

**Exploring reflection in pre-service teacher education: a social perspective on the
application, value and factors influencing reflection**

by

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Dedication

To the memory of some unforgettable souls...

My beloved grandmother Yamna Keltoum (*Mamouza*)

AND

My father Ouahab

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Abstract

This study explores the implementation of reflection from the perspective of teacher trainees in two ‘four-week’ teacher training courses in the southeast of the UK and provides a social perspective into reflection.

The study reveals that participants conceptualise the different aspects of reflection, written, oral, and reflections made about others, differently in terms of their application and value, and shows a number of factors impacting the understanding and practice of such aspects. Accordingly, the application of written reflection is viewed as an idiosyncratic process and is understood as a systematic activity that is underexplored, while oral reflection is described as an interactional process, characterised by discussion and participation, and portrayed to be a practice of an important value. Participants’ views on the reflections made on others, both peers and experienced teachers, define such reflections in terms of a social process. Three factors impacting reflection are *psychological* involving trainees’ emotions, *contextual*, identifying aspects such as the context of reflection, trainees’ status as novice teachers, experience in reflection, and the guidance required, and *social*, revealing the impact of community dynamics on participants’ reflections.

The study followed a qualitative approach and was framed within an ethnographic methodology with an autoethnographic aspect, recounting my insider experience during fieldwork. Data were collected in the two teacher training courses, using interviews, observations of the field, and an analysis of participants’ reflections, then analysed thematically.

The findings of the study have *methodological* implications, focusing on the importance of insider experiences in research, *pedagogical* implications, suggesting a multi-dimensional framework for reflection, useful in teacher education contexts and beyond, and *theoretical* implications, proposing the integration of a social perspective to the study of reflection.

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Glossary of terms

This glossary clarifies the meanings of some terms and explains CELTA-related acronyms used in this thesis.

Assisted Lesson Planning sessions (ALP): these are sessions usually undertaken after the seminars and aimed at helping trainees plan their teaching practice lessons.

Concept Check Questions (CCQs): questions that trainees ask to check their students' understanding of the learned concepts or vocabulary during a lesson.

Context build: the initial stage of the lesson, generally aimed at helping students engage in the lesson.

Fourth assignment: one of four assignments trainees have to complete as part of the course requirements and involves a reflection on the course from a trainee perspective.

Freer practice (FP): the final stage of the lesson where what has been learned is practised.

Guided discovery (GD): an approach of teaching that involves, first presenting examples of the language aspects, then guiding students towards discovering and learning such aspects.

Instruction Check questions (ICQs): questions that are asked when administering tasks to check the clarity of the instructions given to students.

Oral feedback/post-observation feedback: the discussion taking place after each teaching practice and the comments given by both trainers and trainees.

Portfolio: a file where trainees' documents (lesson plans, any materials of teaching, reflective sheets, weekly written assignments, trainers' feedback) are kept.

Reflective/yellow sheets: these involve the written reflections trainees have to complete after each teaching practice. These are also referred to by trainees as yellow sheets given their colour in phase two of data collection.

Seminars: or morning seminars, as referred to by trainees, are the sessions where trainees are exposed to knowledge about teaching English as a foreign language.

Teacher Talk Time (TTT): the time spent in talking by teacher trainees during a lesson.

Teaching group/group: the group of teaching practice to which trainees are assigned.

Teaching practice (TP): the six hours of teaching that trainees are required to complete as part of the assessment criteria in the course.

Test teach test (TTT): an approach of teaching consisting of testing students' abilities, presenting the lesson, and practising for more learning and understanding

Trainees: the individuals who participated in both CELTA courses investigated in this study. The term is used throughout the thesis to refer to the participants who are teacher trainees, taking part in this study in both phases of data collection.

1. Introduction to the thesis

This study aims to conceptualise the implementation of reflection, both in terms of its practice and understanding in pre-service teacher education with a focus on exploring teacher trainees' views and experiences of reflection. In this sense, I investigated the views of trainees in two CELTA courses (the Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), one CELTA course in May 2019, and the other course in November 2019, in two different south-eastern UK institutions.

By exploring trainees' perspectives and experiences of reflection within its social setting, perceptions of different aspects of written and oral reflection, covering self-reflections and observations based on others were revealed in terms of their application and value. Findings showed the application of written reflection as an idiosyncratic, underexplored process, while the oral reflection was described in terms of an important, valuable interaction, mediated by participation and discussion. Trainees' views on reflection by means of observations of peers and experienced teachers, however, outlined the practice of reflection as a social process with varying degrees of scaffolding and was assigned a different value based on trainees' explorations of this social process.

Psychological, contextual, and social factors also emerged as key elements in the findings, influencing trainees' practice and understanding of reflection. Psychological factors showed the role played by emotions, in particular negative emotions and how they acted as a filter to trainees' productions of reflection. The contextual elements included the setting where reflection is practised, trainees' status as novice teachers, the importance of experience in doing reflection, and their need for formal guidance in reflection. The social factors consisted of the community dynamics trainees were part of and involved relationships among trainees themselves and with trainers.

Such explorations, framed through the lens of my insider experience, gained through participating in one of the CELTA courses studied in this research, enabled an understanding of trainees' views about reflection in general terms and provided a social perspective within which such views could be read. The social perspective into reflection allows both understanding and approaching reflection as an activity rooted in and impacted by its social setting.

This study, which involved 12 trainees participating in two CELTA courses, referred to as phases one and two of data collection, is framed within a social constructionist approach and its methodology is qualitatively driven, with both focused ethnographic and autoethnographic aspects. Focused ethnography, undertaken by means of semi-structured individual interviews with trainees, observations of the setting, and an analysis of trainees' written reflective sheets and fourth assignments, provided a detailed view into trainees' conceptualisations of the different aspects of reflection in terms of their application, value. It also revealed the different factors influencing trainees' practice and understanding of reflection. The autoethnographic account added another level of understanding to the complexities of data collection, and accordingly the setting, and allowed an insider perspective into trainees' experiences of reflection, thus, revealing and developing hidden aspects of data useful to the focus of the study.

This chapter starts with a brief overview of reflection. It then explains the rationale for undertaking this study and how its focus developed. The context of the study is also outlined. The development of the research questions and the importance of the study are then discussed. The chapter ends with the structure of the thesis.

1.1. Defining reflection

Since this study aims to investigate the implementation of reflection in a pre-service teacher education programme, the CELTA course, it is relevant to provide an overview of the discussion surrounding reflection. This section then gives a general view into the understandings underlying reflection in the literature, which is later discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The concept of reflection is often used interchangeably with terms like reflective practice and critical reflection (Collin et al. 2013). In this study, the terms reflection and reflective practice are utilised in an interchangeable way to refer to the different reflective practices trainees in this study were engaged in.

Reflection has become a key aspect in teacher education programmes, playing an important role in the development of teachers (Jasper, 2013; Anderson, 2020; Weiss, 2020). It has primarily been viewed as an approach to developing awareness of and progress in teaching which aims to help teachers become more aware of their teaching practices (Lee, 2007;

Farrell, 2018). Loughran (2002, p. 34) indicates that ‘reflection continually emerges as a suggested way of helping practitioners better understand what they know and do as they develop their knowledge of practice through reconsidering what they learn in practice’, with ‘many language education programs warmly embraced the idea of encouraging TESOL teachers to reflect on their practice both as pre-service teachers as well as in-service teachers in development programs’ (Farrell, 2018, p. 2).

However, despite this perceived benefit of promoting reflective practices, what the concept means and what it is intended for is still contested and not clearly understood by students and teachers (Hargreaves, 2004), and that there is still an expectation that we all share a similar grasp of what this concept means (Farrell, 2018).

In terms of defining the concept, Farrell (2018, p. 5) argues that reflection is generally understood differently by different people and that:

When I say ‘reflection’ there seems to be a common perception that we all mean the same thing, however, there still is not a consensus in all of the professions of what reflection really is or even what it entails.

Similarly, Fendler (2003, p. 20) points to the confusion around reflection and the lack of consensus identified among the different understandings provided by claiming that:

Today’s discourse of reflection incorporates an array of meanings: a demonstration of self-consciousness, a scientific approach to planning for the future, a tacit intuitive understanding of practice, a discipline to become more professional, a way to tap into one’s strategy to redress injustices in society.

Despite this lack of clarity on what reflection means in educational settings, it continues to be promoted even though it is open to different interpretations such as a mere self-awareness, a tool of a prospective nature, a tool having an introspective function, and an approach that serves broader aims.

The complexity over the concept of reflection is in line with the findings of this study which demonstrate its complexity in terms of trainees’ understanding and practice of it. This is shown through trainees’ different conceptualisations of the different aspects of

reflection and the value they attributed to each aspect, highlighting reflection as a complex concept, not only in terms of its meanings, but also in relation to its application and value.

The study also explores possible factors influencing the understanding and practice of reflection, which could add insights into the understanding of this concept.

1.2. The rationale of this study

In this section, the rationale for conducting this study is presented. It begins with a background of my early interest in reflection, then outlines how it developed into investigating the concept in a pre-service teacher training course.

My interest in reflection could be traced back to the first teaching experience I had as a teacher trainee in an undergraduate university training programme in Algeria. This training programme, which operated in some Algerian universities and was provided for either third year undergraduate or Masters' students, was provided as part of my third year of study. University students were meant to attend a two-month training course where they were required to observe the teaching of an experienced teacher in middle or secondary schools, and then teach for four to six hours of observed teaching. On the basis of both observations and teaching, students were required to write a report, following guidelines, and including a summary of what they have done during this period. The report would then be submitted to a university lecturer, playing the role of an assessor and with whom students meet regularly to discuss their progress.

When thinking back about this brief teaching experience, I could recall myself regularly noting down some thoughts on my trainer's teaching, the other trainee's teaching, learners' reactions, and behaviours, and also my own teaching. I also participated in informal discussions with both my trainer and the other trainee in my group. Though neither the notes taken, nor the discussions were part of any formal instruction, as the training was meant for serving assessment purposes in our university and awarded credits based on the reports submitted, I felt that my moments of thinking, both at individual and shared levels, enabled me to both familiarise and concretise the act of teaching.

This experience, which I describe as positive, allowed me to reflect in different ways and made me interested in knowing more about the process of doing it in other similar contexts.

This interest was later developed into looking at CELTA trainees' experiences and perceptions of reflection. An overview of how this interest developed into the focus of the study is detailed below.

1.2.1. Developing the focus of this study

At first, I was more concerned with looking at reflection from the perspective of experienced teachers as I thought that such a sample would have experience in reflection and provide useful information. However, as I began my research, first by reading about reflection, I found myself more oriented towards the implementation of reflection in teacher education courses, and studies conducted within this context. As time went by, the influence of my own experience led me to focus on the perspective of novice teachers, and my interest shifted to investigating reflection in a similar context to the teacher training I had attended previously, with a focus on the conceptualisations of reflection from a trainee perspective.

Given this emerging interest in exploring novice teachers' experiences of reflection, I used CELTA courses as a means of exploring these teachers' understanding and practice of reflection. Additionally, I believe that the findings in this study could be relevant to other courses with a similar character and provide insights into the conceptualisation of reflection.

1.3. The context of the study

As this study looks into CELTA trainees' views of reflection, it is important to have an overview of the course and its structure. The CELTA courses investigated for this study are then described.

The CELTA stands for Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. As the course is meant for individuals with little or no teaching experience, it aims at providing knowledge of the English language, with an opportunity to put this into practice through teaching practice sessions. Roberts (1998, p. 211) summarises the CELTA course and what it is meant for as follows:

It is firmly practical, and classroom based. It is often located in language schools, where LTs (learner teachers) are surrounded by working teachers and learners

(Though it is also offered in further education colleges and some university language departments overseas). LTs are constantly focused on teaching real groups of learners and on their reactions to teaching. Personal pedagogic skills are scrutinised, and immediate feedback given. There is exposure to a range of personal styles, both other LTs and experienced teachers. Assignments focus on real learners, their needs, and how they can be met.

The CELTA is then a course that incorporates theoretical knowledge, teaching practice sessions, assignments, assessment, and feedback. It offers a range of skills to teach English effectively to adults and provides an opportunity to put these skills into practice in real classroom teaching contexts.

Course components

The CELTA course involves 120 hours of guided learning, including 6 hours of teaching practice. It is generally run as full time intensive for four weeks or part time lasting for a few months depending on the institution of delivery. It can also be run partially online with a face-to-face teaching practice. The components of the course are as follows and are used as key terms in this thesis to discuss the CELTA course:

Input sessions: the sessions in which trainees are exposed to theoretical and practical knowledge about teaching concepts and approaches. This is used interchangeably with seminars in the study.

Teaching practice (TP): the application of what have been learned during the input sessions in the 6 hour-classroom based teaching.

TP group: the group to which trainees are assigned to complete their TP. On the courses investigated in this study, there were two TP groups in each course.

