentors and pre-service teachers is "hierarchical rather than reciprocal thereby limiting the student teachers involvement in the ongoing process of constructing and reconstructing knowledge" (Canh 2014, p. 216).

This study is in line with the findings of (Le Huu Nghia and Ngoc Tai 2017 and Tsui 2007) who suggest that some novice teachers had a limited power to negotiate their practices and exercise their autonomy as teachers. Their teacher identity at this stage "appeared to be strongly moulded by the community" Le Huu Nghia and Ngoc Tai (2017, p.13), especially by their mentors. Early-career teachers had little power in determining their practices.

Regardless of the power relations between mentors and novice teachers, data indicated that this experience did not have a negative effect on their professional identity. It might be true that some novice teachers developed an identity of non-participation (Wenger 1998) but this did not affect their professional growth. This study differs from the findings of Yuan (2016, p.189) which showed that negative mentoring can create "different ought (e.g., "a follower") and feared (e.g., "controlling teacher") identities, which impinged on their professional learning and growth". The strong sense of identification to teaching that novice teachers in this study have built had a strong impact on their future teaching selves. This is to say that, though novice teachers faced challenges during their practicum, they remained resilient and confident about their skills and teaching abilities.

To sum up, as was presented in the previous section, novice teachers have developed imagined

identities through their identification within their sociocultural backgrounds. These identities continued to develop during their teacher training programme through a process of negotiating the meaning of their practices. Thus teacher identity is a complex process which implies an interplay between identification and negotiation of meaning. Although identification and negotiability go side by side and do not exclude each other (Wenger 1998), professional identity through these processes was discussed separately to illuminate the complexity of its development.

### **8.6 Teachers' professional identities: from imagined to practiced identities**

This section addresses two research questions that are: how have novice teachers' professional identities been affected by the challenges they faced during their first year of teaching? And To what extent does their engagement with different professional communities within school contribute to the development of their professional identities? In other words, this section looks at the transition period from being a university student to becoming a new teacher. To be more specific, it illustrates the shift from imagined identities to practiced identities in the light of the struggles that novice teachers faced when they started teaching.

The imagined identities that newly qualified teachers constructed allowed them to form a "picture of the world and themselves" (Wenger 1998, p.194). In this study, the picture that novice teachers constructed about teaching was based on their learning trajectory as Trent *et al.*, (2012, p.59) pointed out "looking to the past descriptions of teachers from the history of their schooling suggested a trajectory for their own teacher identity construction".

However, the imagined identities in which they viewed teaching as a "noble and a well-respected profession" was not congruent with the harsh reality. Thus Looking at the nature of each phase presented above, I would argue that the phase of the transition from a university student to becoming a teacher is the most complex of the three phases as it is characterized by various tensions and challenges.

Although, in the literature on teacher identity such transition is marked by what is called a "reality shock", "transition shock" or "practice shock" (Veenman 1984, Correa *et al.*, 2015), this period is considered to be a highly important phase as it helps newly qualified teachers to "create their own identity and build self-efficacy as professionals which is important in their perceptions of who they are and it influences what they do" (Ulvik and Largongen 2012, p.44). That being said, I would align my discussion with Ulvik and Langorgen (2012) and Correa *et al.*, (2015) in which their focus was to demonstrate the positive qualities and resilience of novice teachers during the transition period rather than emphasizing on the stress and burnout.

As was discussed in the data, novice teachers have faced many troubles during their first weeks of teaching. Though the problems listed in chapter 6 might also be encountered by more experienced teachers, they "caused feelings of demotivation and insecurity among newly qualified teachers" (Correa *et al.*, 2015, p.67). The findings of this study reveal that the first group of participants' (first-year teachers) state of shock was found to be mostly related to the lack of recognition, students' discipline and classroom management. However, the only concern highlighted by the second group of participants (second-year teachers) was the lack of recognition. This lack of recognition inside and outside their institutions resulted in feelings of hurt, disappointment and sense of vulnerability. Though newly qualified teachers experienced identity conflict during this period they also showed a high sense of resilience in coping with these situations. Thus feelings of shame and anger generated by lack of recognition and experience of failure resulted in "resistance to investment in identity" (Fenton-O'Creevy *et al.*, 2015, p.42)

Findings showed a well-grounded sense of alignment with teaching which was presented through NQTs professional commitment as well as their future expectations toward their future selves. Teacher identity in this sense is "future-oriented" in that NQTs draw on their capacity to

imagine themselves in the future after they enacted their imagined identities (Kiely and Askham 2012, p.498). In other words, though novice teachers' expectations did not meet with the realities of teaching, they showed resilience to stay in the field through imagining their future career in teaching instead of burnout.

Early-career teachers' capacity to overcome this phase depended on their commitment to their job as well as the support they received from their colleagues. These results mirror with Ulvik *et al.*, (2009) study. In the next section, I will illustrate the role of the communities of practice as well as novice teachers' individuality in sustaining such transition. In other words, as Morrison (2013, p.104) states "understanding teacher identity formation therefore needs to be viewed in relation to the contexts in which they work, the nature of personal and professional support provided for them and how responsibility is shared for making this influential time of development beneficial".

### **8.6.1 Participation in teacher communities and beyond**

Findings of this study reveal the fundamental role of the communities of practice in developing teacher identity. Early-career teachers developed their identities through interaction and distinct participation in different communities (Wenger 1998, Handley *et al.*, 2006). The communities that emerged from the data, as was shown in chapter 7, which had an impact on newly qualified teachers' professional identities are their students, colleagues, administration (principals and other staff in the school). In addition to these communities, virtual and broader communities seem to have an influential effect on novice teachers' identities. The figure below shows the findings.

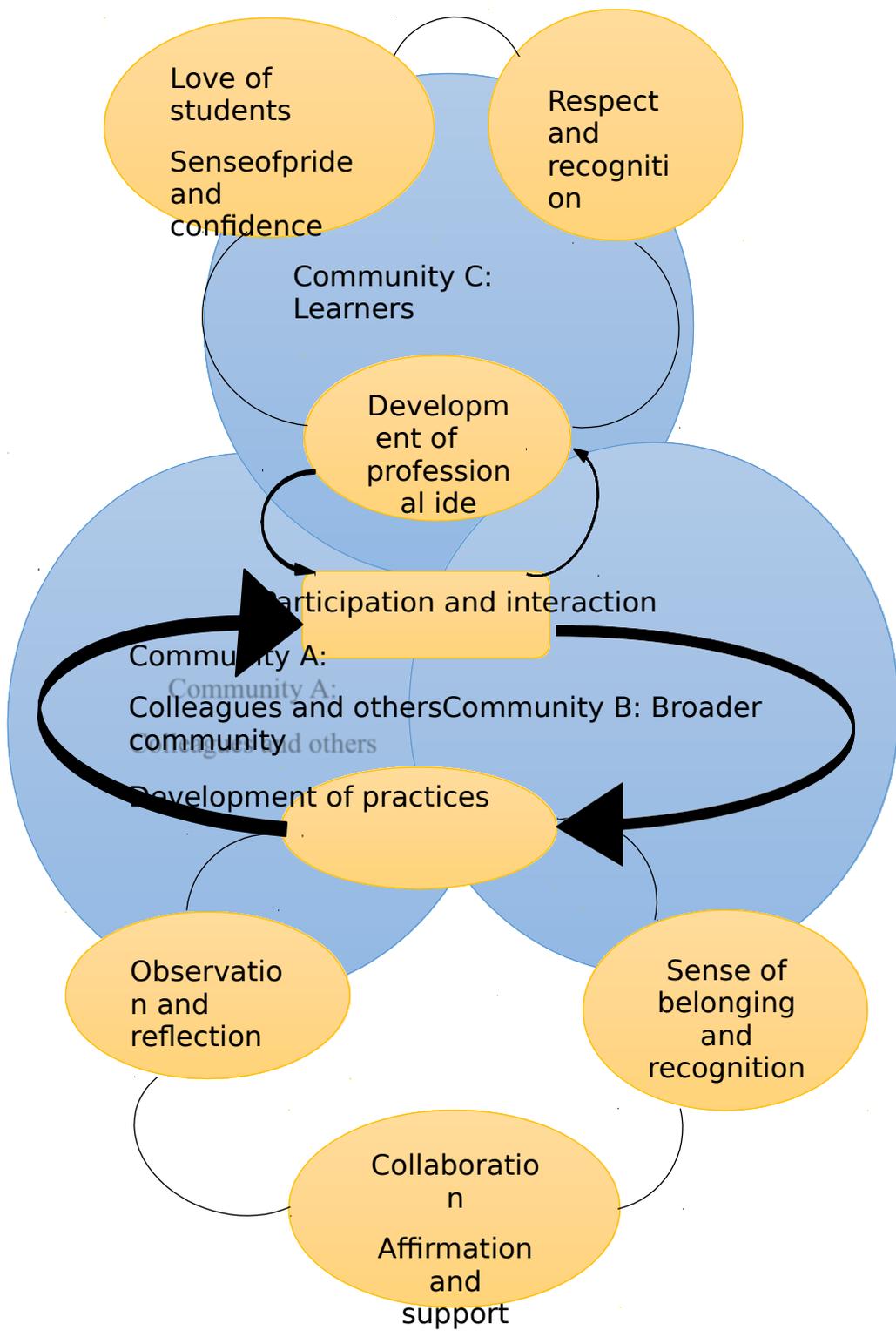


Figure 11: Participants' communities of practice and learning (adopted from Handley et al, 2006, p.646)

As the figure shows novice teachers developed their professional identity through participation and interaction with communities A, B and C. Each community has contributed to strengthening novice teachers' identities in a particular way. Love and respect of students emerged as an important factor which shaped novice teachers' identities. Similarly, the school community and the broader community helped novice teachers to negotiate the meaning of their experiences and understanding the profession through their engagement in different activities (see chapter 7).

In the context of belonging to a teacher community, novice teachers highlighted some conflicts and troubles. They all acknowledged the fact that they were fully accepted by their communities and that they were given enough support from their colleagues. By working together with their colleagues and sharing experiences, NQTs developed a sense of belonging and a joint enterprise within their communities. However, as Fenton-O'Creevy *et al.*, (2015, p.45) state the "need to maintain a continuous sense of self in the face of threats to identity" across those communities resulted in a marginal identity. In other words, though novice teachers shared a 'joint enterprise' with their colleagues, it did not all the time mean agreeing about everything and sharing the same teaching conditions as this enterprise is "their negotiated response to their situation and thus belongs to them" (Wenger 1998, p.77) . This is to say that, joint enterprise is in a way personal so each participant negotiates it differently. Though Wenger (1998) considered such disagreement to be productive (see section 3.3.1), he did not clearly explain its results. In this study, these disagreements resulted in a sense of deliberate marginality which strengthened novice teachers' identity. In the cases of Ali and Amel who distinguished their practices from their colleagues due to the differences in the way of teaching "traditional versus modern", illustrates an example of marginal identity. In such cases participation is "marginal but voluntary rather than excluded which is the sense given by Wenger" (Handley *et al*, 2006, p.648). Wenger's (1998) use of marginal identity among the community of practice refers to the newcomers "exclusion" from the community. However, in the present study participants seemed

to take a deliberate choice in distancing themselves from the practices of their communities as a way of maintaining their individualities and personal identities. Thus, joint enterprise here enabled novice teachers to develop their sense of agency and professional identity. Further discussion about the role of individuality will be held in the next section (8.6.2). Alternatively, as the data showed, newly qualified teachers who developed a "deliberate marginal identity", relied on the virtual communities in their professional development. In other words, it was clear from the data that Amel, Samir and Mellissa used social media such as Facebook groups where there are less boundaries and free space to share their practices as a place to enact their identities.

Importantly there were clear indications in the data that show the importance of collegial support in sustaining newly qualified teachers' emergent identities as capable and confident teachers. As was shown in section (7.2.1.1) Mellissa's self-positioning as a "trainee teacher" at the beginning of the year hindered her from sharing her views with other teachers within the staffroom as well as blocked her from exerting her authority within her classroom. These results were also highlighted in Kanno and Stuart's (2011) work where their participants developed their identities through learning in practice. That being said, Mellissa was able to draw on the professional support and relationship with her colleagues to interpret and strengthen her sense of a teacher authority within her classroom. She showed a firmer personality with her students and she started to act more confidently in her classroom.

Moreover, central to the participants understanding of themselves was the recognition that others provided. Consequently the development of early-career teachers identity is "linked to their participation in their professional communities and how they understand their place within them" Morrison (2013, p.102). In addition to self-positioning, being recognised as a teacher by others within and outside the school institution was an important aspect in the development of newly qualified teachers' identities. This is what Cooley (1902) called "the looking glass".

Newly qualified teachers defined themselves through the recognition of others. Thus, affirmation from colleagues had a positive effect on their professional identities. Novice teachers' sense of self efficacy (Day *et al.*, 2006) increased when more experienced colleagues rewarded their work. This was seen through choosing their exam papers (Ali, Dihia), during invigilation (Mellissa) and through students' results (Mellissa and Ali). While positive acknowledgement caused feelings of pride and belonging to the communities of practice, the same participants also mentioned incidents where they felt excluded from these communities. Basically, the power relationship between schools' principals and teachers was clear in the data. Newly qualified teachers' recounted incidents when they felt that their identities were undermined by school leaders and other staff members (see example of Dihia and Mellissa in chapter 6). These findings are in line with Mann and Tang (2012) who reported that the negative feedback from the principal had a strong impact on how novice teachers perceived themselves and their teaching. Although these incidents affected novice teachers' identities, their commitment toward teaching as well as their colleagues support helped them to manage these situations.

Another finding with regard to becoming a member of a teacher community suggested forms of participation and interactions in broader communities. This study illustrates examples where novice teachers create opportunities to become part of English language teachers' communities beyond their actual schools. In other words, they identified themselves as teachers within their schools but also as English language teachers with a possible career that goes beyond the school as they are identifying themselves as English language speakers. These experiences resulted from their personal initiative and institutional organisation. Among the experiences mentioned, Sonia explained how working in the embassy contributed to her professional development as well as professional identity as a teacher. Through these experiences she could develop her language competencies as well as her teaching methods and understanding of her learners. Other participants like Mellissa, acknowledged the importance of the seminars she joined which were

organised by inspectors in developing her teaching practices. These examples show an awareness of the importance of English language in Algeria and the role of English as a global language, with opportunities for speakers of English in careers in business, tourism, academia, international organisations and other areas of work where English is increasingly needed. This reveals their interests in both developing the language itself and their desire to belong to the English language teacher community as well as develop their professional identities as teachers within their institutions.