Feedback sessions: the meetings where trainers and trainees come together to discuss the teaching practice. Trainees are encouraged in these meetings to reflect not only on their teaching, but also on their peers' performance. The sessions took place immediately after the TP on the courses investigated in this study.

‘Reflective sheets’: written self-reflections that trainees complete after each teaching practice and keep in their portfolios. These sheets include prompts on ‘what went well’, ‘what did not go well’, ‘what will you do next’.

‘Assignment four’ (‘lessons from the classroom’): a reflection on how the course went and impacted on the learning of trainees. The aim of this assignment is to reflect back on the learning through the course, areas of strength and weakness, elements of learning from peers and experienced teachers, as well as to provide an opportunity to reflect on how to progress further in the future.

Observations of peers: the process of watching the TP of the other trainees in the TP group and reflecting on it.

Observations of experienced teachers: the 6 hours (face to face and/or recorded videos) of watching experienced teachers’ practice and reflecting on it.

The components and objectives of the course are defined by University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicates (UCLES); however, the structure is diverse. According to Roberts (1998, p. 199) ‘there is a remarkable diversity in the structure, intake, and the setting of certificate courses’. This implies that the set up differs from one institution to another. This includes the syllabus which each centre is responsible for designing, though following predetermined criteria (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2020).

The number of trainees depends on the particular centre, while the number of learners depends on the volunteers wanting to attend the course. Based on this, the organisation of teaching groups to which trainees are assigned is made.

The syllabus of the course covers five main areas, however, and as mentioned earlier, the setup of the course and its structure may differ between institutions where the course is held. The topics that any CELTA course involves are learners and teachers, and the teaching and learning context, language analysis and awareness, language skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing, planning and resources for different teaching contexts, developing teaching skills and professionalism.

Learners and teachers, and the teaching and learning context as a course area puts a particular focus on learners, their educational backgrounds, learning preferences and aspirations for learning English.

Language analysis and awareness outlines aspects relating to the understanding of grammar, phonology, and other concepts employed in the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) with a demonstration of using them effectively in teaching.

The other area which covers language skills consists of introducing basic knowledge about reading, listening, writing, and speaking. It also touches on the different approaches and strategies used to develop these four skills.

Planning and resources for different teaching contexts defines the fundamentals of successful lesson planning and its evaluation.

Developing teaching skills and professionalism targets a variety of aspects concerned with classroom management and learning. These include organising the classroom setting, controlling classroom practice, and the integration of learners in different activities (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2020).

The above five areas are structured in terms of input sessions. In addition to these input sessions, assisted lesson planning sessions (ALP) are set up for trainees to help them plan their lessons. In other words, ALP sessions are supervised and guided by the course tutors. These are assisted planning sessions taking place after the input sessions. There are also one-to-one tutorials. These are held with course tutors to track trainees' progress, provide feedback, and assess their performance.

The course also covers a practical aspect through the TP. According to Copland (2010, p. 467), in initial teacher training programmes, 'the key component is the 6h teaching practice which trainees must pass'. This underlies the importance of putting knowledge of teaching into practice. The CELTA involves completing 6 hours of assessed teaching practice. All trainees are required to teach these 6 hours and practise what they have learned in the input sessions in a real teaching context. Trainees are split into two or more groups depending on their number and there are two different levels into which volunteer learners are organised, which trainees are supposed to complete their hours of teaching with.

Along with completing their TP, trainees also have the opportunity to discuss it together with their trainers and peers in an attempt to ‘discover how successful their teaching has been in the feedback session, which is usually held soon after teaching practice’ (Copland, 2010, p. 467). Feedback is thus an important element of teacher training courses (Copland, 2011) and can be seen as ‘the context of information supplied to trainees concerning some aspects of their performance on a task, by a peer or a tutor, with a view to enhancing practice’ (Brandt, 2008, p. 39). Feedback involves discussions between tutors and trainees based on the TP.

Related to this is filling in written reflective sheets after each TP, where trainees reflect on their and their peers’ teaching. The sheets may vary in terms of their layout from one centre to another, but they generally comprise prompts that target areas of strength and weakness and aspects that need further development and planning.

Another component of the CELTA course is the written assignments. These are tasks which tackle different topics related to the course syllabus and are completed on a weekly basis. There are four written assignments, each consisting of 750 to 1000 words. The fourth of these assignments is a reflective task entitled ‘lessons from the classroom’ and involves reflections on different aspects of the course. These include reflecting on one’s teaching in light of the areas of strength and weakness, on the processes of peer and experienced teachers’ observation and their possible impact on their teaching, and on future aspirations for further development.

Trainees also have six hours of observation of experienced teachers. These can be live, taking place in real classrooms, recorded videos of teachers, or a combination of both. The observations aim at exposing trainees to different approaches to and styles of teaching. During these sessions, trainees are supposed to complete some observation tasks, and analyse and reflect on teachers’ teaching practice.

Planning and teaching along with the written assignments constitute the two components of assessment in the course. This means that passing the course depends on meeting the criteria set for both the teaching component and the written assignments. Based on this assessment, one of the following grades are awarded to trainees: Pass A, Pass B, Pass, or Fail.

1.3.1. The CELTA courses in this study

The context of this study involved two full time CELTA courses in the southeast of the UK, taking place in two different institutions. 12 trainees of mixed nationalities participated in the study, 4 trainees from the first course and 8 from the second one, all of which belonging to small groups of TP, with volunteer learners of mixed nationalities. In each of the courses investigated in this study, there were two course tutors, referred to as trainers, responsible for delivering seminars and guiding and assessing trainees' practice. The two courses are referred to as phase one and phase two of data collection throughout this study (See Appendix 1).

Trainees joining the first course, taking place in May 2019, were split into two groups of TP, one group involving five and the other with four trainees. As the TP for both groups ran at the same time, I was randomly assigned by the course director to one group. This group consisted of four trainees, two females and two males (See Appendix 2). Access during this phase was limited to the TP and feedback sessions, which took place immediately after the TP. The observations were thus carried for the whole duration of the course, and interviews were conducted with the four trainees in this group before the end of the course. During this phase, access to trainees' reflective sheets and fourth assignments was not possible (See Section 3.3.1). Data collection in this phase was thus through interviews with trainees from the observed group and observations of teaching and feedback.

The second course was conducted in November 2019. Unlike the partial access I had in phase one, during this phase, I had full access as I participated in this CELTA course as a trainee.

The total number of trainees in this phase was nine including myself, six females and three males (See Appendix 2). Trainees were divided into two groups for the TP with a group of four and the other, of which I was part, comprising five trainees. All trainees participated in the study and, as with phase one, the same tools of investigation were observations covering the whole course and interviews with trainees from both groups, with the exception of one trainee who could not be interviewed, making the total number of interviewees seven. Along with this, access to reflective sheets and the fourth assignment was accorded and all trainees agreed to allow me access to a copy of their reflections.

Collecting data over two phases was important. Phase two allowed access to additional data which had not been accessible during phase one. This manifested itself in the complete access I had as a researcher, the recruitment of more trainees, and the integration of further sources of data, reflective sheets and the fourth assignments.

Having two phases was also promising in terms of shaping the direction of the study. As I was a trainee during phase two of data collection, I gradually realised the importance of my insider engagement and how this was a defining element in understanding the data collection process. This in turn developed into an important aspect of my methodological orientation through an autoethnographic account of my insider experience.

1.4. Research questions

The research questions in this study were formulated based on my interest in knowing about reflection from the perspective of teacher trainees. They focused on a number of elements: trainees' understandings of reflection, their perceptions of the practice of reflection during the CELTA course, and the way their community, both trainees and trainers, influences their reflections. The rationale behind choosing these aspects to develop both the questions and the focus of this study was twofold. My initial motivation to conduct this study within pre-service teacher education with the aim of understanding the concept of reflection influenced the way I drafted my initial questions. My early readings around the topic of reflection and the complexity surrounding its meanings and implementation also led me to look more deeply into the concept and accordingly shaped my research questions.

Thus, my initial research questions were:

1. How do trainees perceive reflection?
2. To what extent do trainees consider the importance of reflection in terms of their teaching?
3. How does the course community influence trainees' practice of reflection?

However, after data collection, and initial data analysis, I realised that these questions needed to be expanded in light of the study's aim of conceptualising the implementation of reflection. The data showed that trainees conceptualised the application of the different aspects of reflection, written, oral, and reflections based on observing others in different

ways. It was also apparent that trainees placed different values on these different aspects. The initial data analysis further revealed psychological, contextual, and social factors influencing both the understanding and practice of reflection.

As a result, the questions became more focused, reflecting trainees' views and experiences of reflection:

1. How do trainees perceive the application of the different aspects of reflection?
2. To what extent is the practice of reflection valued?
3. What are the factors that influence the practice and understanding of trainees' reflections?

1.5. Importance of the study

This study is important as it provides a detailed account of the implementation of reflection in pre-service teacher education as practised and understood by those who do it and presents such views through the lens of an insider researcher, participating in the course. This offered a way for trainees to express their views concerning reflection, adding detail to discussions on reflection from the perspective of those doing the reflection, the novice teachers. Accordingly, the findings add useful insights to the current literature on the realities of reflection and the way it is understood in teacher education programmes. It could thus be of relevance to those in charge of implementing reflection in teacher education programmes and those responsible for designing such programmes.

As mentioned in Section 2.1, reflection, though recognised as an important element of professional development (Farrell, 2018), and integrated in many teacher education programmes, is complex, and its implementation is not fully understood. Nevertheless, this study of written, oral, and observational aspects of reflection not only adds to the literature on how reflection is conceptualised, but also discusses why it is conceptualised in different ways. The findings of the study, accounting for the application and value of the different aspects of reflection, enable a novel way to explore the complexities of reflection and accordingly to reconsider the implementation and understanding of reflection in teacher education. The psychological, contextual, and social factors found to be influencing reflection are also helpful in extending the study of reflection to include areas closely related to its practice and understanding, such as emotions, experience, the social context,

guidance, and community dynamics and the relationships existing there as shown in this study. The multi-dimensional framework suggested in the implications of this study is useful in terms of promoting change at the level of implementing reflection in educational contexts as it proposes a holistic view that takes into consideration the practice of reflection, the context of the reflection, and the individual doing the reflection (See Section 7.2.2).

At a theoretical level, the study is also important because it provides practical evidence of the usefulness of a social approach to reflection. As the study uncovered a social perspective framing the practice and understanding of reflection and showed how reflection is rooted in and impacted by its social setting, it extends theoretical understandings of reflection to include a social perspective that is still not fully explored.

1.6. The structure of the thesis

This study consists of seven chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the thesis. It presents a general background to the study, an overview of the concept of reflection, and the rationale for undertaking this research. This first chapter also sets out the context of the study, addresses the research questions and the importance of the study, and outlines the structure of the thesis.

Chapter two explores literature on reflection in two main sections. Section one introduces theories in the field of reflection, primarily based on the theoretical models of Dewey (1910, 1933) and Schon (1987, 1991). It also gives an overview of the complexity of reflection as a concept and its implementation in teacher education and training programmes. Section two covers sociocultural and social learning theories and concepts related to the study of reflection. These include Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978), Blumer's (1986) symbolic interactionism, Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice, and the study of emotions in relation to reflection.

Chapter three presents the methodology underlying the study. It first provides an overview of the philosophical paradigm framing this research and the methodological approach employed. It then gives a detailed account of researcher positionality within fieldwork and the reflexivity characterising the whole study. The chapter also outlines the research design in terms of a description of the setting investigated, access, and participants, and gives a

summary of the processes of data collection and analysis. The chapter ends with an account of the ethical considerations and the challenges faced during data collection. Both the validity and the writing up of the study are also discussed.

Chapter four, five, and six consist of the findings of the study. Chapter four presents an autoethnographic account of my insider engagement during fieldwork and how this impacted both the data collection process and the development of the study. Chapter five and six portray trainees' conceptualisations of reflection. While chapter five focuses on trainees' perspectives of the different aspects of reflection, chapter six accounts for trainees' perceptions of the psychological, contextual, and social factors, influencing the practice and understanding of reflection.

Chapter seven presents a general discussion summary of the findings, proposes methodological, pedagogical, and theoretical implications, and provides a conclusion for the whole study.

2. Theoretical perspectives on reflection

This chapter outlines theories and concepts that inform this study. It is composed of two main parts, each unveiling useful insights into the understanding of reflective practice in teacher education programmes.

I should note that structuring the chapter into two parts is deliberate. The main reason behind this structure is that at the beginning of my research journey, my readings into the concept of reflection have been restricted to early theories and concepts. My main reading was Dewey's and Schon's models. However, as I conducted my data collection and started analysing them, new concepts of relevance to the understanding of my data emerged. Based on this, I put together my initial readings on reflection in part one where the focus is on understanding the complexity of the concept and its development and implementation into what it has become to be in different teaching contexts. Part two then, is more data driven and includes all the theoretical aspects that emerged later either within the data collection or analysis processes and provide a broader social perspective on the understanding of reflection.

The first part reviews two theoretical frameworks that are strongly related to the study. These are Dewey's (1933) reflective thinking model and Schon's (1987) the reflective practitioner model. Both models complement each other and provide a convenient frame for the understanding of the practical dimension of reflection. Accordingly, they primarily assist in drawing a picture of the implementation of reflection in practice and help make sense of the reasons behind the complexity it surrounds.

This part then moves to cover the literature on current conceptualisations of reflection and presents the different interpretations it entails. This account is however not meant to define reflection or bring about consensus over what exactly it implies. The aim is to shed light on the complexity of this concept and the intricacies that underly it. Within the same part, the conceptualisation of reflection in teacher education is explored. The relevance of this aspect could be illustrated through the study's focus on pre-service teacher trainees' perspectives on reflection and the complexities that defined such perspectives, and which revealed insights into the understanding of reflection.

Like part one, part two of the chapter continues to draw upon other relevant approaches and concepts which can be related to and assist in the understanding of reflection. These include Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, Blumer's (1986) symbolic interactionism, Lave and Wenger's (1991; 1998) communities of practice, and teacher emotions. Although these concepts were originally developed to explain the social nature of learning in general, I employ them in the context of this study, considering the social dimension of reflection in this study.

The theoretical approaches and concepts in part two contribute with insights into the study of reflection. They all allow a perspective on reflection that is rooted in the social environment. Accordingly, the particularities of each of these theoretical aspects situate reflection within a social setting of interactions and define the impact such interactions could have on the practice and understanding of reflection. In the context of this study, it is the social perspective emerging from trainees' perspectives that frames the both the understanding and practice of reflection.

Therefore, the chapter starts with part one which frames the study theoretically. It comprises three sections. Section 2.1.1 sets out the theoretical models of Dewey and Schon as integral and indispensable frameworks for the understanding of reflection. Section 2.1.2 introduces the various interpretations of reflection, along with a distinction between this concept and other related concepts like critical reflection. Section 2.1.3 puts a particular emphasis on the integration of reflection in teacher education.

Following the same focus, part two provides an explanation of other theoretical directions relevant to this study and includes four sections. Section 2.2.1 provides an overview of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory with a focus on concepts like the zone of proximal development (ZPD) and mediation and how these are projected in teacher education programmes through scaffolding and mentoring. Section 2.2.2 describes symbolic interactionism as an approach related to the study of reflection and Section 2.2.3 presents the concept of communities of practice and how it corresponds to the practice of reflection as a social activity. Teacher emotions and its connectedness to reflection is set out in Section 2.2.4.

The two parts together provide a theoretical framework for the understanding of reflection and a holistic view into its practice and conceptualisation in teacher education programmes.

2.1. Understanding reflection through the lens of Dewey's and Schon's contributions

This part provides an overview of reflection from the lens of early theories, mainly Dewey's and Schon's contributions. Following such a focus, the sections of this part aim to give a general view of reflection, the complexity it characterises, and its conceptualisation in the field of teacher education.

This part comprises three sections. Section 2.1.1 presents two models of reflection relevant to this study, Dewey's reflective thinking and Schon's reflective practitioner model. Section 2.1.2 details the complexity surrounding the concept of reflection and its current status in teacher education programmes. Section 2.1.3 explores the conceptualisation of reflection in teacher education.

2.1.1 Theoretical understandings of reflection

In this section, the main theories of reflection are discussed in order to explore the link between the theoretical underpinnings of reflective practice and its implementation in educational settings.

This section first outlines Dewey's reflective thinking model, then moves on to cover aspects of Schon's model of the reflective practitioner.

2.1.1.1 Dewey's (1910; 1933) reflective thinking model

This section outlines some aspects of Dewey's model that relate directly to the study. These are the concept of reflective thinking, the role of experience in reflection, and the qualities of a good reflective practice.

Developing a reflective thinking model

In introducing the concept, Dewey first claims that there are different types of thinking and that some tend to be better than others in terms of the outcomes these might bring when used appropriately. In this sense, he introduces reflective thinking and describes it as 'the

kind of thinking that consists in turning a subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration' (1933; p. 3). For him, this kind of thinking is distinguished from mere thinking which denotes anything that goes through our minds or anything that involves imagination and could not be seen or heard. Dewey also believes that reflective thinking works at the level of beliefs and the consequences such beliefs might lead to in terms of other beliefs or behaviours as it 'implies that something is believed in or disbelieved in, not on its own direct account, but through something else which stands as witness, evidence, proof, voucher, warrant; that is, as ground of belief' (ibid, 1910, p. 8). From this, Dewey makes a clear distinction between reflective action that is guided by reasoning and questioning of beliefs, and routine action that refers to the social acceptance of formal rules that are set to define the correct ways of thinking without consciously considering them.

Based on this, reflective thinking is not just thinking about what happens. Rather, it is a process which investigates, and questions already held beliefs and assumptions with the aim of reaching an end or new insights. Within the same view, Moon (1999) argues that Dewey's definition of reflection denotes a thinking process with the addition of a purpose to this process.

Given such an understanding of reflection as a process of structured thinking oriented towards systematically considering the grounds of knowledge, there are certain steps that Dewey devises for such process. He summarises them as '(a) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and (b) an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts which serve to corroborate or to nullify the suggested belief' (Dewey, 1910, p. 9).

As the above quote indicates, reflective thinking consists of a number of stages that move the individual from a state of uncertainty to a confirmation or disconfirmation of beliefs. The first stage is a state that is primarily initiated by doubt which according to Dewey leads individuals to question beliefs. What comes next is a process of enquiry that involves making suggestions and logical connections regarding the problematic situation identified previously. Once suggestions are made, an examination of how the proposed suggestions work takes place. Suggestions are then tested. The final stage then consists of working with the formulated suggestions in an attempt to find solutions and solve the perplexities which

is a key aspect in the whole process. In the case that the suggested outcomes do not work, this implies that further testing needs to be made, allowing new explanations to emerge.

According to Dewey, the above stages of reflection are meant to find a solution to a problem or uncertainty. Further, these stages do not follow a linear process. Some steps might overlap, while others can be extended. The stages of reflection are complementary to each other in the sense that they work for refining and developing the idea to be tested and then confirmed or rejected.

From the above, it can be understood that Dewey's understanding of reflection implies a rationalised and systematic process, which begins when there is something doubtful and ends up when solutions to such doubts are found. In other words, reflection is a thinking process aimed at solving problems. The rational nature that Dewey advocates, could also be paralleled with the mechanical nature that reflection acquired in teacher education programmes. Farrell (2018), for instance, believes that one of the reasons for reflection being a systematic process in teacher education programmes is the influence of the works of both Dewey and Schon on the development of different frameworks and models. Similarly, Rolfe et al. (2011) believe that the educational frameworks based on Dewey's model of reflective thinking put much focus on the systematic thinking process compared to what needs to be done in teaching practice. This means that in terms of teacher training programmes, this understanding could be seen in the practice of reflection that is focused at solving teaching issues and developing teaching by first outlining any issues in teaching, then aiming to solve them.

In the study investigated here, Dewey's reflective thinking and its focus on reflection as a systematic solving problem tool could provide a good framework for understanding some of trainees' views on reflection, particularly the written aspect.

Experience as a triggering element for reflection

Adding to the description of reflection as a systematic thinking process, Dewey also emphasises the potential of learning from experiences and the role these play in reflecting. According to Rolfe et al. (2011), Dewey's work is concerned with the construction of knowledge through enquiry and discovery of the world. This usually happens through reflecting on previous experiences and actions. In this respect, Dewey (1933) indicates that

personal experiences have a great impact on individuals' reflections and thoughts for they stimulate reflective action. He explains this, believing that the suggestions formulated while reflecting come from experiences. Accordingly, he says that 'if the person has had some acquaintance with similar situations, if he has dealt with material of the same sort before, suggestions more or less apt and helpful are likely to arise' (1910, p. 12). Within the same view, he adds that past experiences and incidents could act as a potential start in the development of reflection. He clarifies this in terms of education as

The more a teacher is aware of the past experiences of students, of their hopes, desires, chief interest, the better will he understand the forces at work that need to be directed and utilized for the formation of reflective thinking (1933, p. 36).

This is similar to what happens in teacher training programmes, where reflecting takes place at the level of teaching experiences and drawing upon other relevant experiences such as learning or personal incidents. Such experiences as Dewey claims have the potential of developing reflective thinking. This is in line with the study's findings on the role of the experience of reflection itself in having a positive impact on trainees' process and product of reflection.

There Should be a reflective mindset

Dewey (1933) has also drawn attention to particular qualities which he thinks play a crucial role in promoting reflective thinking. These qualities are open-mindedness, responsibility, and whole-heartedness. He also maintains in this regard that the three qualities together are not only elements that need to be developed, but also traits of one's character.

Open-mindedness describes the willingness to consider different sides, ideas, or alternative responses for an issue, along with the ability to be free from prejudices. The second quality, responsibility, refers to the acceptance of the consequences of the decisions' teachers make. Accordingly, Dewey (1933, p. 32) describes teachers having this characteristic as the ones who 'consider the consequences of a projected step, it means to be willing to adopt these consequences when they follow reasonably from any position already taken'. The other quality, whole-heartedness, is about the complete engagement and the critical evaluation of practice with an intention to develop new insights and make changes.

As far as the implementation of these qualities in teacher education is concerned, Farrell (2014) points out their implications in such a context. He claims that being open-minded means allowing teachers to consider their ways of teaching and the extent to which this teaching assists their students. As for responsibility, it denotes the different levels at which a teacher could think. These levels according to Farrell (2014), involve the descriptive level where classroom actions are reported, the conceptual level which takes into consideration the conceptualisations of practice, and the critical stance that works at the level of questioning assumptions and making sense of powers underlying the educational setting and its interactions. In terms of having a whole-hearted manner in teaching, Farrell explains this as the continuous reflections' teachers undertake, whether these are reflections on action, in action or for action and the outcomes these could generate (see Section 2.1.1.2).

Following Dewey's seminal work on reflection, Schon, another influential author in the field, also developed a model of reflection which has been adapted in many educational fields (Anderson, 2019). The next section gives details about this model.

2.1.1.2 Schon's (1987/1991) the reflective practitioner model

This section presents two aspects of Schon's model which pertain to this study. These are reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action

Reflection as a form of artistry

Like Dewey, Schon is often cited in the literature about reflection and his contributions have been used in educational settings in developing reflective practitioners. Schon's model emerged as a reaction to technical rationality that consists of using theories and knowledge to solve practical issues. He developed a model of reflection that calls for artistry in professions and introduced two notions, reflection-in-action, and reflection-on-action. An overview of this model is provided below.

Schon's model opposes technical rationality which rests on the view that professionals need general knowledge and principles to solve issues and is meant for applying theories to effectively deal with problems of practice. This view implies that the more an individual possesses general knowledge and basic principles in a certain field, the more s/he is a professional. However, when it comes to unsettling situations and uncertainties, Schon

believes that professionals find it difficult to make sense of them and that these 'are not removed or resolved by applying specialised knowledge to well-defined tasks' (1991, p. 19). Consequently, technical rationality proved to be limited in accounting for confusing situations of practice, and for this, Schon suggests an alternative that involves 'an epistemology of practice implicit in the artistic, intuitive processes which some practitioners do bring to situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value conflict' (1991, p. 49). According to Schon, this is professional artistry that consists of the range of competences professionals present in conflicting situations such as reflection.

Schon adds that this artistry is performed through what he calls knowing-in-action that he describes as the know-how of doing things that cannot be explained. In terms of professional practice, this means being aware of what is happening and recognising the different aspects characterising a phenomenon, whether be it details or special features of something, but not being able to describe them. Schon (1987, p. 25), argues for the possibility of verbally explaining this tacit knowing-in-action when reflecting on it. In this respect, he says that 'our descriptions of knowing in action are always constructions. They are always attempts to put into explicit, symbolic form a kind of intelligence that begins by being tacit and spontaneous'. Based on this, reflection is then an intuitive process, consisting of an awareness of a situation or event and an ability to describe the particularities and characteristics of such a situation in order to construct meaning or knowledge.

In describing reflection, Schon points to two types.

Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action

Reflection-in-action as described by Schon is the key to dealing with uncertainties which technical rationality could not address. This type of reflection refers to thinking while the action is taking place, and in professional practice, it is used to challenge the tacit knowledge that individuals believe in and making sense of it through submerging oneself in situations and experiences that carry uncertainty. This process follows certain steps, generally starting by identifying a problematic situation or framing a problem, then going about understanding the complexity of the situation and making sense of it through

questioning. What comes next is generating knowledge and trying different alternatives to finally reach a conclusion or solution (Schon, 1987).