To sum up, the present study confirms that communities of practice are of a great importance in shaping novice teachers identities (Wenger 1998, Clark 2008, Nagatomo 2012, and Tsui 2007). However, findings also pointed to the role of novice teachers' self-empowerment and sense of individuality in shaping their identities. This quote by Correa *et al.*, (2015, p.73) summarises these findings "a community of practice needs both the memory and the experience of old timers as well as the inspirational ideas and energy of the newcomers". The next section examines the importance of agency/autonomy in sustaining and shaping novice teachers' identities.

### **8.6.2 Self-empowerment in the COP**

Drawing on the previous findings of this study in relation to the practicum, it is clear that the process of becoming a teacher entailed a degree of autonomy and individuality among newly qualified teachers. In other words, data showed that early-career teachers who were supported and were given space by their mentors to exercise their autonomy developed a positive identity. In this section, I will use both agency and autonomy to highlight the contribution of NQTS among their COP. Though there is a debate surrounding the two concepts, it is beyond the scope of this study to delve into this discussion. Thus by using autonomy, I am referring to the degree of control that novice teachers' have upon their teaching (Benson, 2011) and agency to refer to the "power or freedom or will to act, to make decisions, to exert pressure, to participate or to be strategically silent" Danielewicz (2001, p.163).

Newly qualified teachers viewed the role of a teacher as going beyond transferring knowledge.

Instead, they discussed multiple roles that teachers should enact and among these roles they all emphasised on the importance of being a "role model" or an "inspiring teacher".

As was discussed in section (7.3.1) all novice teachers were concerned with becoming good teachers and felt a sense of moral duty toward their students. They showed how these moral values played a very important part in their teaching approaches, through for instance, caring about students' emotions and problems (see section 7.3.1). As can be seen from the findings these moral values are rooted in the Algerian cultural background where teachers are recognised and seen equal to Chikh, "the one who is all-knowing and knowledgeable" Miliani (2012). Chikh is also a concept accorded to Imam who is an Islamic leader. Because of this status, teachers' performance is under high public scrutiny in the Algerian context. Thus, these moral values affect the way teachers talk about themselves as was seen in Ali's example who considered his role equal to a parent's role. Though participants did not explicitly mention religion, findings pointed to its importance as a driving source of their moral values.

Moreover, this study also highlighted a close link between the moral purposes of NQTs and their sense of becoming agents of change as their moral values kept them close to the needs of their students. For example, Mellissa (section 7.3.1), who considered punishing her students in front of their classmates, as other colleagues do, as an odd behaviour, looked for other ways, such as, implementing games, to deal with this problem and take control over her class without embarrassing her students. This means that, to accomplish her moral goals, Mellissa developed her teaching strategies and her sense of self as a creative and innovative teacher. These findings confirm Mockler's assumption "that moral purpose is a positive driving force for the profession, and that as a teacher, holding a sense of moral purpose, a desire to 'do good' or 'make a difference' will necessarily be automatically acted upon within the field of teachers' professional practice" (2011, p.523).

Furthermore, although data showed a collectivist education system within these schools, it also pointed to the individualistic process which was adapted by novice teachers. Individuality in this

sense refers to "the power to make independent judgements, to exercise personal discretion, initiative and creativity through their works" (Hargreaves 1994, p.178). With that being said, though early-career teachers strove for recognition within their communities through working hard on becoming successful teachers they also established their own professional identities through comparing and contrasting their beliefs and teaching practices with those of their colleagues and acting upon their own views. Thus, engagement in teaching practice "allowed participants to not only develop a shared repertoire of routines, words, and ways of doing things but to use these to position themselves as a particular types of teachers" (Trent *et al.*, 2014, p.59). As was discussed in chapter 7, newly qualified teachers highlighted a set of characteristics that distinguished them from those of their colleagues. For example, participants described their classroom practices as "new, modern ways of teaching" (see Ali and Amel examples) and expressed a need to distinguish themselves from teachers who are "chalk and talk" (Sonia) and follow "traditional" methods of teaching. By establishing such division newly qualified teachers categorize themselves as belonging to new and modern generation of teachers who are creative and dynamic. These findings are in line with similar phenomena noted elsewhere (Trent *et al.*, 2014, Clarke 2008).

This study then distinguished between two different teaching paradigms that are modern versus traditional which acted upon teachers' sense of self and their professional identities. Aligning themselves with the former paradigm was found in their teaching practices. As was shown in chapter 7, newly qualified teachers were determined to be creative and innovative even though innovation and creativity was in some cases not supported by their superiors (see the example of Safia). However, being autonomous and exercising their agency was part of who they are. It is important to note that early career teachers' regarded themselves as competent individuals and distinct professionals. This resonates with Zembylas statement that "the teacher is an autonomous individual, constantly moving between the need to connect with other colleagues and the need to maintain a sense of individuality" (2003, p.107).

Correa *et al.*, (2015) in their article raised the issue of agency among newly qualified teachers. They believe that it is not "clear whether newly qualified teachers feel free to implement their own way of teaching or whether they choose to imitate what they observe the more experienced teachers doing". The findings of this study confirm the former argument in that novice teachers created their own space to implement and use their creativity as teachers. Moreover, their findings highlighted that newly qualified teachers were positioned in their COP as "agency-less or as teachers whose opinions do not have an impact on the functioning of the school" Correa *et al.*, (2015, p.73). The result of this study appeared to contradict those findings as novice teachers exercised their autonomy at an early stage of their professional careers. In addition to that, even though some novice teachers talked about being marginalised within their COP, such marginalization as was explained in section (8.6.1) was a voluntary one. This means that this voluntary marginalisation created "the space which allowed participants to exercise their individual agency, claim ownership of the meanings that were important to them and become in part the type of teachers they wanted to be" (Trent *et al.*, 2014, p.111).

To sum up, novice teachers' identities as illustrated in the findings are an account of negotiating a sense of identity which includes multimebership in different communities of practice. In addition to that early career teachers' sense of autonomy and agency were highlighted as a strong component of their professional identities. Thus their commitment to teaching was much more related to their desire to teach and do good for their institutions and their country. Though novice teachers in some instances felt that society and administration undermined their identities (see Ali, Amel and Mellissa's extract), unlike the participants in Trent's (2014) study who found that teachers' commitment to teaching was related to society view, they showed a high level of commitment toward their profession. This shows that participants' commitment to teaching was much more related to their intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic factors as was the case in Trent (2014) study.

## 8.7 Chapter summary

This chapter has explored and discussed the findings of this study and compared them with research on teacher identity. This research confirms that teacher identity is multifaceted, dynamic and changes over time. The figure below shows the process of identity construction within this particular context.

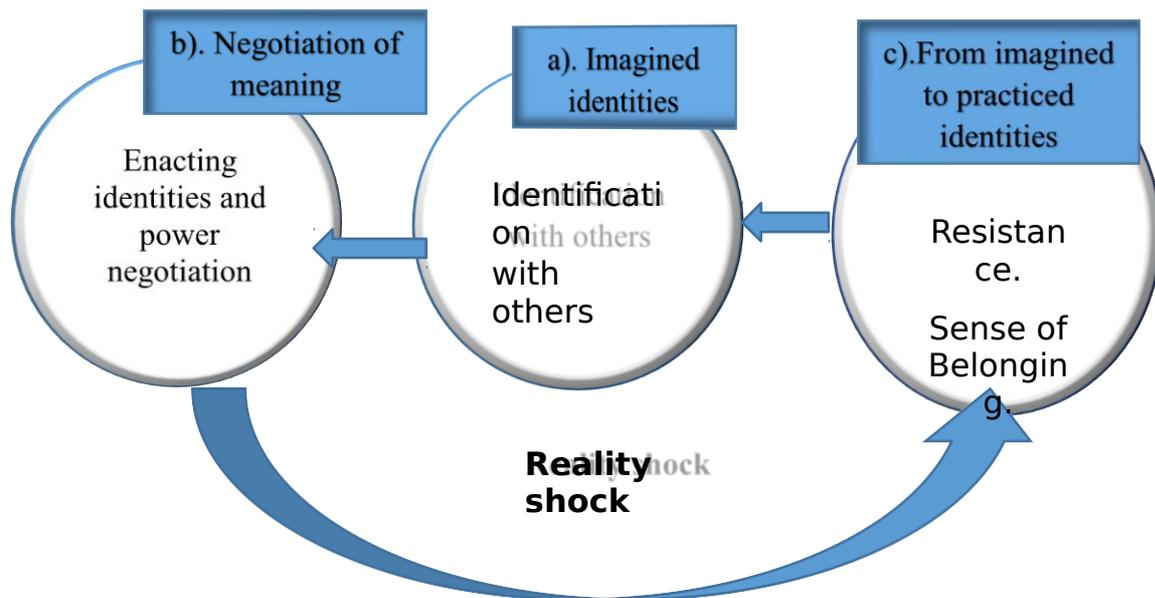


Figure 12: The framework for studying professional identity within this particular context

The process of professional identity in this study started at an early stage through identification with a significant other (family and former teacher). As the figure shows, identification is central to this process and affects the two other stages. It is argued in this research that interaction with others resulted in developing imagined identities of who teachers wanted to become. In other words, NQTs' prior experiences served not only as a mean for understanding their decision to become teachers (Olsen 2008) but it went beyond that to illustrate the complex process of how teacher identity is formed during that stage. These imagined identities that NQTs constructed were challenged and developed during their teaching practicum where some novice teachers had

little space to exercise their agencies. In addition to that, the transition from the teaching practice (b) to the actual teaching (c) as the figure shows, is characterised by a reality shock. Thus, the quest for a professional identity in the present research involves struggle against for instance, traditional ways of teaching, the need to handle classes and gain the respect of others either inside or outside school (see chapter 6 for more details). However, as NQTs developed a strong sense regarding their future-selves, they showed a strong resistance toward the conflicts and challenges they faced during their teaching. Though these struggles threatened their identities at some point, they also helped them to reflect on their experiences and think about their future goals and career plans. This then suggests that their professional identities are "future-oriented, drawing on the capacity to imagine a transformed self and to see it as part of the narrative history" (Kiely and Askham 2012 p.498). Finally, though the study suggested revisiting the concept of the communities of practice in the light of some context-specific aspects of the findings, such as, gender, ethnicity and broader community, COP was found to have a huge importance in sustaining and strengthening novice teachers' identities through encouragement and affirmation from other members such as colleagues.

## **Chapter 9: Conclusion**

### **9.1 Introduction**

Chapter eight discussed the findings and their significance in the exploration of how novice teachers constructed their professional identities. This last chapter looks at the theoretical implications of the findings of this study for the notion of COP. It also discusses the practical implications for the training and induction of novice teachers, with specific reference to the Algerian context. It provides a number of implications for improving teacher education programmes and providing a positive atmosphere for NQTs to develop a strong professional identity. The limitations of this study are highlighted and some suggestions for further research are provided.

### **9.2 Implications**

This study provided valuable theoretical implications and offered practical recommendations for developing teaching education programmes and for providing institutional assistance. As my research was conducted in Algeria, I shall provide some suggestions for the Algerian context. Yet, these implications will be of interests to teacher education context which are similar or different to Algeria.

#### **9.2.1 Theoretical implications**

This research has revealed valuable insights into the way novice teachers developed their professional identities. It developed a framework for understanding teacher identity in this particular context (see section 8.7). The previous theoretical models of identity formation have been inadequate to explain the process of identity formation as was found in this study. This model extends previous research frameworks that are found in the literature such as (Olsen 2008, Xu 2012, Wenger 1998 and Mockler 2011). This model views teacher identity as a cyclical process which begins prior to entering the profession in the form of imagined identities. These imagined identities shift to more practiced identities once novice teachers started

teaching. The practiced identities then will shift to future identities. This process seemed to fit the findings generated from this study. It can also be a very useful way of looking at professional identity in other contexts as well.

In addition to that, this study suggested the need to extend the concept of the communities of practice (Wenger 1998) and to view it as a small culture (Holliday, 2013) which has its norms and traditions. This study showed the absence of the mutual engagement in some cases where gender and ethnicity acted as a constraining factor to building mutual relationships between female and male teachers and between Arabs and Berber teachers. Moreover, the findings of this study revealed that novice teachers in this context see themselves as belonging to a wider community of English-speaking professionals outside their school communities. This is clearly a feature of the Algerian context in which this research is set, but it is also likely to be a feature of many other teaching contexts in other parts of the world where the ability to engage with English as a global language is an increasingly important professional skill. Thus, there seem to be a clear need to re-examine the concept of communities of practice and try to interrogate and expand its definition. In this study as mentioned above many communities of practice were found to be important in shaping professional identity. These communities are not confined to the three parameters set by Wenger (1998) which are joint enterprise, mutual engagement and a shared repertoire. On the contrary, this study suggests that any learning community where novice teachers can negotiate the meaning of their experiences and make sense of themselves as teachers could be viewed as a community of practice.

Furthermore, from a sociocultural perspective learning is a socially mediated process that occurs in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1978). This implies that learning happens by scaffolding. When applied to this study, scaffolding, by fellow-teachers and by students, via the feedback (direct and indirect) they provided, was important for building up the NQTs' sense of professional identity. The scaffolding provided by these communities in this study was mostly

related to emotional support. It was found in this study that the emotional rather than the technical support that was important. All the participants in this research successfully combined their past and their teacher education experiences to their present teaching context to develop a resilient professional identity. That is to say that, this pre-constructed identity or the imagined identity appeared to enable them to make sense of their future-selves and to become more committed to the profession. In other words, what differentiated this research from others conducted within the sociocultural context is that it highlighted the significant contribution of newcomers to their established communities. These personal histories enabled novice teachers to become agents of change within their institutions.