Furthermore, Schon refers to reflection-on-action as the mechanism by which practitioners could think about their actions and experiences after being completed. In Finlay's (2008) understanding, Schon's reflection-on-action entails a reviewing process of past events and practices in an attempt to gain more insights into future development. She adds that 'in both types of reflection, professionals aim to connect with their feelings and attend to relevant theory. They seek to build new understandings to shape their action in the unfolding situation' (ibid, p. 3). In terms of professional practice, reflection-on-action is the kind of reflection teachers are generally involved in after their teaching. According to Akbari (2007), Schon's reflection-on-action is the most popular type of reflection and is promoted in the educational field among teachers and often practised in groups.

Another similar type of reflection that has not been mentioned by Schon in his model is reflection-for-action. This type, according to Farrell (2014) represents teachers' plans and preparations for future practice based on their current actions and their reflections on those.

Like Dewey, Schon's model provides useful insights into understanding reflection in this study as the types of reflection detailed above are all manifested in teacher preparation programmes. These could be seen in writing down self-reflections, post feedback sessions, and all the reflective moments trainees engage in when teaching and the decisions they make as a result of their reflections. However, this study adds details into the way such reflections are understood and practised by trainees.

Given the definition of Schon's reflection, it seems that it is like Dewey's understanding in that both see reflection starting with an uncertainty (Anderson, 2020) and are oriented towards solving problems (Farrell, 2019). Another point in common that the two authors' works have is the focus on experiences to reflect (Farrell, 2018). In this sense, Schon also stresses the role of experiences in learning about new situations, by saying that everyone has a repertoire of examples, events and understandings and that these are associated with the problematic situations they encounter. In other words, when practitioners are faced with new situations, they can access their repertoire and refer to similar situations which enable

them to deal with the new situation in a unique way as being both similar and different to what they have experienced.

Farrell (2018) also points to another point of commonality in both models, the lack of focus on the practitioners' personal values, emotions, and the moral and socio-cultural aspects that reflective practice involves. In other words, the emphasis in both approaches is on the end product which is solving problems with little attention being paid to the person reflecting and their emotions and the social world in which they exist. This could be seen through the study's findings which project the importance of the social environment and its impact on trainees' practice and understanding of reflection.

Both Dewey's and Schon's models of reflection have been very influential over the years and contributed significantly to the development of reflection, particularly in the field of teacher education and training programmes. As indicated throughout this section, Dewey's understanding of reflection could be seen in the implementation of reflection as a tool to solve teaching issues and the focus on the product which is effective teaching. Schon's reflection is apparent in both the reflection-in-action and the reflection-on-action integrated in most teacher preparation programmes.

The next section in this part discusses the complexity that surrounds reflection in teacher education programmes.

2.1.2 Understanding the complexity of reflection

This section explores the complexity surrounding the understanding of reflection. As the focus of this study is investigating reflection in teacher education, it is convenient to review the current discussion on the concept and highlight the meanings it underlies.

In the previous chapter, Section 1.1 introduced the concept with a particular focus on showing the lack of consensus over its meaning. This section continues with the complexities over the understandings of reflection. It first starts by outlining the different perspectives on reflection in light of early theories and goes further to explain other emerging understandings. This section then clarifies some of the confusions surrounding reflection and other similar concepts, namely critical reflection.

2.1.2.1 Early prospects of reflection

As mentioned in Section 1.1, reflection gained popularity in the field of teacher education and accordingly became a prominent aspect of the development of teachers. However, what reflection really means is still debatable.

Since its emergence and implementation in education, reflection has been assigned different meanings. This according to Akbari (2007, p. 192) is mostly related to the historical nature of the term which ‘has been influenced by many trends and philosophies which make the term reflection open to different interpretations’. He adds that the different theories underpinning reflection made the term difficult to understand and led to it meaning ‘whatever academics want it to mean’ (ibid, p. 196). Similarly, Mann and Walsh (2013), Farrell (2018), and Anderson (2020) argue that much of the discussion on reflection has always been influenced by the contributions of Dewey and Schon which has made it hard for the term to be defined. Consequently, most of the meanings of reflection carry elements of either Dewey’s or Schon’s frameworks (See Section 2.1.1).

In defining reflection, Dewey (1933, p. 9) argues that it is as an ‘active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends’ and describes the process as:

Not identical with the mere fact that one thing indicates another, or a symptom of it, or a key, hint, or intimation. It commences when we begin to inquire into the reliability, the worth, of any particular indication; when we try to test its value and see what guarantee there is that the existing data really point to the idea that is suggested in such a way to justify acceptance of the latter (ibid, p. 11).

As indicated in the quotes above, Dewey’s definition implies a rationalised form of thinking that is driven by a careful consideration of knowledge. This rationale process of thinking as shown in the second quote could be seen as a problem-solving process that starts with questioning and testing and ends up by making informed decisions. This according to Dewey, is called reflective thinking and can be distinguished from other forms of thinking like impulsive or routine thinking (see Section 2.1.1.1).

Schon's definition of reflection also provides an early understanding of the concept. Schon (1991, p. 31), unlike Dewey, advocates a more intuitive-like character for reflection that could stand as an alternative to technical rationality which he outlines as:

The positivist epistemology of practice. It became institutionalized in the modern university, founded in the late nineteenth century when positivism was at its height, and in the professional schools which secured their place in the university in the early decades of the twentieth century.

By referring to it as positivism, technical rationality is meant to indicate the process of applying scientific methods and techniques to solve practical issues. In this process, practitioners become mere problem-solvers who only use technical means to solve certain issues (Schon, 1987). To deal with this, Schon proposed professional artistry with reflection as the key to dealing with problems in practice. This professional artistry depends on knowing in action that involves the use of intuition. In this sense, Schon (1991, p. 49) believes that 'our knowing is ordinarily tacit, implicit in our patterns of action and in our feel for the stuff with which we are dealing. It seems right to say that our knowing is in our action'. This knowing in action is important as it enables practitioners not only to be aware of what they do, but also to make sense and reconsider their actions and gain understandings of what these actions imply. Based on this, Schon's reflection-in-action which occurs during the event, and reflection-on-action, which happens after the action, were proposed and have been important in terms of the implementation of reflection in teacher education (see Section 2.1.1.2).

Another understanding of reflection according to Fendler (2003) is rooted in the Cartesian philosophy, dating back to Descartes and which puts focus on the power of the mind and awareness in understanding knowledge and 'rests on the assumption that self-awareness can generate valid knowledge' (ibid, p. 17). In fact, this Cartesian philosophy finds grounds mostly in teacher education courses where teachers are asked to reflect (Akbari, 2007). Fendler (2003, p. 17) exemplifies this by arguing that 'when teachers are asked to reflect on their practices, the Cartesian assumption is that self-awareness will provide knowledge and understanding about teaching'. This view implies that reflection could be used by teachers as a self-awareness tool of their own teaching. Osterman and Kottkamp (1993, p. 19) support this view to reflective practice as '...a means by which practitioners can develop a

greater level of self-awareness about the nature and the impact of their performance, an awareness that creates opportunities for professional growth and development'. based on this, reflection then becomes an awareness-raising tool to different teaching aspects.

2.1.2.2 Where is reflection going?

These early understandings influenced the current discussion on reflection in educational settings, particularly, Dewey and Schon as seen Section 2.1.1. Through their contributions in regard to developing reflective practitioners, the interest of addressing the importance of understanding teaching through looking at teachers' thinking was increased and 'reflective practice has become a focus of interest and a powerful movement in teacher education' (Mathew et al. 2017, p. 126). However, 'the meaning of the term has changed considerably from Dewey's 1933 version' (Fendler, 2003, p. 19), paving the way for various meanings to emerge.

Moon (1999, p. 4) for instance, reviews some common-sense understandings of reflection and concludes that reflection in its general use refers to 'a form of mental processing with a purpose and/or an anticipated outcome that is applied to relatively complicated or unstructured ideas for which there is not an obvious solution'. Along similar lines, Farrell (2019, p. 7) sheds light on one of the possible meanings of reflection, 'common sense reflection', that he argues dates back to ancient times. This understanding, according to him, involves a chain of unorganised thoughts. When applied to a teaching context, this could be seen in teachers' moments of thinking about their teaching. However, in showing the complexity of such a concept, Farrell points to the confusion underlying this definition in the sense that reflective moments any teacher is involved in could be associated with either reflection or critical reflection (See Section 2.1.2.3). This example, as Farrell (2019) claims, reveals the difficulty in understanding what exactly this concept entails or underlies.

Several other studies have also explored the meaning of reflection. An example includes Robinson and Rousseau's (2018) study on the views held by both teacher educators and student teachers. The findings show the disparity of understandings ranging from considering the concept as an enquiry process towards improvement and professional growth to just a useful tool for describing and evaluating classroom practice. Another similar study is Pedro's (2005) work on pre-service teachers' reflections in a graduate

teacher preparation programme. This study also reveals the complexity of defining reflection, which was referred to as mostly a thinking back process that involves questioning one's practices and making changes. Another understanding of the term in teacher education could be seen in Collin et al.'s (2013) generic reflection that rests on learning from past events and experiences and using them to react to different situations in professional practice.

Within the same educational context, Mann and Walsh (2017) point to the view of reflective practice as an element of evaluation. In this respect, they assert that:

RP is regarded as an institutional requirement, either as a central element of a teacher education programme or as a means of evaluating professional performance. Put simply, the issue is that RP is predominantly viewed in these cases as an evaluative tool which is used for assessing competence (p. 27).

Similarly, Eraut (2004) addresses the component of assessment that underlies reflective practice by highlighting the different approaches used in assessing students' reflections, including the cognitive that targets students' awareness, the personal that identifies thoughts and emotions about teaching experiences, and the professional competence approach that deals with students' assessment based on the course components. He also foregrounds the view of reflection as being used for assessment purposes and its possible impacts.

Mann and Walsh (2017) also acknowledge the multiple perspectives of reflection and highlight the different aspects of focus in the concept including social, affective, and critical elements. In the same way, Farrell's (2018, p. 17) review of many studies on reflective practice suggests that it has been dealt with from different levels. Accordingly, he groups these various levels into different categories. These are:

Practical involving the different tools used for reflection.

Cognitive referring to the reflective process of developing professionally.

Metacognitive where reflection at the level of beliefs and personality in teaching is concerned.

Critical consisting of the wider community with its political, cultural, and social aspects of teaching practice.

Moral shedding light on only moral aspects.

Learner where reflection on students and their learning process occur.

Considering the disparity of meanings presented above, and the different levels believed to be part of the practice of reflection, the concept became confused with other similar terms.

The next section attempts to clarify such confusion.

2.1.2.3 Reflection, critical reflection, or the critical in reflection?

As the focus of this study is on reflection, it is useful to cover aspects relevant to the understanding of this concept in practice. Based on this, this section then presents a brief account of critical reflection.

In defining reflection, Fook (2010) points to the importance of clarifying the meaning of both reflection and critical reflection as he believes that these should be distinguished from one another. Rolfe et al. (2011) outlines this difference by claiming that reflection is an intuitive process that individuals are engaged in everyday, which does not make it very promising in terms of giving enough evidence for practitioners in professional practice. They believe that critical reflection goes beyond this understanding to include a level of analysis of our actions. Similarly, in an attempt to distinguish between the two concepts, Brookfield (1995, p. 8) argues that ‘reflection is not, by definition, critical. It is quite possible to teach reflectively while focusing solely on the nuts and bolts of classroom process’. This type of reflection, according to Brookfield, does not involve any elements of criticality and the decisions which are made inside the classroom are generally made based on instinct, without awareness of how the classroom context is embodied in the wider society. For him, however, there are two main aspects that make reflection critical. The first is developing an understanding of how the wider society and its power intrudes into the classroom setting and being aware of its influence. The second consists of revealing and analysing assumptions that people think work for their own good while in fact, they are not. In terms of teaching, those assumptions mostly consist of ideas about good teaching and the right decisions to be taken by teachers. Brookfield (2009, p. 293) further sets the difference between reflection and critical reflection by defining the former as ‘useful and necessary in the terms it sets itself; that is, to make a set of practices work more smoothly and achieve the consequences intended for them’ and the latter as a process that ‘calls into question the

power relationships that allow, or promote, one set of practices considered to be technically effective’.

Within the varying interpretations of critical reflection above, it seems that all of them address the importance of considering the wider social context and its influence when reflecting. This involves taking into consideration any assumptions that emerge, and analysing them, and accounting for their impact on professional and educational practices. This understanding also reveals the main point of difference between reflection and critical reflection, the influence of the later on the wider social context. This means that reflection involves the same practice with critical reflection being one dimension of the process involving more aspects to be considered when reflecting.

Furthermore, based on this overview of both reflection and critical reflection, it appears that the type of thinking promoted in educational contexts is reflection which is generally advocated for as good practice without questioning its nature or process (Brookfield, 2009). Projecting this to the current study, it is found that the critical aspect of reflection is sometimes overlooked and/or undermined. However, some aspects of criticality in trainees’ reflections are shown, particularly when reflecting about some aspects in the course that affect the way their thoughts are shaped.