### **9.2.2 Implication for teacher education programmes**

To begin with, the findings of this study indicated that being a teacher does not simply mean the application of knowledge and theory into practice, it is much more complicated than that and it is influenced by the school culture, motivation, students and interaction with others. One of the major findings of this study illustrates the importance of identification in learning to become a teacher. Novice teachers constructed an identity before embarking to teaching and this was due to their identification with their sociocultural background. Thus their professional identities were "strongly personally embedded at the beginning of their teaching careers" (Flores and Day 2006, p.230) but were developed and strengthened through the support they received during the training and the various interactions they had with their colleagues. Most early career teachers reported the importance of being surrounded by supportive mentors during their training. However, others also mentioned being limited to the practices of their mentors. Novice teachers did not find enough safe space to exercise their agency and were following the instructions provided by their mentors. This suggests the need for providing more space for pre-service teachers to take an active role in their learning to teach process which would enable them to reflect not only on their teaching philosophies but also on their teaching-selves, as being a

teacher also involves who teaches and why (Britzman 2003, Danielewicz 2001). This is not however, to belittle the pedagogical side of the training. Rather, it is to argue that it would be helpful for novice teachers to understand themselves and who they want to become during their teaching practice as "the traditional practice of pre-serve teachers supervision where the focus has been on socialization into a setting and the assessment of the performance is limiting the future teachers growth as professional" (Walkington 2005, p.63). Thus the training programme should include aspects that could help novice teachers understand their future selves and this could be achieved through encouraging novice teachers to reflect on their teaching experience. Though in the Algerian context student teachers write reflection regarding their observation and presentation within the school (see Appendix D), it would be more helpful for mentors to assess and to take into consideration the reflective dimensions of the practicum more than it is currently the case. Such encouragements to reflect would prepare novice teachers for their real teaching experience and "they will be less susceptible to external threats that pose hazards to their identity development" Lee (2013, p 343). In addition to that, university lecturer should consider pre-service teachers' reflections as is suggested in the appendix A. This would give more credibility to the training experience and would enable pre-service teachers to discuss their teaching experience with both their mentors and their university lecturer which could help them to reflect upon their experiences and to negotiate the meaning of these experiences.

Moreover, in the Algerian context experienced teachers are assigned by the principal to supervise one or more than one student teachers (see section 1.8.1). These teachers have experience but are not trained in "mentoring skills" (Canh 2014). Given the significance of the role of mentoring in strengthening novice teachers' identities, it is important for mentors to receive training on how they could help their student teachers during this fragile and sensitive period in reflecting on their previous personal experiences and understanding their professional selves. I agree with Olsen (2008, p.38) that getting student-teachers to talk about their personal experiences is neither "possible nor ethical", however mentors should employ "strategic ways to

encourage students, themselves, to become more conscious and in control of their embedded, holistic professional development process and effects". An example of this could be sharing their experiences in teaching with their student-teachers, this could help them to reflect and critically examine their embedded beliefs and teaching philosophies which will shape their professional identities. In other words, when mentors share their experiences with pre-service teachers they enable them to probe deeply into their constructed ideas before starting teaching and critically reflect on their effectiveness. While these reflections might help pre-service teachers to reflect on their prior experiences, they "might allow for looking ahead at the future practice or a future way of thinking that could inform teacher development" (Conway 2001, Cited in Beauchamp and Thomas 2009, p. 183). This means that novice teachers will be able to reflect on the image of a teacher they wanted to be prior to embarking to the profession as well as think and reflect about who they want to become.

Another recommendation was offered by one research participant Mellissa, regarding the length of the practicum. Though Mellissa's experience during the practicum was positive, she claimed that longer periods would help student teachers in developing their teaching competencies. Thus, she voiced a need to take the training programme in different school contexts for one year as the majority of the mentors do not accept student-teachers' especially those with exam classes because they have to finish the programme. I acknowledge that the practicum cannot anticipate all the problems that novice teachers might experience in the future (Veenman 1984), but the important aspect here is to familiarise student-teachers with teaching and the realities of the classroom which will enable them to reflect on "who they want to become".

### **9.2.3 Institutional support**

With regard to novice teachers' transition period, most of them recalled positive and supportive experiences with their colleagues except for Kahina (see section 6.4). However they also reported the role of the administration in undermining their teacher identities. The findings

suggested that marginalization from the principal often resulted in a negative emotion and a sense of disempowerment as was the case with Mellissa. Thus institutional administrators like the principal should consider the intertwined relationship between novice teachers' identities and their workplace. They should provide them with more space to vocalise and articulate their emotions regarding various aspects. Furthermore, as was shown in chapter 6, novice teachers' professional identity was also tied up to their capacities to exert authority with their students in order to maintain the discipline. The administration then should help novice teachers in their professional development by providing the support needed regarding this issue. Early career teachers would feel more comfortable and confident to exert their authority if they feel they are supported by more powerful figure in their school as was the case with Mellissa. Moreover, principals should create more opportunities within their schools for novice teachers to engage in different activities and interact with other colleagues. These activities were found to be beneficial with Dihia who volunteered to take part of the students' activities organised by her principal (see section 7.3)

The findings also draw attention to the significance of positive feedback and emotional support provided by colleagues in the development of teacher identity. Though novice teachers viewed themselves as knowledgeable in their field and they showed resistance to the approaches and methods used by their colleagues, they also acknowledged the constructive feedback and emotional support they received from their colleagues, inspectors and others. Thus, it would be beneficial for evaluators like principals, inspectors and experienced colleague, to provide novice teachers with constructive feedback which could promote novice teachers' perception of themselves as professional teachers. In other words, evaluators' role should not be limited to sit in the back of the classroom and make comments on aspects that did not work during the session as was the case with Dihia during her principal's visit. While constructive feedback and positive support proved to be beneficial in strengthening novice teachers' identities, data also highlighted the role of novice teachers as agent of change. Novice teachers should be given more space to

rely on their personal experiences and reflect on them while teaching. Inspectors and principals particularly should encourage them to develop their teaching methods and make sense of their teacher identities. An example of this would be trusting their teaching and providing them with more space to be creative without being obliged to follow blindly the instructions of the book or the curriculum.

### **9.3 Limitations**

Conducting this research in various school contexts and with participants who have diverse personal and professional backgrounds has generated valuable insights to understanding the process of professional identity. However, this research also suffered from unavoidable limitations which need to be examined. The first limitation concerns the length of the study. I am aware that more insights into professional identity construction could be gained through a longitudinal study. In other words, as was suggested in findings, novice teachers' identity is a complex process which entails interaction with others and personal and professional aspects which cannot be captured in a short period. Furthermore, due to limited time and access I could only visit my participants during the interviews. Such limitation narrowed the depth of the study. Secondly, this study was conducted with two groups of beginning teachers. It focused on the perceptions and experiences of early career teachers without accounting for the perspective of others like colleagues, students and principals. Given the importance of interaction with others in constructing professional identity, it would have been beneficial to include their views as they might have added useful and additional perspective to the study. This could enrich the findings and could provide more insights into the construction of novice teachers' identities and could also further explain the concept of communities of practice.

This research did not scrutinise aspects like age. Yet some findings implied various facts about it and it was interpreted briefly in the findings section. Similarly exploring the distinction between novice-teachers graduated from a public university and teachers' college was not one of the research aims however through the comments of some participants this subject was briefly interpreted.

Other limitations derived from the methodological side of this research. Even though this research implemented various data tools such as interviews, written reflections and researcher field notes to gain a profound understanding of teachers' identities, it was noted that the absence of classroom observation made it difficult to draw conclusions about teachers' identities in practice. In other words, it was difficult to know the degree to which their imagined identities were enacted in practice. While classrooms constitute a major space in understanding teacher identity, observing the engagement of NQTs with others in their staffrooms, different school activities and during school-meetings could generate more depth to understanding practiced identities.

Though the sample of this study consisted of novice teachers with both one year teaching experience and no experience at all, it was limited in the sample of the participants. The number of female participants are more than males. In this study there are only two male teachers. This limitation might have narrowed the findings of this research.

Finally, the data was analysed inductively and thus focusing on themes which emerged from the data rather than a complex description of each participant profile. Despite the case study examples that I used to illustrate deeply the complexity of teacher identity, this research failed to provide a deep analysis of each novice teacher.

#### **9.4 Suggestions for further research**

The limitations mentioned above could help researchers in designing their future research. I would suggest that conducting a longitudinal study would generate an in-depth understanding to

the process of identity formation. As was shown in chapter 2, professional identity involves both the person and others. Thus, a longer study could capture a comprehensive account of the phenomenon. Conducting a study before novice teachers enter teacher education and lasting through their teacher training preparation and first year of teaching would provide more details to the development of their professional identities. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to provide an account for each teacher to provide more depth for teacher identity development. In addition to that, further studies should consider the role of colleagues, mentors and other stakeholders within the school culture when conducting a research on teacher identity. Their views might shed light on other factors that affect teacher identity.

As the present study relied on interviews as the main data source accompanied with NQTs' written reflection and researcher' journal, it would be worthwhile to broaden the scope of the data tools. This study revealed the importance of interviews in understanding NQTs' earlier experiences. Another way of exploring teacher identity might be through using narrative inquiry as its main basic. Moreover, further research on teacher identity could consider the possibility of implementing observations and extending visits to the schools in order to generate complex data regarding the process of professional identity development. In other words, classroom observations followed by discussions with teacher focusing particularly on their professional development would generate a deeper understanding of teacher identity.

Further research is also recommended explore teacher identity with both male and female teachers. This diversity would highlight other aspects of professional identity that this research might have failed to capture.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: The objectives of the teaching practice

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية  
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي  
جامعة ~~الجزائر~~  
كلية الآداب واللغات  
اتفاقية التريـص



بمعية ~~الجامعة~~ كلية الآداب واللغات  
الممثلة من طرف السيد العميد: ~~العميد~~

من جهة

المؤسسة أو الهيئة: .....

الممثلة من طرف: .....

من جهة أخرى.

في إطار تجسيد التعاون بين وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي ووزارة التربية الوطنية في مجال الدعم التكويني تم الاتفاق على ما يلي:

#### • المادة الأولى: أحكام عامة

تخضع هذه الاتفاقية لأحكام المادة 6 من المرسوم التنفيذي رقم 13-306 المؤرخ في شوال عام 1434 الموافق 31 غشت سنة 2013، والمتضمن تنظيم التربيـصات الميدانية و في الوسط المهني لفائدة الطلبة وأحكام القرار رقم 19 المؤرخ في 21 جانفي 2015 و المتعلق بطبيعة التربيـصات الميدانية في الوسط المهني لفائدة الطلبة و تقييمها و مراقبتها.

#### • المادة الثانية: موضوع الاتفاقية

تهدف هذه الاتفاقية إلى تحديد إطار تنظيم و سير التربيـصات الميدانية في الوسط المهني لفائدة طلبة كلية الآداب و اللغات، جامعة ~~الجزائر~~ يخصص التربيـص الطلبة المسجلين لنيل شهادة الليسانس / الماستر في كلية الآداب و اللغات .

#### • المادة الثالثة: أهداف التربيـص

يهدف التربيـص التكويني إلى السماح للطلاب بتطبيق معارفه النظرية و المنهجية التي تحصل عليها خلال تربيـصه و انجاز مشروع نهاية الدراسة بتحضير مذكرة .  
يهدف التربيـص إلى تحضير الطالب للحياة المهنية، و يندرج التربيـص ضمن المسار البيداغوجي للطلاب و هو إجباري للحصول على شهادة الليسانس / الماستر.  
تحدد نشاطات التربيـص من طرف المؤسسة الجامعية أو مؤسسة أو إدارة الاستقبال و ذلك حسب برنامج التكوين المتوفر.

#### • المادة الرابعة: مواضيع التربيـصات و تنظيم العمل

تترك مواضيع التربيـصات و كذا مخططات عمل المتربيـصين و الأهداف المرجوة من التربيـصات لتقدير المشرفين على التربيـصات و تحدد حسب برنامج الدراسات و موضوع نهاية الدراسة المصادق عليه من طرف الأستاذ الباحث للمؤسسة الجامعية بموافقة الهيئات البيداغوجية المعنية بالتكفل بالتربيـصات في المؤسسة أو إدارة الاستقبال .

#### • المادة الخامسة: تعيين المؤظريـن و مسؤولي التربيـصات

تعين المؤسسة الجامعية أستاذًا باحثًا مؤظرا للتربيـص و تعين المؤسسة المستقبلة مسؤولًا للتربيـص.  
تعين الإطارات التقنية (مسؤولو التربيـص) المكلفة بمتابعة المتربيـصين من طرف مدير المؤسسة و يجب أن يكونوا ذو كفاءة و يحوزوا خمس (5) سنوات من الخبرة على الأقل.

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية  
وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي  
جامعة ~~الجزائر~~  
كلية الآداب واللغات  
اتفاقية الترتيب



بمبادرة ~~جامعة الجزائر~~ كلية الآداب واللغات  
المتثلة من طرف السيد العميد : ~~العميد~~

من جهة

المؤسسة أو الهيئة: .....

المتثلة من طرف: .....

من جهة أخرى

في إطار تجسيد التعاون بين وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي ووزارة التربية الوطنية في مجال الدعم التكويني تم الاتفاق على ما يلي :

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وأحكام القرار رقم 19 المؤرخ في 21 جانفي 2015 و المتعلق بطبيعة الترتيبات الميدانية في الوسط المهني لفائدة الطلبة و تقييمها و مراقبتها.

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يخص الترتيب الطلابي المسجلين لنيل شهادة الليسانس / الماستر في كلية الآداب و اللغات .

• المادة الثالثة: أهداف الترتيب

يهدف الترتيب التكويني إلى السماح للطلاب بتطبيق معارفه النظرية و المنهجية التي تحصل عليها خلال تربصه و انجاز مشروع نهاية الدراسة بتحضير مذكرة.  
يهدف الترتيب إلى تحضير الطالب للحياة المهنية، و يندرج الترتيب ضمن المسار البيداغوجي للطلاب و هو إجباري للحصول على شهادة الليسانس / الماستر.  
تحدد نشاطات الترتيب من طرف المؤسسة الجامعية أو مؤسسة أو إدارة الاستقبال و ذلك حسب برنامج التكوين المتوفر.

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تترك مواضيع الترتيبات و كذا مخططات عمل المترربين و الأهداف المرجوة من الترتيبات لتقدير المشرفين على الترتيبات و تحدد حسب برنامج الدراسات و موضوع نهاية الدراسة المصادق عليه من طرف الأستاذ الباحث للمؤسسة الجامعية بموافقة الهيئات البيداغوجية المعنية بالتكفل بالترتيب في المؤسسة أو إدارة الاستقبال .

• المادة الخامسة: تعيين المؤطرين و مسؤولي الترتيبات

تعين المؤسسة الجامعية أستاذا باحثا مؤطرا للترتيب و تعين المؤسسة المستقبلة مسؤولا للترتيب.  
تعين الإطارات التقنية (مسؤولو الترتيب) المكلفة بمتابعة المترربين من طرف مدير المؤسسة و يجب أن يكونوا ذو كفاءة و يحوزوا خمس (5) سنوات من الخبرة على الأقل.

**Appendix B: Ali's example of the observation notes during the practicum**

	Remarks & observations.
us. sion abt Do you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very crowded class.</li> <li>• The teacher has very good relationships with the Ls.</li> <li>• She asks for their personal tendencies.</li> </ul>
While ivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• She has a good amount of general culture.</li> <li>• The learners are very motivated and vivid.</li> </ul>
orally. the picture board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nice use of the white-board.</li> </ul>
lect on it. p do. tivity + seller= l" => adj.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To stop the noise, the teacher knocks on the desk and sometimes shouts at troublesome pupils.</li> </ul>

## Appendix C: The evaluation sheet

Université de   
Faculté des Lettres et des Langues

### FICHE D'EVALUATION DE STAGE

Date du stage : du ..... au .....  
Sujet du stage :

Obligatoire (intégré dans le cursus)  non obligatoire (non intégré dans le cursus)

#### ETUDIANT STAGIAIRE

<i>Nom</i>	
<i>Prénom</i>	
<i>Adresse</i>	
<i>Téléphone</i>	
<i>Adresse électronique</i>	
<i>Diplôme préparé en 20...../20....</i>	
<i>Option</i>	

#### ETABLISSEMENT

<i>Nom de l'établissement</i>	
<i>Adresse de l'établissement</i>	
<i>Téléphone/ fax de l'établissement</i>	
<i>Nom et prénom de l'enseignant encadreur</i>	
<i>Adresse de l'encadreur</i>	
<i>Téléphone</i>	
<i>Adresse électronique</i>	

## Appendix D: Ali's reflective journal

### Critères d'évaluation

Exceptionnel	1
Très bon	2
Moyen	3
Insuffisant	4
Non évalué ou sans objet	5

### Comportement général de l'étudiant stagiaire

	1	2	3	4	5
Personnalité	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Aptitudes analytiques	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Motivation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Ponctualité	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Qualité d'expression (orale et écrite)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Communication et interaction avec les apprenants.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

### Aptitudes professionnelles

	1	2	3	4	5
Connaissances techniques pour le travail	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Qualité du travail accompli	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Méthode et organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Initiative, autonomie	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Imagination pratique	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Appréciation globale du stagiaire	1	2	3	4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	14 à 15/20	12 à 13/20	10 à 11/20	08 à 09/20

Commentaires complémentaires :

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Avis sur le rapport de stage :

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Date .....

Note obtenue ...../20

Signature de l'encadreur

(la note maximale ne doit pas dépasser 15/20)

Signature et Cachet de l'établissement

In brief, observing the different classroom activities and analyzing some of the issues that are present in teaching and learning makes me a more aware future teacher. Through the observation phase, I witnessed a material-like teaching/learning setting encompassing the teacher, the learners as well as the whole classroom context, where I acted as a mere observer preparing for his future performance in the subsequent phases. Though the time allocated to this step was clearly insufficient, I could, thankfully, construct an overview about the different concrete characteristics of this noble job which is teaching. I also became conscious of the obstacles and different shortcomings, for which I would soon find a remedy.

# Conclusion

In a nutshell, the practical training was of a great benefit since it offered us the chance to come into direct contact with learners and to put into practice all the theoretical knowledge gathered during our five-year academic curriculum. In other terms, I have reinforced my knowledge about how to design lesson plans, tests, and how to attract learners' attention, motivate them and particularly gain their respect. It was, indeed, an intense socio-emotional and professional experience during which I have learnt a lot about learners and even myself as a teacher. The actual events in the classroom, and with no less importance, our discussions with [redacted], our training teacher, left me heart-broken at the idea of leaving the training institution. It is with an immense amount of experiential information, effective advice as well as a great deal of satisfaction that I end this unforgettable journey.



### **Appendix E: First interview guide**

- What attracted you to teaching?
- When did you start thinking about becoming a teacher?
- How did you decide to become a language teacher?
- How do you think a teacher should be?
- Do you have any memory from your childhood that motivated you to teach?
- When you finished secondary school and you had to make a decision about higher education how did this go?
- Did you have any teaching experience before? If yes, can you tell me about it?
- Did it help you with your classroom practice now?
- Do you think you needed any kind of support when you were doing the training? If yes tell me more about it?
- What would you like to do differently in your training?
- How do you find your teaching practice if you compare it to where you are teaching now?
- If you have had a chance to go back 4 or 5 years in time would you make the same decision?
- What did you do in the first session of teaching?

### **Appendix F: Second interview guide**

- How do you feel about being a teacher so far?
- How do you see yourself as a teacher?
- What sort of a teacher would like to become?
- Do you still have some weaknesses that you are still looking forward to develop?
- Can you give me an example of your strength as a teacher?
- What kind of things you have done to develop your practice?
- Do you work in collaboration with your colleagues?
- Do your colleagues help you to develop your teaching practice?
- Can you give me an example when you did something and thought that it reflected you as a teacher?

- Can you tell me about something that happened to you and increased your motivation to teach?
- Can you tell me something that happened to you and reduced your motivation to teach?
- How do you feel about yourself when something negative or positive happen to you?
- Did you attend any seminar?
- Are you still in contact with the teachers you met during those seminars?
- Tell me about the new reform? What is new in this programme?
- Do you find it interesting?
- What are your exceptions with regard to this new programme?
- How do you see yourself in five years' time?
- Did you buy any materials with other teachers?
- Since becoming a teacher did your experience affected your beliefs about being a teacher?

### **Appendix G: Third interview guide**

- Do you feel as motivated now as you first started teaching?
- What sustained your motivation to teaching?
- Do you think that you have developed professionally as a teacher?
- Do you have a mentor in this school?
- Did any one of your colleagues attend a session with you?
- How do you think your students see you?
- What about your colleagues, how do you think they see you?
- Do you attend school meetings?
- Do you think that you have the freedom to express your views during these school meetings?
- Do you have an example where you felt like neglected or rejected from the school in general?
- How do you feel about teaching in this particular school?
- Do you work in collaboration with other teachers?
- When you prepared your exam, did you share it with your colleagues?
- How did you feel about preparing the exam on your own?
- Do you think that you are treated professionally from the school?
- How do you think you're seen from people outside the school?
- Do you think that the school programme strengthen or weaken your development to become a teacher?
- What have you professionally achieved from these three months?
- What are your short and long terms goal as a teacher?
- How do you see the future of teachers in Algeria?

- Do you think that your work can bring innovation to school?
- What kind of support you think that you might need in this school?
- How do you see yourself as a teacher in five years' time?
- Do you do any private teaching?

## **Appendix H: Participants' information Sheet**

The Quest for Teacher Identity: A Qualitative Study of Professional Identity Construction of Novice English Teachers in Algeria.

### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET**

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by **Lynda Djoudir**

This study is part of a PhD research, and it aims at understanding novice teachers' professional identity. It will adopt a qualitative approach with the use of interviews, observations and teachers reflections as means of data collection.

#### **What will you be required to do?**

Participants in this study will be observed in school and will be asked to take part in a semi-structured interviews with the researcher. They might also be asked to provide the researcher with their teaching reflections reports.

#### **To participate in this research you must:**

Participants in this study will be EFL novice teachers including both males and females in Algerian schools.

You will be asked to take part in interviews and provide me (researcher) with the teaching reflections.

#### **Confidentiality**

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data can only be accessed by **Lynda Djoudir**. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed).

#### **Dissemination of results**

The results of the study will be part of my PhD research and any publication that might come out of this study will use pseudonyms to keep my participants anonymous.

#### **Deciding whether to participate**

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason.

#### **Any questions?**

Please contact **Lynda Djoudir** on **07448186083** or [l.djoudir351@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:l.djoudir351@canterbury.ac.uk). Canterbury Christ Church University, Department of language studies and Applied Linguistics.

**Appendix I: Consent Form**



**CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Project:** The Quest for Teacher Identity: A Qualitative Study of Professional Identity Construction of Novice English Teachers in Algeria.

**Name of Researcher:** Lynda Djoudir **Contact details:**

**Address:**

North Holmes  
Road, Canterbury  
Ct1 1QU  
  
Kent

**Tel:**

07448186083

**Email:**

[Ldjoudir351@canterbury.ac.uk](mailto:Ldjoudir351@canterbury.ac.uk)

**Please initial box**

- 1 I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the  
. above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
- 2 I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to  
. withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- 3 I understand that any personal information that I provide to the  
. researchers will be kept strictly confidential
- 4 I agree to take part in the above study.  
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Name of Participant

---

Date

---

Signature

---

Name of Person taking  
consent (if different from  
researcher)

---

Date

---

Signature

---

Researcher

---

Date

---

Signature

**Lynda Djoudir**

Copies: 1 for participant

1 for researcher

## **Appendix J: Questions that have been generated from the pilot study**

- Do you feel that the school programme or curriculum strengthen or weaken your commitment to become a teacher?
- How did you plan to teach English language?
- How are you teaching it now?
- Why did you choose to become a language teacher?
- Who helped you to take such a decision?

## Appendix K: Sample of the initial coding process

Researcher and Melissa greeting each other.

Researcher: what attracted you to teaching?

Melissa: at the beginning, I wanted just to teach because of my parents because both of them are teachers and I like the job especially for women I think that it is the most suitable job for women. What about the language why English is because I was influenced by teacher of English in High school, she was like an idol she seemed to like her job very much, she was bringing to us songs and videos and she said that we are allowed to sing in English any time we want.

Researcher: you have mentioned so many important thing here. You have said that you parents are teachers. Are they teachers of English?

Melissa: no of science. My mother is a teacher of science but my father was a teacher of physiques but he stopped teaching.

Researcher: did you like English when you were in middle school?

Melissa: yes even in middle school I had great teachers of English; even those teachers made me love English but at that time I loved French too because my teachers of French were great too but I have chosen English as most preferable language in high school.

Researcher: why do you think that teaching is the preferable job for women?

Melissa: because I guess they have time for chores they have time for their children, they have time for their homes and taking care of their kids more than other jobs especially for examples like doctors they do not have time for their kids and their homes as teachers, and because of the holidays.

Researcher: according to you what are the criteria of a good teacher?

Melissa: flexibility, I guess that it's a must for a teacher to be flexible because the generations are different. In one class, you may have many types of learners who use different types of learning strategies. The teacher must be flexible, must choose what is appropriate and what fits the most their students' needs, he must try to understand them because each one of them has his way of thinking. I must switch from one method to another according to my learners needs and according to their thinking. I think that flexibility is a must for any teacher.

Researcher: can you give me an example?

Melissa: this is what I try to apply with my learners. I try to design and plan my activities according to the learning strategies. For example, some of them are visual learners they love to see everything written on the board we have to give them every piece of information. Some of them are auditory learners they love listening and they learn most from hearing. As their teachers, we must give enough explanation to everything and other students may be those who memorise by heart so we have to give them rules, as this is the way that suits them the most.

Researcher: you have been teaching almost for two months, how did you learn to see their ways of learning?

Melissa: When I was a student at the ENS, we made a research about this. They provided us with types of

activities that can suit any type of learner and they taught us how to design an activity, which can suit all these types of learners. For example, you design an activity in grammar where you can attract the visual and the auditory and ones who memorize by heart at the same time.

Researcher: so you are teaching 1<sup>st</sup> and 3years

Mellissa: most of them are in scientific stream

Researcher: do you have any memory from your childhood that motivated to teaching?

Mellissa: I do not remember any teacher in primary school who made me loving teaching.

Researcher: what about your parents.