The next section outlines the conceptualisation of reflection in teacher education.

2.1.3 Conceptualising reflection in teacher education

As this study investigates reflection in one of the teacher education programmes, the CELTA course, it is then relevant to look at how this concept has been implemented and conceptualised in teacher education.

The section presents how the concept has been implemented in teacher education. It then provides an overview of some issues related to this implementation.

2.1.3.1 The practice of reflection in teacher education

The importance of reflection in teacher education has been conceptualised and implemented in different ways. According to Lakshmi (2012), and Dzay-Chulim and Mann (2017), there are various methods and approaches of promoting reflection. These can range

from self-reflection to journal writing, peer and experienced teachers' observations, dialogic reflection, and audio-video recordings.

Journal writing, for instance is the most common approach followed in most teacher education programmes. It is described by Lee (2007, p. 321) as involving 'reflections on teaching and learning issues that student teachers write on a regular basis. They are considered a useful instrument for developing reflection, since they allow teacher learners a space to reflect'. Similarly, Lakshmi (2014) claims that writing about ones' experiences and the issues encountered while teaching is one method to better understand one's practice and move forward with it. This implies that writing down thoughts helps in identifying and addressing teaching issues as this method allows teachers to look back into their teaching with a reflective eye. In terms of this study, this reflective task manifested itself through the self-reflective sheets trainees used to fill after each TP as part of the course structure in both courses investigated.

Furthermore, the practice of reflection extends to observing peers and experienced teachers and the feedback that results from such observations. As teacher training programmes provide the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge into a teaching practicum, observation of that teaching is a crucial element in learning to reflect. Yamamura and Okazaki (2019) address the potential of observing others in the sense that it prepares student teachers and mentors to discuss practicum-related issues later. Copland et al. (2009) also point to learning from observations on certificate courses and the feedback that could result from them. In doing so, they identify three distinctive elements that make up the learning process of observations and their post feedback sessions. These according to them, constitute an element of self-evaluation generally undertaken by trainees who provide feedback on their lessons. There is also trainer evaluation, where trainers are involved in the discussion and provide both comments and suggestions to trainees to improve their practice. Peer feedback is another element that results from observations of teaching. The three elements together, based on observations of teaching, constitute the feedback that is provided after the TP. Copland (2011, p. 1) calls it 'post-observation conference' feedback sessions where interaction between trainees and trainers takes place (Dzay-Chulim and Mann, 2017). Juxtaposing this to the context of this study, one could say that observations on both peers and experienced teachers and the feedback afterwards are all integral aspects

of the CELTA course and constitute an element of reflection for trainees. In fact, trainees were involved in watching teaching sessions of experienced teachers and observed their peers and reflected on their teaching regularly in the feedback.

Conceptualising the implementation of reflection in teacher education is important to the understanding of reflection in the field of teacher education. As the course investigated here involves trainees reflecting through writing and speaking, the study provides relevant aspects into these modes of reflection from trainees' perspectives.

As the different sections above provide a glimpse into reflection, its understanding, and conceptualisation, one cannot deny the complexity that underlies the concept and the intricacy of understanding it. Simply put, as there is a promising aspect in reflection, there is also a critical side which needs to be considered. The next section presents some critique on reflection in teacher education programmes.

2.1.3.2 Reflection in teacher education programmes: a critical stance

As mentioned earlier in Section 1.1, reflection is a core component of all teacher education programmes and its practice has been advocated to improve teaching. Nevertheless, there is some critique over its implementation.

As mentioned earlier and in chapter one, there is a lack of consensus over what reflection means which relates mainly to its theoretical underpinnings. Thompson and Pascal (2012), for instance, believe that the theories that underlie an understanding of reflection in teacher education are oversimplified. They explain this by pointing to Schon's work as a major reference in implementing reflection in many courses and how it is conceptualised as merely thinking about one's actions, with little consideration to the meaning that could be generated out of the reflective process. Another related concern pertaining to its theoretical understanding is the lack of a sociological understanding of reflective practice and the limited consideration attributed to the social context where reflection occurs (Thompson and Pascal, 2012). According to Walsh and Mann (2015), this could be clearly seen in the individualised reflections with little collaboration or importance given to learning from others' experiences.

In talking about the implementation of reflection, Farrell (2018, p. 2) addresses the limitations that the approaches used in teacher education programmes place on the practice of reflection. Accordingly, he claims that reflection is generally restricted to what went well and what did not go well and that ‘there is a danger that we are confining reflection in a bubble to fix-it approach or a repairing of some perceived deficit in teaching that separates the teacher from the act of teaching’. Similarly, Copland et al. (2009) highlight the focus on the weaknesses of trainees and the areas that need further development in feedback sessions, emphasising how teaching should be, with little consideration to other aspects like teacher personality and how it is brought to the teaching context. This goes in line with Ciriello et al. (1992) claim about the attitude followed by many institutions about what makes good practice and the need for learning effective skills to develop ones’ teaching. This narrow vision into the meaning and purpose of reflection results in neglecting teacher personality and emotions (Thompson and Pascal, 2012; Farrell, 2018) and makes reflection seem more evaluative and inauthentic as the interest in reflecting becomes more oriented towards completing the course (Copland et al. 2009; Mann and Walsh, 2017).

Within the same view, writing down thoughts has also been doubted as to whether it is beneficial for the development of teachers or not. Mann and Walsh (2013; 2015) believe that the dominance of written forms of reflection in teacher education influences the way it is done. They explain this by referring to the organisational nature which makes reflection look like a requirement and the repetitiveness of the reflective tasks. This then makes reflection a mere ‘institutionalised requirement that then encourages superficial engagement or inauthentic reflection’ (Mann and Walsh, 2013, p. 299).

The time needed for reflection is also a subject of interest in teacher training programmes. Some courses, particularly those of a short nature like the CELTA course place pressure in terms of the amount of knowledge presented, compared to the time provided to grasp it (Mackenzie, 2019). This means that time could act as a factor impacting learning and reflection. On this point, Mann and Walsh (2017) analyse the relationship between time and reflection in post-feedback sessions as resulting in more direct and authoritative roles from trainers’ part. Such a view then implies not only a reduced time for reflection, but also creates an imbalance in terms of trainer-trainee roles when reflecting. An alternative view

of time constraints on teacher education courses is however expressed by Thompson and Pascal (2012, p. 320) who believe that

The busier we are, the more reflective we need to be. That is, the more pressure we are under, the clearer we need to be about what we are doing, why we are doing it, what knowledge is available to help us to do it to best effect.

Given such a view, one cannot say that a particular amount of time is needed for reflection to take place appropriately. In fact, as teaching is often demanding, reflection should go in parallel with the requirements of practice and its challenging realities. In other words, reflection should take place regardless of the circumstances of the teaching.

In terms of this study, some of the findings are in line with this critical account on reflection. In fact, as this research looks into perceptions and experiences about reflection, some related views to the account above emerged in the data, unveiling interesting insights about the practice, and understanding of reflection from trainees' perspectives.

Given the different sections of this part, it seems that the understanding of reflection is still complex and its implementation in educational contexts is accordingly still intricate and critical, making it difficult for educators, practitioners and teachers to understand or work with the concept in practical terms.

In light of the data, the second part of this chapter provides a broader perspective into the understanding of reflection and puts focus on particularly the social and affective aspects as important elements in reflection. Part two thus, approaches reflection from a social view, focusing mainly on some concepts of social learning and their link to reflection. This part also sheds light on the individuals' emotional dimension and how it relates to reflection.

2.2 A broader perspective into the understanding of reflection: a sociocultural view

This section provides a broader view on reflection and is based on a social perspective emerging from the data. Since the practice and understanding of reflection according to trainees are found to be rooted in and impacted by its social setting, it is useful to look at the social setting of reflection and the interactions taking place there.

This part then covers aspects from Vygotsky's (1978) work on social learning in Section 2.2.1 and its connectedness to reflection. It then goes on to explain symbolic interactionism as an approach useful to the understanding of reflection in Section 2.2.2. Section 2.2.3 outlines how communities of practice and some of its related concepts could elucidate useful insights into the study of reflection in teacher education. This part ends with Section 2.2.4 on emotions and their relevance to reflection.

2.2.1 Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory in practice: reflection as a social practice

This section provides an account of socio-cultural theory and its principles, then looks at reflective practice in light of this theory as it is of relevance to the understanding of the nature and practice of reflection in pre-service teacher education.

A sociocultural perspective to learning considers the importance of the social setting in developing one's learning. Kozulin et al. (2003, p. 2) summarises Vygotsky's approach on the importance of sociocultural aspects in learning as 'shaping the situation of a child's development and learning and points to the crucial role by parents, teachers, peers, and the community in defining the types of interaction occurring between children and their environments'. Given this perspective, learning is a social activity that is defined by the relationship between the individual and the existing social processes and the role played by these processes in development and learning. Similarly, Akpan et al. (2020, p. 51) argue that 'social constructivism recognizes the social aspect of learning and the use of conversation, interaction with others, and the application of knowledge as an essential aspect of learning and a means to achieving objectives'. Given such a view, learning is a process that takes into account the social and cultural aspects of the environment and is shaped by people's interactions with the aim of creating knowledge. Socio-cultural theory thus focuses on social interaction as a triggering element to learning and the construction of knowledge based on this interaction (Lantolf et al. 2021).

In terms of teacher education programmes, Mann and Walsh (2017) provide a theoretical understanding to the application of a sociocultural theory to the practice of reflection by pointing to the relevance of its aspects in understanding reflective practice. In this sense, they believe that 'learning occurs in the first instances through interaction with others who are more experienced and, in a position, and support of the actions of the novice' (ibid, p.

12). Taking such view to reflection, the authors claim that reflection is part of this learning process where discussion and dialogue are key aspects, leading to the construction of new knowledge and understandings. Mann and Walsh (2017) also provide explanations into how reflection and social learning are interrelated by means of the mediation taking place between learners and teachers and scaffolding of experts to learners. Such concepts are further discussed in this section later.

Considering this view means that opportunities for reflection could emerge out of interactions and move learners towards gaining and developing insights and understandings about teaching, and that understanding reflection could better be explored within this view. In other words, collaboration and discussion among trainees and the guidance given by trainers are elements of teacher education and training programmes which strongly relate to sociocultural theories, and the interactions taking place in such a setting. This then could provide an understanding to trainees' conceptualisations of some aspects of reflection such as the oral aspect where interaction is a key element, the observations carried at the level of peer and experienced teachers' teaching as seen in terms of a social practice, and the contextual and social factors trainees identified as impacting their practice and understanding of reflection.

Social learning as interaction is also outlined by Vygotsky in terms of what he calls the zone of proximal development (ZPD).

The zone of Proximal Development

This concept first appeared in Vygotsky's terms as 'the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers', denoting 'those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state' (1978, p. 86). Based on this, the ZPD involves the level an individual could achieve and the processes in route of development when assisted with a more capable individual. This development takes place through interaction and collaboration with others.

Similarly, Chaiklin (2003) explains the notion of ZPD as the interactions taking place between an expert and a novice involved in an activity oriented towards gaining more competence. He further identifies three aspects that characterise the common understanding of ZPD in all contexts. The first aspect which he calls the generality assumption refers to the individual's ability of performing tasks and the idea that this performance increases when tasks are done collaboratively. The second characteristic defined as the assistance assumption refers to the ways experts use to assist in the learning of novices. The third, the potential assumption, is about the readiness of learners to learn. These aspects together make up the ZPD as a zone involving interaction and collaboration between individuals, the assistance of an expert, and the readiness to learn and explore one's potential.

Taking such a view of the ZPD as explained by Chaiklin's (2003) three characteristics provides insights into the way trainees in this study developed their practice and understanding of reflection through the experience of being engaged in different reflective practices during their course (generality assumption), together with others, both peers and trainers (assistance assumption), leading to development of reflection in terms of its focus, accuracy, and detail (potential assumption). These elements together, operating as part of their experience of reflection paved the way to some kind of development in trainees' practice of reflection (See Section 6.2.3).

The conceptualisation of the ZPD generally takes place in practical terms through mediation.

Mediation

Vygotsky refers to mediation as a key aspect in understanding the movement of learning in the ZPD in different contexts. Lantolf (2000, p. 17) refers to this point as 'how mediational means are appropriated and internalized'. Mediational refers to 'the involvement of a third factor (mediator) into the interaction between two objects, events, or persons' (Kozulin, 2018, p. 23). Put simply, mediation is the process humans or other mediators undertake to facilitate learners' learning. In other words, as the ZPD involves interactions between individuals, mediational tools define the extent to which assistance and guidance help in the development of learning (Shabani et al. 2010). This makes learning a process consisting of mediation between individuals and their environment.