Mellissa: Yes, **my parents made me love the job** because sometimes they were treating us the same way they were treating their students. I mean they do not get angry that fast, they are all the time afraid to hurt us like they do to their students. for example in the classroom you do your best in order not to hurt your students you give an advice but in way where you do not make your student as he is vexed so they do the same at home



		<p>and this was my aim to be a teacher. This was the first thing that pushed me to be a teacher. (Samir 1<sup>st</sup> interview p01)</p> <p><b>Amel:</b> to be honest what attracted me to teaching is that it's a noble job ... (Amel 1<sup>st</sup> interview p01)</p> <p><b>Dihia:</b> I always wanted to be a teacher, to be honest, I always taught that it was a noble job (Dihia 1<sup>st</sup> interview p1)</p> <p><b>Fatima:</b> I would say that teaching is a noble job especially for women. (Fatima 1<sup>st</sup> interview p01)</p> <p><b>Fatima:</b> Here in Algeria for example the best job for women is teaching... because of the mentality of Algerians, in other countries maybe it is not the same; it's not me who think that way all the Algerians. In Algeria in our societies the best job for women is teaching, I don't know many men think that the suitable job in Algeria for women is teaching. (Fatima 1<sup>st</sup> interview p01)</p> <p><b>Mellissa:</b> .... I like the job especially for women I think that it is the most suitable job for women ....because I guess they have time for chores they have time for their children, they have time for their homes and taking care of their kids more than other jobs especially for examples like doctors they do not have time for their kids and their homes as</p>	<p>that society imposes this job for women, however <b>Amel</b> considers it an appropriate job for women as they are much more respected in that job than others. <b>Mellissa</b> thinks that teaching would give her time to look after her children and spend time with her family later on in her life.</p>
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			<p>teachers, and because of the holidays. (Mellissa 1<sup>st</sup> interview p01)</p> <p><b>Amel:</b> .... I prefer teaching especially because I am a women, and women in Algeria are preferable to work as a teacher, because of their time maybe, and it is a place where women is respected. (Amel 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 1)</p>	
<b>RQ1</b>	<b>Thinking about being an English teacher</b>	<p>Self-desire</p> <p>Transmitting knowledge and raising generations</p> <p>Childhood experience</p>	<p><b>Amel:</b> ... it was my dream since my childhood... (Amel 1<sup>st</sup> interview p01) And of course teaching is a job where I can produce that's why exactly I have chosen this job when I produce when I see my fruit when I raise children, educate them, provide them with knowledge .... (Amel 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 01)</p> <p><b>Ali:</b> and I like the fact of transmitting knowledge to other generations that is what really attracted me to teaching (Ali 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 01)</p> <p><b>Samir:</b> Second of all, I want to give something or anything I know to other generations so I will share, even if it is a little thing, with others(Samir 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 01)</p> <p><b>Dihia:</b> it was maybe when I was a child I play the role of teacher with my neighbours and so on ... I took all my neighbours and even though they are older than me I ask them to sit there in the yard and we take the wall not the board (laughter) and I start</p>	<p>Participants here started to seriously consider the idea of becoming a teacher. Though <b>Ali</b> was raised in a family of teachers, his decision to become a teacher was taken once he was in secondary school and this was due to his teacher influence. Teachers' influence played an important role in participants' decision. This influence was in both personal level and teaching methods. Work opportunities was also a limitation for most of the participants in this study. Sonia wanted to be a translator but she could not follow her dream as she knew she would not find a job later on.</p>

			<p>teaching... (Dihia 1<sup>st</sup> interview p1 and 2)</p> <p><b>Amel:</b> ....I play with my friends and my sister I prefer to be their teachers I write on the wall, and sometimes I wear the uniform of my father this was my preferable game. (Amel 1<sup>st</sup> interview p3)</p>	
<b>RQ1</b>	<b>Final decision to become a teacher</b>	<p>Teacher influence</p> <p>Love of the language</p> <p>Teacher advice</p> <p>Being obliged to teach</p>	<p><b>Dihia:</b> I had the desire to be a teacher when I was in middle school, I always loved my teacher it's not an English teacher to be honest it was the teacher of history I always loved his way of teaching how he makes us love the subject ... and I was fond of his personality and the way he makes us learn. (Dihia 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 01)</p> <p><b>Dihia:</b> English for me is an international language and I always hated French (Dihia 1<sup>st</sup> interview p2)</p> <p><b>Sonia:</b> let me tell you that, I love English (Sonia 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 01)</p> <p><b>Amel:</b> I fall in love with English somehow, I like English.... (Amira 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 02)</p> <p><b>Dihia:</b> when I was in the high school in the third grade I have a teacher of German he told me that you have to do this and this he gave me pieces of advice ... my teacher of German oriented me as I was amongst the best students to go to ENS Dihia 1<sup>st</sup> interview p3)</p>	<p>Here again participants had to make a final decision about becoming a teacher. Interestingly two participants <b>Salima</b> and <b>Fatima</b> did teaching because their parents obliged them to do it</p>

			<p><b>Fatima:</b> my family pushed me to choose teaching that is why I followed the way they draw for me. (Fatima 1<sup>st</sup> interview p02)</p> <p><b>Salima:</b> yes I wanted to choose law but my family did not allow me to choose law they proffered that I go to ENS to study at ENS (Salima 1<sup>st</sup> interview p02)</p>	
<b>RQ1</b>	<b>Teaching perceptions</b>	<p>Teacher as a psychologist and caring about students' conditions</p> <p>Long life learning</p> <p>Multiple strategy use</p>	<p><b>Dihia:</b> for me I think understanding the learners, I think I have tried this from the first day and I told them that everyone who has anything at home even though you may be shy not talking to me but from the first beginning I told them you have to talk to me for example if you do not bring your copybook or you did something which is not in its place for example if you have troubles at home I will be easy with you but if you don't tell me and if I say something that doesn't fit you, he will be violent with me and the same with me if he does something wrong I will be the same so it will be... (Dihia 1<sup>st</sup> interview p2)</p> <p><b>Salima:</b> I think a good teacher first before he has to be a psychologist first before being a teacher, he will deal with adolescents...(Salima 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 01)</p> <p><b>Amel:</b> to be a long life learning because we are living in a world that change everything change, we have to adopt</p>	<p>Participants in this study stressed on the idea of caring about students' feelings and troubles. <b>Sonia</b> believes that her students have different cultural backgrounds thus they need to be treated differently.</p>



			<p>want them to hate me, I do not want them to feel marginalized so I really ought to accept them and accept that they are different, it is not impossible but it is not that easy , theoretically speaking you can say you make your lesson, you study some psychology and some didactics and everything would be alright, no it is not (Sonia 1<sup>st</sup> interview 03 and 04)</p>	
<b>RQ3</b>	<b>Training positive experiences/negative experiences</b>	Mentors' support	<p><b>Dihia:</b> I did a training in Algiers in the capital... the learners there have a level I spoke in English and I did everything in English and all of them were participating and they know what I am talking about and I did not feel myself that I am tired because they helped me when I give them tasks they do everything... my teacher trainer was very helpful and she helps us and gave us everything for example she is not the kind of teacher who gives you each time negative point she all the time gives us positive points ...she is not the kind of teachers who stayed in the back and destructs and she always smile and believe me the psychological side play an interesting way she made me love what I have done with her and now (Dihia 1<sup>st</sup> interview p3)</p> <p><b>Ali:</b> I had a supervisor she was very nice she</p>	<p>Participants here reflected on the various aspects they learned during their training. This period was their first contact with students. Some of them were excited and other nervous. Apart from <b>Fatima</b> who claimed that her training was not helpful, others were satisfied with it.</p>

		<p>Losing fear</p>	<p>advised us she guided us .... She encouraged us to work... (Ali 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 02)</p> <p><b>Dihia:</b> it helped me a lot yes, because facing the learners one time you will lose the fear and after performing with tem it will be ok ....(Dihia 1<sup>st</sup> interview p3)</p> <p><b>Fatima:</b> it helped me only in one case which is facing the audience that's all. The first time when I faced students I was afraid, and they are not even your students, you think how the situation is , by time I started losing this fear (Fatima 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 3)</p>	
		<p>Pedagogical preparations</p>	<p><b>Amel:</b> it helped me so much...concerning the pedagogical side how to prepare a lesson how to write in teachers documents, you know we have so many documents to fill... Amel 1<sup>st</sup> interview p04)</p> <p><b>Salima:</b> yes for sure, how to make lesson plans, how to present, the steps for presenting ... (Salima 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 03)</p> <p><b>Fatima:</b> the trainer was just giving us orders to do this and that try to do this lecture for tomorrow, for example he shows us how to do reading and writing but we don't know exactly how the teacher did his lesson plan we did not see the lesson plan of the teacher, we had a module in the university about how to make a lesson plan, so we follow just the techniques of our</p>	

			teachers in the university., and the trainer did not help us in making the lesson plan. (Fatima 1 <sup>st</sup> interview p 3)	
<b>RQ3</b>	<b>Training issues</b>	Training Length	<p><b>Ali</b> : I would have extended the time of the training because it was only for three months I would prefer that the training took the whole semester let's say six months half year. (Ali 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 02)</p> <p><b>Amel</b>: Maybe the period, it is so short for me, one month is not enough, I prefer to have more training because it is beneficial for me, so I prefer to have more time to learn more, because the more we see the more we learn . (Amel 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 05)</p> <p><b>Melissa</b>: the period was not enough, and in fact this was the suggestion we made to the head of department of English in ENS before we leave we said that one month is not enough and since we were in ENS we studied for five years and we had only a month of practice I think it's not enough. I think that we need one year of training maybe in different schools because the majority of high schools do not accept to receive any trainees for a long period of time. Because of these problems in classroom, management and curriculum especially third year classes the majority trainers do not allow trainees to teach these classes so we gave a solution of doing the training in different</p>	Many teachers here reported that the period of the training was not enough and they needed more time to practice. <b>Ali</b> and <b>Melissa</b> made a suggestion to their departments in teachers college to extend the period.

		<p>Lack of guidance</p>	<p>school for one year. (Mellissa 1<sup>st</sup> interview p05)  <b>Fatima:</b> during the training I made a lot of mistakes, so I needed advice from teachers to tell me about how to use materials and so on, the teacher was just asking me to do this and that(Fatima 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 04)   <b>Salima:</b> We did not know how to teach some skills like writing so I had no idea how to teach writing skill (Salima 1<sup>st</sup> interview p 02)</p>	
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### **Appendix M: First interview sample transcript**

Greeting each other

Researcher: let's start with general questions related to teaching. What attracted you to teaching?

Ali: Frankly speaking, I have been raised in a family of teachers. My father is a teacher, my mother is a teacher too, and I like the fact of transmitting knowledge to other generations that is what really attracted me to teaching.

Researcher: are your parents teachers of English? Ali: No, they are primary school Arabic teachers.

Researcher: when did you start thinking about becoming a teacher?

Ali: the idea had really crossed my mind during secondary school I was affected by my teacher of French she was a very excellent teacher and she has done her studies in the higher college of teachers, as I was an excellent student she advised me to take part in that school to become a future educator.

Researcher: what about a language teacher how did you decide to become a language teacher?

Ali: frankly speaking, at the beginning I wanted to become a teacher of Spanish. I was much more interested in Spanish because I have studied foreign languages but then I realised that being a teacher of Spanish and studying at university was not a guarantee for me. I had to choose a language which was taught in higher college for teachers so it was either French or English so I chose English because it is an international language unlike French it is not really used here in Algeria.

Researcher: how do you think a teacher should be?

Ali: For now, I guess that psychological skills are much more important than linguistic skill. A good teacher of course must have an eclectic approach either linguistic or sociolinguistic or discourse he should have all the competencies necessary for the success of his own learners and he should be generous while giving information.

Researcher: do you have any memory from your childhood that motivated you to teaching?

Ali: No, as I told you it started much more in an advanced level when I was in secondary school.

Researcher: when you finished secondary school and you had to make a decision about higher education how did this go?

Ali: Frankly speaking, my decision was motivated by both work opportunities in Algeria as well as my own desire to be a teacher. First, concerning work opportunities if you want to have work here in our country you have to enrol in higher colleges for teachers, which guarantees your job as a teacher. For my own desire I was affected by that teacher and I wanted to be like her to be generous with my learner, to give them knowledge to be understanding.

Researcher: what made her particular?

Ali: her way of dealing with students and her knowledge.

Researcher: do you try to do something like that now?

Ali: Yes, I am trying my best but for the moment, it is in vein. Researcher: let's talk about your training experience?

Ali: I had training in my last year in school in my fifth year it was very exciting at the beginning. It was a new setting for me I was a student and suddenly I had to become a teacher of course I had a supervisor she was very nice she advised us she guided us and it was a very nice experience I enjoyed it and I was a successful trainee.

Researcher: how do you find it if you compare it to where you are teaching now?

Ali: I guess my training was much better than what I am encountering now in my secondary school. Because maybe, it is due to the fact that I am working on the seaborne and X school [previous school] is a great city. people there have contact with languages cultures TV internet but in the place I am working now it is kind of remote place and learners do not really have access to such things. and here in my city, we are much more French speaking than English speaking which is the opposite in X school, there they despise French and prefer English.

Researcher: what would you like to do differently in your training?

Ali: I would have extended the time of the training because it was only for three months I would prefer that the training took the whole semester let's say six months half year.

Researcher: do you think that you needed any kind of support?

Ali: No it was ok I guess everyone did well, me and my colleagues were motivating each other and as I said the trainer was motivating us, the supervisor in the training was a very nice teacher and very experienced teacher she encouraged us to work in the way we did because we have received a lot of theoretical amount of knowledge in the school so she encouraged us to put this amount of knowledge into practice and not being afraid of showing our competencies.

Researcher: If you have had a chance to go back 4 or 5 years in time would you make the same decision?

Ali: to be frank with you no. Because I am really disappointed by how worst our educational system has gone. We became no more knowledge giver but rather subject of criticism. Teachers are seen like only people who seek for money because of the strike mainly. Students do not anymore owe you respect because you have always to monitor them, to be educated, be calm. This is not teaching this is as if you are in a kinder garden so that's why now frankly speaking I do not know if it is just the beginning I see that job does not suit what I want to be.

Researcher: what do you want to be?

Ali: now I am seeking to be a higher education teacher this is my ambitious. Researcher: do you think that there is a difference between the two levels?

Ali: of course, there is a big difference it is a matter of specialization first. Because people who choose to study English at the university, they certainly have some basis in English. They will of course, do whatever they have to improve their level in English and they will certainly respect their teacher, listen to him, seek advice. In secondary school, you are teaching different streams so apart from the foreign languages stream the others do not really pay attention to English. They say that they are much more interested in mathematics those technical subjects so they do not need English even though we always stress the fact that English is an international language you will needed sooner or later but in vein.

Researcher: let's talk about your first session here in your school how did it go?

Ali: to say that I was nervous, no because I had already the opportunity as I said to have my training. The fear of public audience has gone by the training but I was very excited to know how interested my learners are. And just to know the students I like the fact of working with adolescents. I was excited to know about their backgrounds and their knowledge their interests so it was exciting the first session was so successful because I somehow gained the respect of so many.

Researcher: what did you do in the first session?

Ali: I started talking in English but I quickly understood that most of them did not understand what I was saying so I tried to code switch. You know some French some Berber since it is our first language just to transmit the message because I stressed a lot the fact of being respectful to the teacher in order to receive the same respect. I told them also that I am not dictator or I am not here to dictate behaviour. I am just like an older brother because you know I am a very young teacher and I am very close to them and I have students who are older than me. I said I am not a dictator I am like a brother you can ask whatever concerning the course the students were reacting positively to my lecturing lets say.