Furthermore, During the process of interaction between experts and novices, imitation becomes a learning tool. Vygotsky (1978) explains this by comparing between children's and primates' learning in that the latter imitate what they already know and could not go beyond it. However, children do not merely imitate adults, they rather go beyond that imitation and construct their own meanings. Chaiklin (2003) explains Vygotsky's view on imitation in the ZPD as implying the interactions the child is involved in with the help of a competent adult. He further adds that the process of imitation identifies what children can perform and hence, provides evidence of the functions that are developed.

In addressing mediation, Kozulin (2003), suggests two types of mediation based on Vygotsky's work. These are symbolic and human. The former involves the learners' ability to use symbolic tools like language and appropriate them to achieve higher mental functions. The most useful symbolic tool used for interaction and learning is language (Vygotsky, 1978). The latter, however, concerns the interactions between individuals, then taking these to a more personal level where meanings are internalised. In both types, Kozulin (2003) claims that appropriation of the knowledge takes place and the link between both types of mediation should be set out for learners in order to be able to make sense of the knowledge presented and generate new aspects of it. This again confirms that novices do not just imitate what experts do, rather they learn and appropriate what is there for them in their own unique ways. Wertsch (1985, p. 61-62) refers to this as internalization and describes it based on Vygotsky's theory as 'a process whereby certain aspects of patterns of activity that had been performed on an external plane come to be executed on an internal plane'. By external processes, Wertsch means the mediated social interactions including help from others, language, or texts that assist in developing the internal psychological functions such as creating meanings. This internalization does not involve the exact transfer of what has been learned but consists of the formation of the mental functions based on the social processes and interactions individuals are exposed to. This again, suggests that learning does not involve pure imitation, rather it consists of construction of knowledge through mediation. This notion of internalization has also been advocated in other approaches to social learning such as symbolic interactionism, referring to the same meaning of building new knowledge based on interpretations made at an individual level (See Section 2.2.2).

In terms of teacher education programmes, particularly, the context of this study, this process of moving through the ZPD by means of mediation has been operationalised by Mann and Walsh (2017) in terms of the mediated help of experienced teachers to their learners, leading those learners to develop new knowledge and reflect in unique ways. This mediation in general, as it is rooted in interactions between individuals, is practically apparent in this study in different ways, providing practical grounds to the relevance of social learning theories as explained by Mann and Walsh (2017). As this study focuses on trainees' experiences of reflection as implemented in the CELTA course, the process of mediation could be seen in terms of the social perspective identified in this study and how reflection then becomes understood as a social activity rooted in and impacted by the social context surrounding it.

This study also sheds light on the importance of mediation in reflection. As mediation symbolises guidance, it is revealed in this study that the help provided to reflect in different ways was not fully mediated, particularly in writing reflections and also in regulating emotions when reflecting. This was maybe due to the disconnectedness between human and symbolic mediation which Kozulin (2003) above argues is important for developing new knowledge.

2.2.1.1 Operationalising the ZPD in teacher education

The operationalisation of the ZPD in teaching contexts could be seen in different related ways. In this section, two concepts of relevance to the ZPD and which are applicable to the context of this study are scaffolding and mentoring.

2.2.1.1.1 Scaffolding

Though the ZPD initially emerged in the field of childhood development, the theory could apply to other aspects of development in life (Lantolf and Poehner, 2008). A related aspect to this notion, which developed primarily in the context of foreign language teaching is scaffolding.

This notion, which is generally understood in light of Vygotsky's ZPD (Bliss et al. 1996; Verenikina, 2003; Mahan, 2020) denotes the aid provided by an expert to a less experienced individual. In describing the general meaning of scaffolding in teaching, Van

Der Stuyf (2002, p. 2) argues that ‘in scaffolding instruction, a more knowledgeable other provides scaffolds or supports to facilitate the learner’s development. The scaffolds facilitate a student’s ability to build on prior knowledge and internalize new information’. Similarly, Wells (1999) points to the dialogic nature the notion carries and its role in the creation of knowledge and understanding through the help of mediators. In this sense, scaffolding is oriented towards developing independent learning by means of mediation including either guidance or tools for learners to assist their learning.

This notion is common in different teacher education programmes where novices in the profession are assisted by experienced teachers in different tasks. Given the focus of this study, which is reflection, this notion of guidance is then related to reflective practice and operates as part of the mediation, explained above, that expert trainers provide to novice trainees or even the help provided by trainees to each other. Dzay-Chulim and Mann (2017) for instance, point to the crucial role of trainers in guiding and promoting trainees’ reflective skills. Farrell (2001, p. 368) also highlights the importance of help and interaction in reflection and calls it critical friendship. He defines it as ‘people who collaborate in a way that encourages discussion and reflection in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning’. In this study, scaffolding in reflection is shown through the mediational process trainees are involved in in different ways. This is shown not only through reflections made at the level of experienced teachers’ practice, but also extends to include scaffolded reflections made at the level of peers’ observations, emphasising the importance of peer scaffolded reflection.

2.2.1.1.2 Mentoring

This section continues with the social nature of reflection and suggests looking at it from a perspective that takes into account aspects related to its practice in a social environment. In the context of this study, this setting is a pre-service teacher course involving groups of trainees learning to teach with the help of experienced tutors with the focus being placed on reflective practice. This section addresses the mentoring provided to trainees in parallel with trainees’ reflective skills.

Mentoring is rooted in sociocultural theory and rests on the view that knowledge is co-constructed by means of interactions between individuals, prior knowledge, and personal

understandings (Tonna et al. 2017). In teacher education, this notion is described as the process of ‘being supportive of the transformation or development of the mentee and of their acceptance into a professional community’ (Malderez, 2009, p. 259). This happens generally through the assistance provided by an experienced to less capable others to develop their skills (Ragins and Kram, 2007; Tonna et al. 2017) by means of different scaffolds.

Mentoring is often confused with similar terms like supervision (Malderez, 2009). This latter concept is defined in terms of the assessment conducted based on observations to determine the extent to which teaching or other activities have been done in a good way with some discussion on different ways of improvement (Malderez, 2009). Within such a view, supervision is more directive with the supervisor being the sole authoritative body responsible for observing classroom practice and assessing performance accordingly with a discussion afterwards on what should be done. Though this implies a degree of collaboration, it still restricts trainees as the decisions and options available are framed by the supervisor’s view (Malderez, 2009).

This, however, differs from mentoring. Though mentoring involves assessment of teaching practice, it is more oriented towards developing mentees’ skills by means of discussion and co-construction of meaning (Malderez, 2009). It is thus the term mentoring that is chosen as it is broader in its meaning and not only restricted to assessment of mentees. In addition, in the CELTA course, there are different aspects such as the seminars, ALP sessions, one-to-one tutorials, and feedback, all aimed at developing trainees’ both theoretical and pedagogical skills in teaching, with assessment being one aspect of tracking such development.

Given such an understanding, the role of the mentor consists primarily in the professional integration of mentees in their communities, the acquisition of the necessary skills and the assessment of such skills (Malderez, 2009). In the context of this study, this covers developing the mentees’ ability to plan, make decisions, observe others, learn from their own experiences, and develop teaching (ibid, 2009).

As far as the focus of this study is concerned, that is, reflection, mentoring provides a good potential for encouraging mentees’ reflective abilities. In this sense, ‘the mentor can enable

reflective practice through astute questioning and particularly probing questions that allow the mentee to deconstruct and reconstruct pedagogical practices' (Tonna, et al. 2017, p. 213). Similarly, Malderez (2009) argues that one of the roles of mentors is enabling mentees' questioning and noticing skills in regard to teaching practices, whether these involve their own or others' teaching, including peers and experienced teachers.

Nevertheless, this role of promoting reflection can appear at odds with the assessment role mentors have to undertake. In teacher education programmes, Copland et al. (2009) argue that trainers should follow the assessment criteria defined by their institutions, while at the same time, putting a focus on developing trainees' reflection, which can cause tension, particularly during the feedback sessions. They explain this by the prevailing views of trainers and the apparent focus on developing effective teaching, which can minimise opportunities for reflection. Similarly, Copland (2011), in another study on feedback sessions in a teacher preparation programme, confirms that trainers' views emphasise principles of good teaching and how to achieve them, while trainees are expected to work with these views and apply them in their teaching, even if they are not convinced. This again suggests a focus on what constitutes good teaching and less opportunities for critical reflective thoughts.

Legitimacy of talk, as Copland 2011 calls it, is also part of the tensions raised in mentoring. Legitimacy in this sense is defined as 'the acceptability of practices within particular contexts' (ibid, p. 4). While it exists in teacher preparation programmes and manifests itself in terms of who is to speak and what to speak about, there is still some confusion in terms of participative structures (Copland, 2010). In other words, there could be some imbalances in the feedback in regard to its structure and the participation roles that both trainers and trainees should perform, thus creating hierarchies in their roles and leading trainees to be placed in a secondary position compared to their trainers in terms of reflection.

Given such tensions, mentoring could become congruent with supervision as both seem to be more focused on assessment criteria at the expense of providing equal opportunities for reflective practice. This also implies that power is exclusively held by experts who are trainers. This aspect is of importance to understanding trainer- trainee relationship and its impact on reflective practice.

Projecting such a view of mentoring as involving both assessment and support for reflection to the current study could add to the understanding of reflection, its nature, and practice. This view could also provide insight into the different relationships in the setting and how they impact reflection, particularly in light of the type of mentoring or supervision roles existing within the context of this study.

The next section provides a brief overview of an approach situated within the same framework, symbolic interactionism.

2.2.2 A symbolic interactionist view to reflection

This section presents the main attributes of symbolic interactionism as an approach to the study and understanding of human interactions. As reflection pertains to social interactions, the following account is relevant to the focus of this study.

Blumer (1986, p. 78-79) defines this approach as referring to:

The peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or define each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their response is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such situations. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's action. This mediation is equivalent to inserting a process of interpretation between stimulus and response in the case of human behaviour.

Based on the above quote, Blumer refers to three main characteristics of this approach. The first consists of the actions and reactions individuals make based on the meanings they carry for them. This implies the individuals' agency and independence in considering things such as people, objects, or principles in light of the meanings they attribute to them. Blumer, as explained in his work on this theory, however, adds the element of social interaction as a second crucial aspect in defining such meanings. In this respect, he believes that:

The meaning of a thing for a person grows out of the ways in which other persons act toward the person with regard to the thing. Their actions operate to define the thing for

the person. Thus, symbolic interactionism sees meanings as social products, as creations that are formed in and through the defining activities of people as they interact' (1986, p. 4-5).

Given such a view, interaction constitutes a defining aspect in the creation of meanings. Like sociocultural theory, symbolic interactionism emphasises the importance of interaction and mediation. In this respect, Carter and Fuller (2016, p. 932) assert that within this approach, the main interest is in 'how repeated, meaningful interactions among individuals come to define the makeup of society'. This suggests interaction as a triggering element for the construction of meaning.

In what concerns the third characteristic of this approach, Blumer (1986) calls it interpretation. He claims that the meanings generated by individuals are not just an application of their social interactions, rather, they present personal makings used to guide one's actions. In explaining the process of interpretation, he suggests two stages that individuals go through while creating meanings. The first is the interaction process where meanings are pointed to. The second is the interpretation of these meanings and involves the transformation of such meanings in accordance with the context in place and the actions to be taken. Again, in line with sociocultural theory's emphasis on the meaning of imitation as a way of internalising new insights, symbolic interactionism also holds the view of individuals' ability to transform learning in their own ways. This happens by means of interpreting meanings in different and unique ways based on the context and the individual's agency.

This general view of symbolic interactionism, as described by Blumer (1986), could provide an understanding of reflective practice. On a course like the one investigated in this study, the different interactions with trainers and peers, and also the interactions taking place between trainees and other tasks, such as writing up reflections or observing peers or experienced teachers, help define the practice of reflection and its meanings to trainees.

The principles outlined above in Blumer's (1986) quote about action-reaction, interaction, and interpretation pertain to this study. As explained above, the individual does not merely interact with the environment, but also makes reactions to the actions made in that environment based on what this individual thinks or believes. Juxtaposing this to the

current study, could explain trainees' perceptions of reflection based on the meanings they attach to the context of the reflection and the individual reactions they make accordingly. A symbolic interactionist perspective on reflection thus provides a basis for understanding the concept as rooted in interaction and internalized in accordance with its practice in the social setting of the CELTA course.

The next section presents the concept of communities of practice as another form of dealing with reflection from a social learning perspective.

2.2.3 Reflection in communities of practice

Sharing a similar focus as the earlier theories, communities of practice advocates learning as a situated social practice in the sense that both ideas and actions are bound to a societal setting. As this study involves the perceptions of groups of trainees on reflection in a pre-service teaching course, this theoretical framework provides relevant insights into the workings of such a social setting and the operationalisation of reflection within it.