Researcher: This is the end of the interview, Thank you for your time. Ali: Thank you, I hope I provided you with the information needed

## **Appendix N: Second round interview sample transcript**

Greeting each other.

Researcher: how do you feel about being a teacher so far?

Sonia: I guess that it is like amazing it is not that something difficult, you know almost all teachers say that teaching is difficult and it is not that easy thing but I guess that it is not difficult but I would say challenging. I have never thought that it would be like this. I mean you need really to work hard, I thought it's an easy job. I mean teachers are coming, presenting lessons, and the lessons are like for kids. It means that you are like hmm high graded then them. It means you don't really need to prepare yourself but it is not this way. You need to prepare as hard as you can. You know I do imagine myself always as a soldier at home. Your nights are going to be days there is a kind of transformation in your life. I mean you will not sleep at night and you have to prepare. A lesson of one hour would take three hours of preparation. So it is like teaching is challenging really. There are so many questions that should be asked actually like, am I going to make every single thing in the lesson clear? Will my learners love me? Will they respect me? Will they understand my lesson? You know there are many things that should be taken into account when saying teaching is challenging. I do repeat that teaching is challenging really. I mean it is really a big challenge especially for novice teachers because we are not used to this rhythm of work. I didn't imagine things to be this way to tell you the truth. Don't get me wrong I love teaching but I've never imagined things to be this way. I didn't prepare myself to be a hard worker this way. I said to myself "oh my god I finished my studies, oh it is really such a thrill" I mean spending nights in revising is over, searching in the library is over, so many things. I mean I didn't take into account that I'm going to spend nights in preparing, I mean I've never imagined that I'm going to spend night in preparing till 3:00 in the morning. I am still studying with them, I do discover thing with them it is not an easy thing it is a challenge it is not difficult but it is a challenge to take. It means you need really to prepare yourself very well a soldier. It means each time you come into the class it is like war to take. It's a battle more than this.

Researcher: how do you see yourself as a teacher?

Sonia: oh no, you know I think this question should be asked to my learners. Look, I do believe in myself so very much I do have a kind of high self-esteem. I don't know if this is good or not but I myself do believe that I deserve to be a here. To tell you the truth this is not my thing I mean even other teachers are telling me the same thing. I do see myself doing my job properly. I do think about learning more than teaching I do think about my learners so very much. I do bear the burden I mean I do always feel like I'm tiring myself a little bit. I'm giving too much. I think

I would say I really deserve to be a teacher and I really think that I've reached my aims. I mean this is as far as the feedback is concerned, my learners do really move me and you know according to the grade they have I guess this is also good. I feel like I've reached the objectives. My learners are really developing their competencies; I've noticed that I've reached my aims. I guess that I'm a little bit good not to tell you that I'm a perfect teacher no one is perfect but still there are a lot of things to learn. The inspector didn't come yet but I'm preparing myself not for him but I'm preparing myself to be the best. I'm preparing myself for my learners and myself because I do have a teaching philosophy to apply and I do it. I guess that this has really succeeded at a certain point.

Researcher: what sort of a teacher would like to become?

Sonia: I want to be a guide, I want to be an adviser, I don't want to be just a teacher chalk and talk it is more than this. Look the relationship between the learner and a teacher I guess and I do believe ahh I mean there is a relation more than a lesson of grammar, vocabulary, or reading you know. There is something behind this, there is something up. I don't want to be like other teachers, coming to the class throwing things, they are going out, and in the exam they are going to correct (sound of disagreement). It is more than this. It is a life run thing so I do believe that I have and I should be a guide to my learners. It is a life thing not a class thing.

Researcher: do you still have some weaknesses that you are still looking forward to develop?

Sonia: yeah, I do have weaknesses. Believe me you need to have a weakness to perfectionate your work. We cannot be perfect without having weaknesses. I would tell you what my weakness is. My weakness is that I do always love giving my learners too much. In the programme, we do have certain limits, you have to give this to your learner and you have to avoid this. For instance, we mention all the rules and we forget about exceptions. For instance comparative and superlative, we do have long adjectives, short adjectives and irregular adjectives. Short adjectives like "real" but we cannot say "realer" we say "more real" so this is an exception. In the programme, you don't have to explain the exception. We cannot say, "You are righter than this" we say, "you are more right". I do mention all this we say "clearer or more clear, simpler or more simple" you see both of them are correct. I do mention them because in real life we do apply exceptions more than rules. The adjective real is commonly used in the frequent language. I do not want to be a slave of the book or the curriculum; I do mention every single thing that is related to real life. I mean my learner when they are going out or listen to music or an interview or something like that they won't be shocked when hearing "more real". The teacher told us that short adjective is plus "er". I don't want them to face such situations so I do mention everything. I do feel myself like I'm giving too much. This is a weakness we don't

have to give too much to the learners because they're becoming lazy. They know that you are going to give them everything. I mean must know what is much and what is enough. I need to stop at certain moment in the lesson. For instance, this lesson of superlative and comparative took me three hours and this is too much. In the syllabus, you have to take only one hour. I do take like three hours. Time management and the amount of knowledge that I should give to my learners and handwriting. Handwriting is a weakness too; I don't know how to write on the board I do find difficulties. I do speak a lot than writing. I didn't have the opportunity to train myself on writing on the board.

Researcher: what are your strengths as teacher?

Sonia: I do love my learners too much, I do care about them, I do feel comfortable on being on the board, I do love the audience watching me, and I do not have any complex. I do play with my learners I do really enjoy teaching. I love coming every morning here so this is a strength in comparison with other teachers they don't like being here. I do love being here I do love teaching. I do love seeing my learners, I do really care about them, and I know all their problems. I know all the learners who smoke and I know all of those who are taking drugs and all this stuff. I am really wrecking the elbows with my learners this is strength I guess here.

Researcher: what kind of things you have done to develop your teaching practice?

Sonia: I do attend so many conferences here and somewhere. I do ask a lot of questions, I do teach a lot, I do speak a lot. I am working in the embassy right now, this means I am developing my language I am developing my teaching philosophy too. I am trying to learn from other teachers. I do always ask too many questions I am always questioning and trying to be self-disciplined. I guess that these are a little points that I try to undertake in order to be a good teacher.

Researcher: what is your job in the embassy?

Sonia: We are taught methods of teaching, we are presenting and we are talking in order to develop the oral competencies. We are learning how to deal with other cultures because there are Americans, British, and Algerians. You are trying to teach different cultures so there is a kind of interculturality. So, this is an opportunity because here for instance, I do have learners who are not Muslim we do have atheist and Christians in my school. So this is an opportunity for me to get used to different situations. In the ENS we have some teachers who are Americans. I mean, I tried to integrate myself with them. This is why I do work with them. I do work with an Egyptian teacher who was born in Florida. He was teaching us workshops on cultures and something like that. So I tried to integrate myself with him and talk to him I said to myself that I have to work with Americans in order to develop my language and my thinking too. He allowed

me to be part of their show and workshops. I enjoyed being there I mean it was really such an opportunity. They used to teach us games and different workshops.

Researcher: did anyone help you inside the school?

Sonia: yes for sure. All the teachers are helping me. We are working always in a collaborative way. I do always give them things and then they do give me more things. There is kind of exchange. For instance, when preparing a lesson, I do prepare a lesson in a certain way and they do prepare it in another way so we combine things. If my lesson is the best, they will take mine and if their lesson is better than mine I am going to undertake theirs. Sometimes we do prepare things in a PowerPoint some teachers do not do that. They don't know how the power point is working so I do prepare the PowerPoint myself all the videos and so forth and I do give them my things. They do give me advice. They are always telling me that I am teaching them. I don't feel so but they do always tell me that because they have been taught at university which is different from ENS. They are not made for teaching I am made for teaching. I do have a lacking thing is that the experience plays an important role. You see time management you know what is good and what is not. I do give them new things I am like the new generation of teaching. They are like I wouldn't say the old generation but they are more experienced.

Researcher: tell me about something that happened to you and increased your motivation to teach?

Sonia: the headmaster increases my motivation a lot. I mean each time I ask him to do something he would say "omg I like it". Each time he motivates me and he raises my desire to do more and more things. He is like nudging me, pushing me and I like it.

Researcher: tell me about something that happened to you and reduced your motivation? Sonia: till now nothing happened to me.

Researcher: Since becoming a teacher did, your experience of teaching changed your beliefs about teaching.

Sonia: I do always create a kind of balance and parallelism between my beliefs and the terrain. I always try to create this kind of balance. It means I do not do things when I don't believe in. I do work as far as my beliefs are concerned. For instance my belief is not to finish the programme because all the teachers are about to finish the third unit. They started the third unit but I didn't. Because I'm spending all the time repeating and repeating. I always see if the competence is evolved or not. When the competence of the learners is not evolved, it means that the learner is not able. Each time we prepare a lesson we write the objective of the lesson "by the end of the lesson my learners will be able to use comparative and superlative". I do present the lesson and we do activities. I do give them an extra activity and I see that half of the learners were not able

to compare and use the adjectives properly. This means that my learners were not able to use comparative and superlatives. I have to repeat the lesson again and again in order to reach this competency. My aim is not to finish the programme and satisfy the inspector and the administration. My aim is to enable my learners to reach their competencies and use the lesson appropriately. To enable my learners to trigger the lesson in their hands. It means that the lesson would become a life thing. This is why I'm a bit late, I do come back and do what we call remediation.

Researcher: let's talk about the conferences you have attended?

Sonia: I have attended the conference of CBA and the principle of CBA in Tugurt two weeks ago. I have attended another one in Algiers in addition to other conferences about human development. The human development was in Arabic and it was about how to deal with learners, how to deal with people, how to enhance the positivity of the learners. I've learned so many things like the principle of presenting, the principle of treating people, principles of dealing with learners, principles of talking with learners, the principles of presenting a lesson and the principle of wearing too. When you wear something and your shoes are like damaged you don't have to come to the class with because all the learners are going to focus on your shoes and not the knowledge you give them. The way of clothing, the way of presenting, the way of standing in front of the audience, the way of opening discussion, the way we talk, the way we say hello, the way we encourage learners, the way we give the opportunity to the learner in order to participate. These are the things I've been taught during the session of human development. This conference is all about positive and negative energy. For example when you are smiling, you are sending a positive energy to the learners.

Researcher: do you have any mentor in this school?

Sonia: Normally I should have one trainer but all the teachers are training me even the teacher of French, the teacher of Arabic. You know I do always ask them how we do that and that because experience plays an important role. I don't have experience I have only four months of teaching and it is not enough I'm still learning. I guess all the teachers are covering me and helping me. I feel like I'm spoiled. I am not going to tell you that only teachers of English are helping me but all the teachers are helping me I feel like spoiled.

Researcher: do you attend sessions with your colleagues?

Sonia: for sure, I do attend sessions sometimes, they do attend with me, and they do give me feedback.

Researcher: how do you feel about the idea of observing and being observed?

Sonia: it is a good thing it's more practical, it reminds me of the training. I guess it is a good

thing because sometimes we learn things in a theoretical way but we need to have something practical. We need to be facing the audience, we need to present something. People are going to observe you and they would say there is something wrong and this is good. They are going to give you what we call the warm feedback and the cool feedback. The warm feedback is the thing that you do appropriately it's like good and the cool feedback is something that should be improved the time because when you are there presenting a lesson you won't see things. You won't feel yourself, you need someone to watch you, to observe your movement, the way you write and to present the way you say things and to watch any single thing you do. I mean this is an important thing for me. I don't know about other teachers but according to me, according to my personality and the way I believe things should be I guess it is a good point. This is the end of the interview, thank you so much for your cooperation.

## **Appendix O: Third round interview transcript sample**

Greeting each other.

Researcher: do you feel as motivated now as you first started teaching?

Mellissa: well, according to the results, I feel really demotivated extremely demotivated the only two classes that are motivating me and their results and behaviours are the first year classes. About third year classes they are really demotivating I had really catastrophic marks especially in the exam and I have discovered so many weaknesses in their level like during the lesson of writing they seemed weak but they seemed weaker in the exam. Some students have left blank spaces in writing. Whenever there is, something related to writing even re- writing sentences they have left a blank space. I don't want to shock you, imagine in the writing expression they were copying the text ad with mistakes so this really demotivated me. They did the same even in Arabic. They left a blank space in writing expression.

Researcher: what sustained your motivation to teaching?

Mellissa: well, I have hope in my first year students, I think they are really hard workers and I imagine if I keep teaching these classes they will be great students. Because comparing to their level in the beginning of this term, they were really too weak. I have the result of the diagnostic test I had catastrophic marks which meant that their level in the middle school was weak. Now I guess they are in progress, they are getting better, they understand better, they have learned how to write for example paragraphs taking into consideration the form for example topic sentence and punctuations. I mean all the things that I have taught them, they have kept them in mind. Some of them have problems in sentence structure but they have kept in mind the notes I taught them. For example, like using the topic sentence they write the topic sentence then they write between brackets this is the topic sentence and in indentation they leave a space and say this is indentation (smiling). It makes me feel happy and hopeful about their levels in the coming years.

Researcher: do you think that you have developed professionally as a teacher?

Mellissa: well, I guess that I can face now some problems that I have never thought I will face them. For example; like classroom management I guess that now I have control over the classroom more than the first days. You know, in the first days I was feeling afraid of any reaction I might do in the classroom. Like sending students out and using punishment with their marks or writing reports but now I feel confident to use all these punishment I am not afraid because I see that I'm not the only one who faces this problem. I mean I see other teachers like not afraid of taking such decisions like sending reports to their parents or using punishment with

marks. I have seen in the continuous evaluation even some teachers gave two and one just for the behaviour so I feel confident to use all these. And I guess that when a student see these marks they will refrain from misbehaving and being careless.

Researcher: do you have in mentor in this school?

Mellissa: no. as I told you we have only two other teachers. One of them is a novice teacher like me and the other one has two years' experience in teaching so she is just helping me in lesson planning or in designing activities. I didn't attend any session with her as we are having teaching in the same hours. A trainer should have ten years' experience.

Researcher: did any one of your colleagues attended a session with you?

Mellissa: no. the headmaster told us that we have to attend lessons with each other and he used to tell stories about him when he was a teacher he said, "We used to attend even with other teachers". I mean not only the subject you are teaching for example I am a teacher of English but I'm going to attend with a teacher of French or teacher of Arabic just for the methodology of teaching. but I didn't do any of these because my timetable is full. I'd like to do something like this but during my training because as you know we have a training in our first year of teaching fifteen sessions I guess with a trainer. You attend eight hours and you teach seven hours. I didn't do this yet as we are waiting for the order of the inspector.

Researcher: is he coming soon?

Mellissa: I don't know maybe tomorrow during the seminar he is going to inform me about his visit.

Researcher: how do you think your students see you?

Mellissa: well, I guess that some students love me so much (laughs). If you have seen my post on Facebook, some of them have written some papers like this and have they written "we love you miss" and some students used to draw hearts on their exam or test sheet so I guess they love me. One staff memeber said that my students prised me and that they are wishing all teachers are like me I don't know if it's true or they are laying (laughs). About third years classes I don't expect them to love me or care about me because they don't have good marks but when I was giving them back their marks I was astonished that some of them felt upset they said " we like English and we like you, we wished we've had better marks just for you". I was a bit choked "laughs" because I didn't expect this they have only two and three and four.

Researcher: how do you want your students to see you?

Mellissa: I just want them to care about my feelings because I'm suffering with them and I'm trying to do my best just for them not for me but sometimes they are carless and they don't

understand that this makes me feel sad. I keep telling them that I'm doing this for them not for me, I am re-explaining for them especially what I hate the most is re-explaining because someone has asked then he/she doesn't pay attention. Going through the whole lesson re-explaining the whole lesson for someone then he doesn't pay attention so I wish they would understand my feelings more.

Researcher: what about your colleagues, how do you think they see you?

Mellissa: seeing my results, I guess that they feel a little bit happy or I don't know how to explain it. Because I guess they didn't expect me to have such results. They said because these classes are very weak I am talking about third year since they have baccalaureate exam. They said that they didn't expect to have these results especially from students they were really surprised. I got some students I never knew them during the lessons but they got seventeen in the exam. I guess it was a surprise for other teachers they didn't expect me to have such results and they didn't expect students to like English or even to have a good score in English because they are careless when it comes to languages especially the scientific stream. They have awful scores in French especially and Arabic. In English comparing to Arabic they are brilliant.

Researcher: why do you think they were surprised?

Mellissa: because I am novice and because they know more about the students. They know they are weak especially in English and French and they know I am a novice teacher they said that maybe I wouldn't be able to control the situation, maybe I would face difficulties maybe I would have had worst then these results.

Researcher: how about your relationship with them?

Merieme: I think it's good. During the class council meetings discussing the averages of the students and the results I guess that I share so many things in common with other teachers. I mean, we agree on some situations of the students. We agree even on the remarks we are going to put in their report card. I guess that there is no big difference between me and them. Sometimes they are asking me the first one in the meeting when they are writing remarks on each student's document so always I am the first one to be asked (laughs). They wanted to know more about my critical thinking I guess they were testing my critical thinking. They wanted to know if I am aware enough to criticise students' results comparing to their behaviours and absences and so on and I don't see any big difference between my critiques and theirs. So I feel happy (laughs).

Researcher: do you attend school meetings?

Mellissa: well, we have education councils they are held in the beginning of the year and we discuss the number of students in classes, we discuss the streams, for students I mean case by

case. For example, why this student is in scientific stream then teachers of scientific subjects would say if he is good or weak so he doesn't deserve or deserve. The decision about the students streams and we have also meetings before the exams I order to agree on the timetable of the exams and invigilation. I didn't attend this one because only teachers responsible for the subject who attended it. One teacher represents each subject.

Researcher: do you think that you have the freedom to express your views during these school meetings?

Mellissa: yes, in the beginning for example when we used to have the meetings of the general assembly which is a meeting between teachers in order to discuss the conditions in the high school for example about cleaning, classes, number of students, school canteen. In the beginning I didn't like it much to express my pinions. I was feeling afraid of them making fun of me because I don't know much in the field but now I feel the urge to express my opinions. Sometimes I just impose my opinion I say "no no don't move from this point I have to say something". Because I found that my opinions are so important. Yes, I didn't value them in the beginning because I thought I didn't know much about it but now I guess I know too much about it so there are no worries to express my opinions.

Researcher: do you have an example where you felt like neglected or rejected from the school in general?

Mellissa: no. well, at the beginning I used to feel this way but nothing happened. It was just a feeling I had without any reason. I was feeling that I am isolated from them and that I'm not part of them because they are older than me so the only one who has less experience than me has 14 or 15 years of experience. Even the age is ahh there is a big gap between our ages. I used to feel alone I was even afraid to talking to them because I was afraid they would say this is a childish teacher (laughs). Because I am too young so maybe they will find my ideas as childish.

Researcher: how did you overcome these ideas?

Mellissa: it was a matter of time for example in the strike other teachers older than me used to say you are a teacher like us. They encouraged me and each time I ask them "can I punish the student" they say "yes of course we're punishing students so you should punish students you're a teacher like us". I was feeling like I don't have the same rights like other teachers but I felt like I have the same rights when they gave me the paper of my salary. You know before this, I heard other teachers talking about this paper then I said "no there is no need to go because I don't have a salary yet so I don't have this paper" then I asked one teacher and I said "what is this paper about can I see, can you explain for me" he they said "you can go and bring yours" so I felt like "yeah I'm a teacher" (laughs). I was feeling like I'm still a student especially that I don't have the salary (laughs).

Researcher: how do you feel about teaching in this particular school?

Mellissa: I guess it's okay. Well, I had only one experience before so I'm going to compare to that experience. My experience during the training in Algiers I guess that this one is much better than the one I had in Algiers. I know of course it's a matter of time. The time I had during my training in Algiers was not enough to know more about teaching, to criticise things, or to know more about my relationship with teachers and students. I guess it's a matter of time, I mean if I had more time during the training maybe I would feel that happy and that confident like I'm feeling now. Now I think that all the hardship I'm liking in it because of those who got results this is motivating and encouraging me to work better. I mean if other students don't have a good results it doesn't mean that I failed. Well, I am evaluating myself I'd like to compare myself with other teachers as well. I mean I'm not just evaluating myself seeing the results of English for example. I mean if a student is so weak that he has a result of 6 in English if he has good results in other subjects it means I failed. All the students I have who don't have averages in English have similar results in other subjects. And I am just evaluating myself seeing the cases of first year students honestly because evaluating myself by seeing especially the classroom of management and economics would be a disaster. They are weak even in the important subjects in their stream for example they are weak in economic and mathematics. You know what "I always try to delete that thought that whatever I do for them they would have bad scores" I don't like to think this way because in each class I see the only one who got good marks. I tried to ignore the results of the others. I think it was something expected because all along the term they were careless they never bring even books or copybooks so it was expected such a result. I try to think positive I try to look at those who got good marks and I'm saying maybe I'm the reason why these students got good marks but I'm not the reason why others didn't get good marks (laughs). Some students have awful situations at home they are really suffering, some of them

are really sick and I have never knew it. I believe that understanding students is really important. For example one student got 2 in the exam and he didn't pass the test because he was too lazy to come so I was blaming him he got a great copybook beautiful hand writing. Then I said you are lazy and he confessed "yes I'm lazy, I'm careless, I don't care" I know all this I am aware about everything and I regret it but I cannot do anything about it especially that he is repetitive for the third time. I started talking to him and I think we're getting closer he used to sit in the back table and now he is sitting in the first table maybe he will be successful I'm wishing.

Researcher: do you work in collaboration with other teachers?

Mellissa: no not really. I guess because we don't have the same classes I have third year and first year level and she's got second year level and even third year level she's got literary stream so they don't have the same programme so we cannot work in collaboration.

Researcher: when you prepared your exam, did you show it to them?

Mellissa: yes, she has just given me one remark about the written expression as you know we give two topics for choice, I gave the same theme for each topic so she said they are not supposed to have the same theme. So I guess showing her my subject was useful.

Researcher: how did you feel about preparing the exam by yourself?

Mellissa: it was something hard but once it was done I was feeling happy and proud because as I know some teachers in that group of Algerian association of teachers of English were looking for already made subjects and they just print them and its okay. It means that they are not making efforts to prepare new subjects. I have prepared them by own, I have included all the lessons I wanted to include everything that we have covered and dealt during the term so I was feeling happy. There was a variation in questions for example some questions were based on learning by heart, some questions of language, vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling and stress and so on it was varied subject and I liked it.

Researcher: do you think that you are treated professionally from the school?

Mellissa: yes, I guess I started to feel confident and started to think that other teachers think that I'm a teacher like them (laughs). Everyone is treating me like a teacher I guess that I started to feel more confident and I started to feel that even other teachers are confident about my work and about what I'm doing in the classroom.

Researcher: how does the school strengthens your professional development?

Mellissa: I guess my relationship with other teachers and the feedback I receive from them. For example, one teacher of history was discussing with me my results and he was all the time praising me. I mean he's got some students who are very weak in history but they have got acceptable results in English. When I was talking for example about the behaviour of some students I discovered that some students are wise with me very wise and careful about their behaviour in the classroom but he faced problems with them and called their parents but I never faced this with these students, I think he made me feel good and successful. Because not facing problems is a big success I think.

Researcher: how do you think you're seen from people outside the school?

Mellissa: they are just praising me especially my grandmother but she doesn't know anything about it. my parents too, I don't think it's something new for them my mother used to say before that I was expecting you to be successful because you were successful as a student so of course you will be successful as a teacher that's what she was saying. I never cared about it but I would like to receive feedback from other teachers more experienced than me and inspectors and so on. I mean feedback from family is not really helpful because they are your family, even you don't succeed they are not going to say you are bad or you have failed so what would be helpful for me is to receive feedback from other teachers and inspector.

Researcher: do you think that the school programme strengthen or weaken your development to become a teacher?

Mellissa: the programmes are not letting us the chance to be better I guess, because we are restricted its like we have to follow blindly the programme but in some cases for example in order to cover students' weaknesses, we don't have to follow the programme, you have to omit some lessons you have to add some lessons. For example if my students are weak in passive and active voice and they're supposed to learn a lesson about passive and active voice in the present progressive, do you expect they know what is the present progressive active in order to learn about present progressive passive?

So if I was able to change something I would start over from the beginning passive, active voice from present simple but I don't have the right to do so. I remember I have talked about this because it's time consuming, and the only thing they criticise us is being late in the programme that's what we have discussed now in the meeting and they were asking us why. I guess there contradiction between administration and the inspector and even contractions in the slayings of the inspector (laughs) because the inspector would come and say show me your remedial work. Remedial work is series of activities about a given lesson that you have found out that your students didn't get. For example me in the exam I have found out that my students didn't get well the lesson of articles so I was supposed to plan a session for remedial work to give them activities about articles in order to reinforce their understanding but I'm late in the programme. But when the inspector comes she would ask me why you didn't plan for remedial work and why you are late. I don't know how to work with this programme. I wish I were able to design my own programme. Its not really helpful, the programme is full of an uninteresting things and it doesn't devote necessary time for important thing.

Researcher: what have you professionally achieved from these three months?

Mellissa: the fears have disappeared, I'm not afraid now of my reactions I'm not afraid of what others think of me and I'm not afraid of failing sometimes. And my students' level is getting better especially first year students.

Researcher: what are your short and long terms goal as a teacher?

Mellissa: I would like to have better results in the second term because now I guess I know more about my students, about their preferences, their weaknesses and about their attitudes toward English and toward studies in general. I guess I am going to use all this to get better results. For my long term goals, I think but I am not sure that I will subscribe for a master.

Researcher: how do you see the future of teachers in Algeria?

Mellissa: you know the pressure the ministry of education is practising on teachers during and after this strike let's say I'm sure that it won't be a bright future for Algerian teachers. The majority of them are demotivated because of this new law of retirement and because of touching the holidays reducing the days of holidays and I have ever heard that they are going to reduce the time of summer holiday into forty days. You know one teacher during the meeting said 'years ago we used to have bad students but now we have bad parents of students' and he is right. Because whenever you call a parent and tell him about his/her daughter he would say I don't care so even the parents play a great role in the situation they put their children.

Researcher: do you think that your work can bring innovation to school?

Mellissa: I don't know because now I'm not using any innovative ideas and so on so maybe when I start using innovative ideas and ICTs and having my own classroom maybe then I will inspire them.

Researcher: what kind of support you think that you might need in this school?

Mellissa: administration are not really strict they are not really helping us whenever you punish someone by sending him to the administration they make him sit in a chair for one hour, having rest using his mobile and chatting on Facebook for one hour then he goes back to his classroom as nothing happened. Whenever I send someone to the administration it means I need him to be punished, this is it but they are not punishing them. Whenever a student knows that when he goes out he is going to have a sit in a warm place chatting on facebook do you think he is going to refrain from misbehaving. I think we need support from administration they are not really doing their job.

Researcher: how do you feel about being the youngest teacher in the school?

Mellissa there is another teacher of mathematics we have graduated this year so we are 23. I guess they like us. I don't know because whenever we mention our age they smile. Maybe they are seeing us as successful students and teachers.

Researcher: how do you see yourself as a teacher in five years time?

Mellissa: I don't know maybe I won't be a teacher for five years (laughs), but I guess if I keep on teaching I believe that I am going to keep in progressing and being better.

Researcher: do you do any private teaching? Mellissa: no. enough students in the school (laughs).

Researcher: do you think that your role changes in both school and society?

Mellissa: well about society I don't like to think that my motivation is related to society because as you know that parents and society as a whole don't have a good picture about teachers. They don't see these teachers as noble people they see us as enemies. Whenever you punish a student the parent will never be on your side they are always going to be on the side of their sons and daughters. I think that society need to have a totally different idea about teachers especially in this period of strike they were like insulting us in an indirect way. They were thinking that we are doing all this strike for money. They were saying that we are greedy and we are evils and we have consumed all the money of the country and so on. So I don't really think of how I look to society.

This is the end of the interview, thank you for cooperation.