Communities of practice, a theory proposed by Lave and Wenger (1991), suggests a view to learning as involving opportunities for engagement and participation in a community with the latter implying 'participation in activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and communities' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p. 98). Given such an understanding, communities of practice consist of people interacting, sharing, and constructing knowledge through engagement and participation. This goes with Wenger's (1998, p. 47) definition of the notion as 'the prime context in which we can work out common sense through mutual engagement'. Again, this suggests the importance of interaction, and working together to develop practice.

Based on this view to learning as a social activity, Wenger (1998) further developed the concept of communities of practice by referring to three defining characteristics. These are: domain, community, and practice. The domain refers to the shared understandings and interests that bring a certain community together and the underlying exchange of knowledge with each other, helping in addressing collective issues and interests and developing one's learning. Community as defined above in terms of participation and engagement, involves a space where people interact and construct knowledge relevant to its

members. Practice as another defining element of communities of practice refers to the process members of a community are engaged in through their interactions.

Relating communities of practice to the current study, reveals some aspects important to understanding reflection. The context of this study, a pre-service teacher course, provides a good example of a community of practice as it consists of individuals sharing thoughts, interacting, and participating in given tasks with the aim of developing teaching practice.

As the focus of this study is on reflection as a task situated within a community, the concept of communities of practice could provide a relevant example into the understanding of trainees' participation in reflective activities, the participative roles they undertake and the interactive endeavours they are involved in. The defining characteristics of communities of practice could also give insights into the practice of reflection at two different levels. At one level, this concerns the oral feedback and the interactions underlying it. As this is a space for sharing ideas between trainers and trainees, communities of practice could provide relevant explanations into trainees' conceptualisations of the oral aspect of reflection as an interactional practice characterised by discussion and participation and their explorations of it in shared spaces. At another level, projecting communities of practice to the particular network of peers and how their shared interests and interactions with each other could have an impact on the reflections they produce is also useful.

Another aspect relating to social learning identified in this theory is the negotiation of meaning. Negotiation of meaning is also addressed by Swain (2000) and Van Lier (2000) as an aspect of social learning and interaction. Both authors refer to the potential of negotiation of meaning in terms of building comprehension. However, Van Lier believes that negotiation of meaning becomes more beneficial for learners when it takes place in a setting where there is an expert.

For Wenger (1998), however, negotiation of meaning describes the engagement and practice in communities of practice as negotiating meaning. He refers to negotiation as a dynamic process where meaning is found by means of participation and reification. The former is about developing a sense of belonging to social communities and being actively engaged in them. The aim of participation in this sense is:

As members of a community of practice interact, share, and participate in a particular cultural practice over time, they develop their understanding about the practice, about who they are, and about what they know in relation to the community and its goals (Wenger, 1998, p. 336).

As the above quote suggests, participation involves some kind of belonging to a community of practice, sharing thoughts, developing understandings about oneself and others in a particular community. Therefore, being able to recognise others, develop one's practice and skills, and shape one's identity.

The latter, reification, the other process associated with the negotiation of meaning, denotes a concretising process of abstract objects and conceptions which helps in the transition of forms to experiences, stories, and concepts (Wenger, 1998). In other words, reification is the way individuals use to create projections of meanings and understandings of abstract notions and facilitate their perceptions as existing entities. Wenger (1998) claims that the transformation of a form to an experience happens by means of strategies such as describing, naming, or designing. In a community of practice, participation and reification are central as these facilitate engagement and understanding of one's role and interests and how such role is situated within the wider community.

In teacher education programmes, negotiation of meaning could explain the process of reflection and how it becomes reified by means of peer help and engagement within their communities of teaching practice. In other words, seen as a community of practice, trainees engage with other members, particularly their peers, participate in different reflective tasks and reify meanings of teaching concepts and teaching practices during this process of participation. Both this participation and reification could provide a basis for trainees' conceptualisations of reflection as such processes give insights into the negotiated meanings of the concept and its operationalisation in the CELTA course.

In the next section, the relationship between emotions and reflection is explained.

2.2.4 Emotions and thoughts: two faces, the same coin

Having dealt with the social nature of reflection and the different aspects relating to its process and product, it is useful to look at the process of reflection itself and its nature

within the context of this study and more particularly, in light of the trainees' teaching practice. This section then presents emotions as a relevant aspect to the process of reflection and how the two concepts are interrelated.

The study of emotions and their importance to other theories and fields has been under-researched (Sutton and Wheatley 2003; Zemblyas, 2005). This is mainly due to the common understanding the concept underlies as '(1) irrational and disruptive; (2) emotions are things that merely happen to people rather than people do voluntarily; and (3) the impact of emotions on action is at best indirect and insignificant' (Zhu and Thagard, 2002, p. 19). Similarly, Swan and Bailey (2004) believe that emotions are generally seen from a positivist perspective as a danger to rationality and making informed judgements. This description of being irrational and out of control is one reason for the little attention given to this aspect in different fields (Fried et al. 2015).

Nevertheless, research shows that this view has been challenged, and emotions gained a new orientation, entailing an agreed upon understanding in professional settings as a multicomponential entity (Sutton and Wheatley, 2003). Fried et al. (2015, p. 418) refer to this as 'each emotion consists of a number of more or less unordered collection of components, jointly activated by how an event is appraised and by component propensities'. This underscores the complex nature of emotions, consisting of a variety of elements that come into play by means of one's natural reactions to situations and events. In what concerns teaching, emotions have received more attention recently and become an important aspect in areas such as learning, teacher identity, beliefs and cognition, reflection, and classroom management (Zemblyas, 2005; Zemblyas, 2014; Fried et al. 2015; Chen, 2019).

The emotions of reflection: is it really a catalyst?

In terms of reflective practice, Zemblyas (2005, p. 467) argues that '...emotions come into play as teachers make decisions, act and reflect on the different purposes, methods and meanings of teaching'. He further claims that 'teacher reflections and emotions are closely intertwined' (ibid, 2014, p. 211). Sharing a similar view, Demetriou and Wilson (2008) point to the link between cognitive and emotional development, claiming that cognitive

processing such as thinking is closely related to the emotions individuals carry when teaching.

This link between reflection and emotions has been referred to in the work of Dewey (1933) and manifested itself in terms of wholeheartedness, one of three qualities for developing a reflective disposition (See Section 2.1.1.1). Dewey argues that ‘there is no greater enemy than divided interest ... [but] when a person is absorbed, the subject carries him’ (1933, p. 137). This implies the importance of being committed to reflection and the impact of the emotional dimension on this process. Nevertheless, emotions have not been regarded as a central aspect to reflection in Dewey’s and Schon’s work and have been given little consideration (Swan and Bailey, 2004).

Early interest in the role of emotions in reflection is also found in Moon’s work (1999, p. 93), which acknowledges the relevance of emotions to reflection. She explains this by saying that ‘if affect is part of the process of reflection, the suggestion is that it is actively contributing to the way in which a person is reflecting to the outcome of that reflection’. This quote denotes the crucial role emotions play in the process of reflection and the results produced. McManus (2011) highlights this role as being a beneficial catalyst for reflection and whether these emotions are produced as a result of reflection or within the reflective process on something else. The role of emotions has two sides: one in promoting reflection and the other in acting as a barrier to reflection and development. Boud et al. (1985) argue that describing an experience should be free from any false perceptions or misinterpretations as these tend to blur one’s view to some important features. What is being addressed here is the emotional aspect that is evoked at the time of reflecting, which could hinder their ability to making appropriate decisions as:

learners who do not observe this affective dimension of their experience may undermine the value of their reflections by restricting them to one aspect of their responses to the world around them, thus placing artificial barriers on their response to experience (Boud et al. 1985, p. 28-29).

The quote above clearly demonstrates the impact that holding negative emotions could have on both the process and outcomes of reflection. It also reflects the case of many individuals in professional practice settings where reflection is an element of practice. In the case of

trainees in this study for instance, emotions constituted a crucial aspect in the reflective process and had an impact on trainees' reflections. Trainees as novices in the profession hold different emotions including stress, anxiety, and lack of confidence, and these generally appear when teaching and are translated into their reflections.

In terms of what these emotions are and how they emerge, Brookfield (1994) provides an explanation based on the emotions of adult educators during the process of reflection. He claims that reflecting critically on taken-for granted assumptions and beliefs involves some kind of negative emotions which interfere within learning. These emotions range from lack of confidence, fear of rejection from one's community, to uncertainty, restlessness, and a sense of belonging with others sharing similar emotions. If juxtaposing such emotions to a similar setting as the one investigated here, there could be a clear vision and understanding of the emotions trainees could have during reflection and how these tend to impact their reflections.

On another level, positive emotions are also integral in the process of reflection in that they help in moving from being emotionally involved in a given experience to intellectually immersed in it (Steinaker and Bell, 1979). This process is about the emotional integration of the individual within the experience that is taking place. The result is development in terms of thinking and learning. Similarly, Boud et al. (1985) emphasise the utility of positive feelings in reflecting and how these, if used appropriately, could benefit reflection as they 'supply the most reliable information about the situations and ourselves and provide the best ways to efficiently achieve our ends' (Zhu and Thagard, 2002, p. 20).

Though this account reveals the importance of the emotions of reflection and how such emotions could act as catalysts in the reflective process when being acknowledged and used positively, the general portrayal of emotions seems to be as a problem that needs to be solved in order not to impact reflection negatively. As Swan and Bailey (2004, p. 110) note 'unreflected-upon-emotions are a kind of lens which can give us the wrong perception of reality and reflected-upon-emotions can provide us with an access to the truth about a situation'. This understanding implies the need for managing one's emotions and controlling them to allow accurate reflections on oneself or teaching to take place. Similarly, McManus (2011) claims that most work on emotions in reflection focuses on negative emotions and that these need to be regulated when thinking to achieve a better

understanding of one's experiences. McManus puts this under emotional literacy, which involves an in depth understanding of one's emotions and the ability to manage them. According to her, this knowledge of one's emotions operates as part of emotional intelligence which she describes as:

a person's ability to recognise emotions and emotional states and to name them. It also includes the ability to control emotions 'appropriately' and to recognise them in others and make interventions such as calming or redirecting them in useful ways (McManus, 2011, p. 7).

It seems that emotions constitute a crucial part of reflection, and that this emotionality needs to be considered by means of self-awareness and appropriate control in order for reflection to take place effectively. Part of this is also the role one could play in relation to others' emotions and the ability to understand them. In what follows is a brief account on managing emotions collectively.

Sharing emotions of reflection: is it a therapy?

In talking about managing one's emotions when reflecting, Raelin (2001) proposes making reflection public in the sense of sharing thoughts in a safe environment with trusted individuals through dialogues and discussions. This again alludes to the importance of interactions in reflection and the community of individuals that is created as a result of shared interests and aims. In the same way that these interactions are helpful for promoting reflection, they are also of a benefit to the discussion of emotions. Raelin (2001, p. 21) believes that:

The reflection in this instance [dialogue] may not only be about our thoughts and actions, but about our feelings. The dialogue might also extend to what was not said or done. Hence, even under the grip of emotion and tension, we can develop the discipline of acknowledging our feelings and inquiring about the feelings of others, at least to the extent that we can understand the frames or meanings afforded by our statements and actions. Relying on the trust, friendship, and support of others, we can distil the learning resulting from interpersonal reflective processes.

Here, Raelin seems to suggest a new dimension to reflection in its oral form. Rather than being restricted to professional practices like teaching to be reflected upon, the emotional aspect to dialogue proposes taking into consideration the unrevealed emotions and unspoken-about thoughts or actions. It also extends to awareness and understanding of others' emotions. In doing so, mutual trust and support is necessary to develop both reflection and learning. This aspect of mutual understanding is similar to emotional intelligence in that it calls for recognising others' emotions and providing appropriate support for them and Farrell's (2001) critical friendship's focus on the element of trust and safety when sharing one's reflections.

Similarly, Brookfield (1994), in the context of critical reflection, refers to the potential peer support plays in managing feelings of discomfort and that this is one of the important stages of critical reflection. He calls it community and it refers to the membership everyone involved in reflection possesses and the emotional commitment the group shows to keep the sustainability of the whole group as 'identifying, expressing and sharing emotions with others will be beneficial in some way to the individual or the collective' (Swan and Bailey, 2004, p. 112). Reflecting in a group upon one's emotions works as a therapy that assists in acknowledging one's emotions and being aware of how others feel and as a result, be of support to them. Additionally, acknowledging one's emotions in a trusted environment could help in developing one's reflections and learning in general.

Given this brief account on emotions in reflection, one could see that these present mostly theoretical claims about the importance of the emotional dimension in the reflective process, with little consideration to this aspect in practical terms. In other words, what is more relevant is looking at the emotions of reflection and their impact in context, which this study reveals in some respects.

Therefore, in terms of the context of this study, this framework for studying emotions provides a good theoretical understanding of the emotional dimension of trainees' reflections and the possible impact these emotions could have on reflection. As there is a community composed of trainees and trainers, and possibly relationships being tied within the group, it is also useful to consider the collective atmosphere and group dynamics of the community studied in this research to understand the emotions of reflection in the public sphere and more particularly in light of different relationships.