## **Appendix P: sample of second year teachers**

Researcher: What attracted you to teaching?

Hamida: What I really like in teaching is kids, I like dealing with them. Researcher: What influenced you to become a language teacher?

Hamida: My teacher of English in the middle school who influenced me.

Researcher: Do you have any memory from your childhood that motivated you to teaching?

Hamida: Of course. When I was a Fourth year pupil in middle school, I wrote a paragraph about panda (an animal in danger of extinction). It was a great work and my teacher showed my work to the other pupils in other classes which made me feel proud.

Researcher: When you finished your secondary school and you had to make a decision about higher education, how did it go?

Hamida: It was not that hard for me, since teaching was what I wanted since my childhood.

Researcher: Tell me about your training experience when you were a student?

Hamida: When I was a student I was eager to start teaching. The first day in training was just an observation. When the teacher was teaching wasn't just observing but writing the lesson plan of that lesson which was almost the same as the one of the mentor. All in all, the training was the practice of the theory we did in ENS. I appreciate it and I learned a lot of things from the mentor.

Researcher: How did the training help you to your real teaching now?

Hamida: The training paved me the way to my real teaching. There I faced learners for the first time and I had the chance to explore what I learned during fourth years at ENS. In addition, I learned how to learn by observing others and learn from their mistakes.

Researcher: Do you think you needed any kind of support when you were doing the training? If yes tell me more about it?

Hamida: The support I needed I found it with the teacher trainer. She did her best with us and she always told us that she learned from us (trainees). So, it was kind of exchange

Researcher: Who was your favourite teacher when you were a student? Hamida: Absolutely, my teacher of English.

Researcher: How did your ideas about teaching changed during these two years of experience?

Hamida: During these two years of teaching my ideas about teaching changed because my training in Algiers was with excellent and average learners whereas in my school my learners are average and slow learners which requires more efforts. So, I have to adapt my teaching strategies according to my learners' level. I found myself in a great challenge.

Researcher: How do you see your role change in school?

Hamida: Many things changed. They take into account my suggestions and views concerning important decisions. the pupils ask for my help and support even the headmaster appreciates my views concerning pupils because he sees they are closer to me.

Researcher: How do you see yourself in five years time?

Hamida: In five years time, I think I'll be a great teacher because I'm working on this.

Researcher: What challenges have you experienced?

Hamida: The great challenge was to help my learners learn English and make them like foreign languages because a learner told me "English and French are the languages of enemies"

Researcher: Do you feel as motivated now as you first started teaching?

Researcher: Not as much as I first started teaching because the teaching conditions don't help

me ,but I'm still motivated and I want to give more and learn more.

Researcher: What sort of a teacher do you see yourself as now? And how would like to become?

Hamida: I think I'm a good teacher and I want to be a great one.

Researcher: Do you feel that you have developed professionally as a teacher? If yes can you provide me with some examples?

Hamida: Being graduated from ENS was a professional development for me and I'm still developing. I attend the different workshops delivered by the British council and AELTT.

Researcher: What kind of things you have done to develop your teaching practice? Hamida: I attend with others teachers. I attend the conferences and the workshops .

Researcher: Do you still attend seminars? If yes, what are they about and how do they help you?

Hamida: I still attend seminars and workshops. They're about the teaching methods ,how to teach the different skills, how to use ICT , and many other subject which has a relation with teaching English as a foreign language. This helps me in my teaching. It gives me ideas how to make my teaching more effective.

Researcher: How do you think your students see you? And how do you want to be seen?

Hamida: My students love me and I'm an inspiration for them because a pupil of mine told me that. I want to be a role model for my pupils. When they will be old, they remember me as the best teacher.

Researcher: What about your colleagues how do you think they see you?

Hamida: My colleagues love me because I'm the youngest teacher in the middle school, but they always tell me you disturb us as my classes are always noisy since I always use games, songs. So, their pupils don't concentrate.

Researcher: Do you attend school meetings? If yes, do you think that you have the freedom to express your views on important school matters?

Hamida: I attend school meetings and I also give my point of view especially concerning pupils and I'm free to express my views.

Researcher: What would you like to do differently from your first year of teaching? Hamida: I'd like to change the things that I failed in.

Researcher: Do you work in collaboration with other teachers?

Hamida: Yes, I do. I adore working and exchanging ideas with other teachers from all around Algeria and even abroad.

Researcher: Are satisfied with the new programme of 1<sup>st</sup> year?

Hamida: I don't know much things about it, but I think it will be great if teachers really know how to work with it.

Researcher: Does this programme provide you with more freedom to work compared with old one?

Hamida: No, because I always work regarding my pupils needs and interests. So, I'm always free.

Researcher: What are your expectations with regard to the new programme?

Hamida: I think our pupils will learn more but many teachers will get bored since much efforts will be needed.

Researcher: What would like to advice someone who is new to the teaching profession?

Hamida: My pieces of advice to the new teachers are:

- Love teaching because if you don't love this noble job, you will never succeed.

- Don't stop learning. 'To teach is to learn twice' Joseph Robert.
- Be enthusiastic, dynamic, active, creative, and vary your teaching.
- Respect your learners and listen to them.

## **Appendix Q: Sample of teachers' written reflections**

### **1) A sample from Ali's reflections:**

After three weeks of a non-stop and serious work by now, I start to feel as a real teacher and completely involved in teaching. My parents boost me daily and encourage me to excel in this job. I know all my pupils now and I really appreciate their company. They do respect me thanks god. The problem that is posed is the matter of level and interest. A considerable number of pupils do not get interested though I tried to use different techniques. But when I asked other teachers, they assured to me that it is a global problem which does not only affect English but also the other subjects. This lessened somehow from the pressure that I imposed on myself.

### **2) A sample from Thilleli's reflections**

As a new EFL teacher and as a newcomer to the field of teaching I was supposed to do training sessions and workshops with the inspector in charge to get to meet with the basis of teaching English as a foreign language, the training sessions would cover the main important things that a new teacher should be aware of which include:

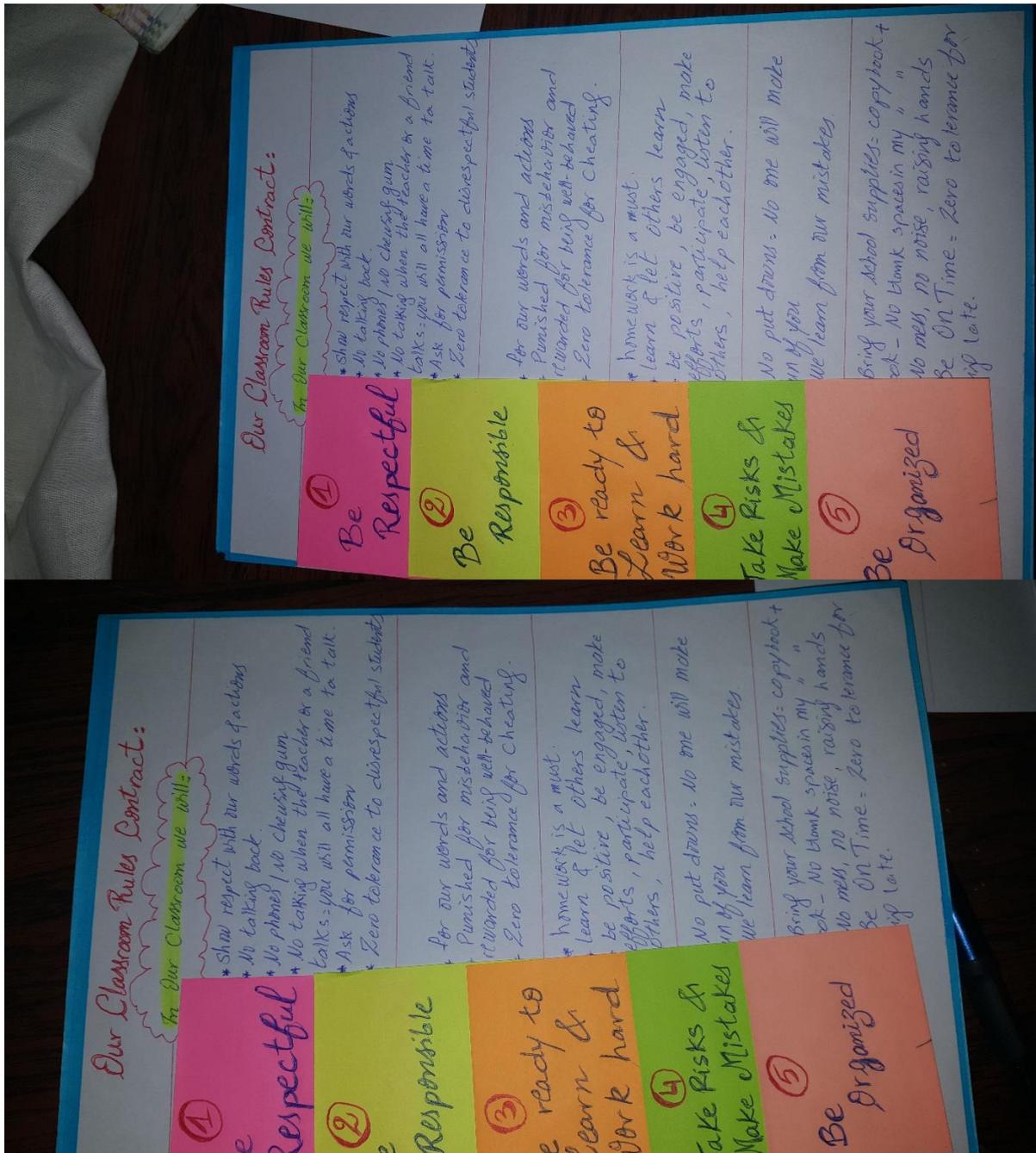
How to plan the lessons how to work with a syllabus and what to do in TD sessions and the teachers' documents. I was excited about the training and I went with high expectations at least to get to know where to start from and get some hints and ideas about the teaching process. but unfortunately there was unexpected thing is that the inspector in charge of the training was always absent he didn't come at all and this show the lack of his responsibility and they didn't take it as a serious work Another unexpected situation happened to me was when I wanted to subscribe to pass the PhD contest. I was so excited to do higher studies in my field which is language science and didactics but what surprised me was that the headmaster of the school faced me with his rejection of my request to go and pass the exam. Even though I am protected by law he told me to choose between my work and doing higher studies I was really disappointed because this studies will only help me to develop my skills and competencies as an EFL teacher.

## **Appendix R: sample of the researcher field note**

On the 23.10.2016 I planned to conduct two interviews with two participants who teach in secondary school. These schools are not far from each other. The first interview took place in the morning. When I got to the school I called the teacher by phone and she asked me to meet her in the staffroom. The teacher was sitting with another English teacher completing her work.

The room is too large and the teachers were sitting in pairs or forming groups. My participant introduced me to her English teacher colleague only. We stayed together in the staffroom, I explained to her the purpose of my research. She agreed to take part in my research then she signed the consent form. After that we went together to see the headmaster in order to prove my presence at school. When I was done with these procedures I came back to the staffroom to conduct the interview. My participant asked me to see the interview questions. I was a bit surprised particularly when she started to answer the questions in a separate paper. I felt that my participant was not comfortable and I immediately explained to her that the purpose of the interview is not to evaluate her English or to judge her knowledge. It took her a while looking at the interview questions and thinking at the same time. At that time I felt that my participant was not comfortable with the presence of her English teacher colleague. After some time her colleague left the room and my participant started asking me about some questions regarding my interview guide. When she felt ready to start the interview she asked me if it would be okay to conduct the interview outside the staffroom. This made me think that the teacher was not comfortable talking in the staffroom as there are some of her colleagues in the room. We had the interview in the school yard and the teacher answered all the questions in English and sometimes she uses some French or Berber languages.

Appendix S: Mellissa's work



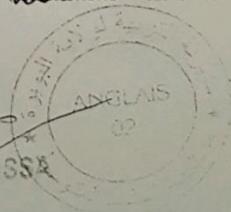
## Appendix T: Dihia's inspector observation

Short account of the lesson content:

Miss. ~~XXXX~~ <sup>Dihia</sup> started her lesson with a short review of the previous lesson "making apologies and giving explanation". Then, she introduced the new topic "asking for clarification". She asked a pupil to read the instruction of the task (pair work p27). After some clarifications and explanation of some key words, the students worked in pairs and played roles using the target structures to complete given exchanges (a customer at the post office/ a teacher in the classroom...). The teacher walked around, checked pupils' performance and made sure all learners were taking part in the activity. Then, the pupils passed to the board and wrote their answers.

Miss. ~~XXXX~~ <sup>Dihia</sup> is a calm and steady teacher who is leading her learners to improve their level at English little by little. But still I advise her to:

- ✓ Avoid correcting pupils' mistakes; encourage peer-correction instead.
- ✓ Avoid too much writing and intensify oral practice especially when dealing with oral exchanges.
- ✓ Assess learners' achievement at the end of each session.

Observation Rubrics	E	G	A	NA	P	NP
<b>Use of teaching materials:</b>						
1. Use of the blackboard						
2. Use of visual aids						
<b>Teacher's personal qualities:</b>						
3. Mastery of the language						
4. Care for professional development						
5. Rapport with class						
<b>Classroom management:</b>						
6. Variety of interaction						
7. Error correction and feedback						
8. Time management						
<b>Activity types:</b>						
9. Lesson opening and closing						
10. Promotion of learner autonomy						
11. Novelty/ creativity in techniques						
<b>Pedagogical Documents:</b>						
12. Lesson Plan						
13. Lessons' record book						
14. Log book						
15. Students' copy books						
<b>Overall evaluation of teacher's performance:</b>						
Mlle. <del>XXXX</del> <sup>Dihia</sup> travaille sérieusement en classe. Elle fait de son mieux pour faire progresser ses élèves. Je l'encourage à persévérer.						
Note obtenue (en chiffre) : Visite d'orientation			A <del>Agueda</del> Le 19/10/2016			
En lettre /						
Lu et pris copie le :			L'ITEM d'Anglais			
Emargement du professeur :			Cachet et signature			
			  AIT SAI MOUSSA			

**Appendix U: Students' drawing**