In short, this part summarised some of the theories of social learning and their relevance to reflection. Aspects of sociocultural theory, symbolic interactionism and communities of practice as applied to learning could also apply to reflection, its conceptualisation and practice in the current study. The study of emotions and its importance to reflection has also been discussed. These different concepts and theories inform this study, providing a broad theoretical perspective through which to understand reflection as a social activity in teacher education.

Summary

This chapter consisted of two main parts, both providing a glimpse into the theories informing this study. Part one reviewed two theories relevant to the understanding and implementation of reflection in teacher education, Dewey's reflective thinking model and Schon's reflective practitioner model. This part also covered an overview of the complexity that characterises reflection in teacher education with a particular focus on the different understandings of it, and some current issues around reflection. Part two of the chapter, following a similar focus as part one, continued with a review of some pertinent approaches and concepts useful to the understanding reflection as investigated in this study. This part outlined aspects of sociocultural theory, symbolic interactionism, communities of practice, and emotions and identified their relevance to the focus of this study.

While this chapter accounted for the relevant theories informing this study, the next chapter gives a detailed overview of the methodology underlying it.

3. Research methodology

This chapter presents how the methodology underlying this study emerged and developed. It is composed of four main sections. Section 3.1 provides an overview of the research paradigm that frames the whole study. It also explores the qualitative nature within which the research is located and gives details about the methodology that was followed. Section 3.2 of this chapter explores my positionality in this study and the reflexivity characterising the whole research. Section 3.3 presents the research design of this study. It outlines the research tools used and places a particular focus on describing the processes of data collection and analysis. Section 3.4 is devoted to a discussion of the ethical considerations and limitations faced during data collection. It also addresses the validity and the writing up of this study.

3.1 Paradigmatic choice and methodological inclinations

This part first presents the paradigm that frames this study, social constructionism. It then explores the qualitative nature underlying the study and the methodology used which consists of a focused ethnographic approach and an autoethnographic account.

3.1.1 Paradigmatic choice: social constructionism

This section outlines the paradigmatic choice in this study, social constructionism, and how it is relevant to the study's focus in terms of its epistemology, ontology, methodology, and analysis.

The choice of a paradigm that directs the whole research journey is of importance in any study. According to Holliday (2016, p. 20), 'there does need to be an umbrella strategy of investigation or methodology within any research project that drives whatever methods of data collection and analysis are used and whether these are qualitative or quantitative'. Selecting a paradigm also requires identifying the researcher's perspective that would inform the interpretation of the research (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017). The paradigm chosen to frame this study is social constructionism. Crotty (1998, p. 42) defines this philosophical perspective as 'the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social

context'. This perspective then implies that meaning is constructed through individuals' engagement with the world around them. Sharing a similar view, Burr (1995) believes that the focus of social constructionism is on the social processes' individuals are involved in and the interactions they engage in. Having such a focus, Burr (1995) explains that understandings of the world emerge only through such interactive processes that people are continuously submerged in, therefore placing an emphasis on both the social and its role in the construction of meanings (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

Given this emphasis on the construction of meaning out of interactions between people and their worlds, this perspective fits well with the aim of this study, which is looking at trainees' perceptions of reflection in their pre-service teacher course. Put in another way, as this research investigates one of the daily activities trainees are involved in in a particular social setting, a social constructionist perspective that sheds light on the interactions and social processes of trainees, and how meanings emerge based on those interaction seems useful to understanding the focus of this study.

Another feature of social constructionism which is relevant to this study is the interest in both the individual and the collective experiences and values that individuals share (Galbin, 2014). Crotty (1998, p. 58) explains this aspect as 'the hold of culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see things (even the way in which we feel things) and give us quite definite view of the world'. This implies that the meanings individuals construct are bound within social and historical perspectives (ibid) and that understandings are generated between individuals collectively and rooted in the culture of the individual, then brought up accordingly. Juxtaposing this perspective to this study, helps in having insights on the collective views trainees hold of their shared experience of reflecting in the course and how these could be rooted in their cultural and social worlds.

Following a philosophical framework also allows understanding how meanings emerge and how reality is perceived. In this sense, it provides a glimpse on both the epistemological and ontological principles which guide the researcher in terms of how to perceive the research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Epistemology which is concerned with making sense of knowledge and the relationship between the researcher and researched, is manifested in social constructionism through the different interactions people have and the resultant meanings constructed (Crotty, 1998; Williams, 2016). Ontology, involving an

understanding of the nature of reality and how it is perceived (Crotty, 1998) appears through social constructionism in the different meanings and realities individuals construct regarding the same phenomenon (Galbin, 2014).

The above social constructionist epistemological and ontological principles inform this study. As the focus of this study is on knowing trainees' conceptualisations of reflection, the epistemological and ontological underpinnings here place an emphasis on the meanings trainees assign to reflective practice in light of the interactions and social processes existing in the setting along with the agential power trainees imply in constructing different realities of reflection. In other words, a social constructionist perspective to this study reveals insights into the views that trainees constructed of reflection in the CELTA course and how such views are varied, highlighting the role of the social aspect in understanding both individual and communal views. These principles also show how the findings of this research are constructed in light of the interactions and relationships between researcher and researched. In this sense, as a researcher, I interacted with trainees particularly during data collection, and throughout the CELTA course in phase two (See Chapter 4). In doing so, I had an impact on the data collected in the sense that I was making sense of the data collection process and its particularities, thus, denoting the realities of others. This meant that 'the findings are a construct produced by the interaction between the interpreter and the interpreted as situated in society. Knowledge of the observed is constructed rather than discovered' (Levers, 2013, p. 4).

This paradigm also guides the choice of the methodology employed in this study. As detailed in Section 3.1.3, the methodology used consists of following a focused ethnographic approach along with an autoethnographic account. These two methodological orientations imply social constructionist principles as they both allow the depiction of trainees' different constructions of reflection and the factors influencing it. Galbin (2014, p. 82) argues that 'the social constructionism perspective says that we never know what universal true or false is, what is good or bad, right or wrong; we know only stories about true, false, good, bad, right or wrong'. This goes in line with the aim of focused ethnography which is studying a phenomenon in its social context and interpreting what is being said, heard, or seen in light of the interactions and behaviours of the participants in their settings. This in practical terms is manifested through the observations of the setting,

trainees, interviews, and analysis of trainees' reflective sheets (See Section 3.3). These altogether, showed trainees' views of the different aspects of reflection and the factors influencing its practice and understanding and how these are located within a social sphere of shared experiences and aims.

As far as autoethnography is concerned, it also goes hand in hand with social constructionist principles as its main focus is on the construction of meaning through interaction (Ellingson and Ellis, 2008). In other words, meanings and understandings emerge through autoethnography's focus on the connectedness existing between the self, others, and culture. Autoethnography as a social constructionist research also challenges the dualism of truth, particularly, that of objective-subjective division. In this sense, autoethnography highlights that 'true objectivity is absent in the human sciences because all methods require one set of subjective humans to rate another subjective humans' (Galbin, 2014, p. 85). In terms of this study, the autoethnographic aspect presented in Chapter four sheds light on the insider experience I lived, trainees' accounts of reflection, and interactions taking place in the setting and how the intersection between these brought up the understandings outlined in Chapters five and six. Put in another way, the autoethnography puts focus on the shared trainee experience I had and its impact on revealing much in terms of the data and constructing an understanding of trainees' views. Thus, following a social constructionist perspective as manifested in autoethnography frames this study, particularly in terms of acknowledging the subjectivities of my research and bringing up understandings that 'are to be found neither in the individual psyche nor in social structures, but in the interactive processes that take place routinely between people' (Burr, 1995, p. 8).

Applying a thematic analysis approach to the data also goes with the philosophical framework used in this study as it calls for meanings to emerge (See Section 3.3.3.1.2). Accordingly, as social constructionist principles guide this study, thematic analysis is used to interpret the data in a way that allows the construction of meanings flexibly and reflexively through the continuous interaction with the data.

To sum up, this section presented the paradigm framing this study which is social constructionism. It also looked at how this paradigm guides the research epistemologically, ontologically, methodologically, and analytically.

3.1.2 A Qualitative approach to this study

This section explains how a qualitative research approach frames this study and is useful to its focus.

This study investigates trainees' perceptions of reflection in a pre-service teaching course with a focus being placed on the meanings trainees assign to reflection as practised in its natural context. In other words, since the interest is exploring trainees' perspectives of reflection in light of their lived experiences in the CELTA course, a qualitative approach is relevant to the aim of this study as it 'looks to understanding a situation as it is constructed by the participants [and] attempts to capture what people say and do, that is, the products of how people interpret the world' (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 18). Put in another way, this study is qualitatively driven as it enables the identification of 'issues from the perspective of study participants and understand the meanings and interpretations that they give to behaviour, events, or objects' (Hennink et al. 2011, p. 9), which is the defining aspect of any qualitative study. Related to this is the wide range of tools qualitative research provides to serve this aim. Unlike quantitative research which mainly deals with numbers, qualitative research consists of collecting textual data, then analysing it (Dornyei, 2007). This kind of data emphasises participants' views as it denotes what they think of a certain phenomenon and how they perceive it.

In terms of this study, the data is qualitatively collected and analysed using qualitative tools including interviews, observations of the setting, and an analysis of trainees' reflections. All of which, interpreted thematically, allow trainees' perspectives and understandings of the different aspects of reflection along with its application, assigned value, and factors influencing it to emerge.

The exploratory nature of qualitative research and its focus on participants' construction of meanings which quantitative research underscores also fits the study's focus and goes hand in hand with what it aims to explore. Unlike quantitative research and some of its methods which generate data that is 'standardized or structured, or removed from real life or natural social context' (Mason, 1996, p. 4), qualitative research:

looks deep into the quality of social life. It locates the study within particular settings, which provide opportunities for exploring all possible social setting variables and set

manageable boundaries. An initial foray into the social setting leads to further, more informed exploration as themes and focuses emerge (Adrian, 2016, p. 6).

As the quote suggests, a qualitative approach posits research in a contextual setting where data could emerge naturally, yet flexibly. Hence, underlying an emergent nature that concerns itself with the process of understanding participants' worlds and views as the research progresses or as new situations or variables emerge.

Similarly, Maxwell (1998) points to the flexibility characterising qualitative studies. He explains this by claiming that the research design in qualitative studies does not follow a prescriptive set of procedures or sequences to be followed. Rather, it is nonsequential and non-restrictive in the sense that it allows some openness in dealing with the research activities. It also helps 'to reconsider or modify any design decision during the study in response to new developments or to changes in some other aspects of design' (Maxwell, 1998, p. 70).

Working under a qualitative research orientation helped in conceptualising the whole picture of my research in terms of an emerging process that kept developing. Though the focus of the study and research tools were already set up at the start of my research, I allowed some flexibility in terms of the research design. This involved elaborating the research questions, the focus of the study, and data collection and analysis in light of how the research was developing.

Framing this study within qualitative research was also useful in terms of understanding my positionality and the role I played during the research process (See Section 3.2.1). Mason (1996), in this sense, believes that qualitative research provides the opportunity to consider the researcher's role in the research. It also celebrates researchers' subjectivities and sheds light on the impact they have on the interpretations they generate (Hennink et al. 2011). Looking at my research through this lens, I realised the importance of defining my positionality and I reflexively considered how my role impacted my study accordingly (See Section 3.2.2).

Therefore, approaching the study from a qualitative research lens is convenient in this study. As it has been explained throughout this section, qualitatively framing this study goes hand in hand with the study's focus and what it aims at exploring.

In the next section, the methodology underlying this study is detailed.

3.1.3 Methodological inclinations: focused ethnography and autoethnography

This section outlines the methodology followed in this study. It first presents focused ethnography as a method guiding the research and how it is manifested throughout the study, then explains the use of autoethnography and its relevance in this study.

3.1.3.1 Focused ethnography

Since this study is qualitative, the approach employed to go about collecting data should follow accordingly. The methodological orientation implemented in this study is focused ethnography. It is one of the contemporary methodological adaptations of ethnography and consists of studying cultures or subcultures in particular settings with the focus being on a particular phenomenon, specific cultural context, or specific features or elements of a phenomenon (Knoblauch, 2005; Cruz and Higginbottom, 2013). This method, therefore, ‘explores a specific social phenomenon as it occurs in everyday life’ (Bikker et al. 2017, p. 1) and allows ‘richer understanding of complexities from participants’ perspectives (emic view)’ (Chopra, 2020, p. 211).

Given this understanding of focused ethnography as an adaptation of ethnography, exploring a phenomenon in its social context, and allowing researchers some flexibility in approaching the field study, I employed it here as it serves the aim and focus of this study. As I am investigating the perceptions of a number of trainees in regard to reflection in their teacher training course, focused ethnography is best suited for this focus. As explained earlier, this method is most helpful in studies which focus on specific elements or shared experiences within small groups of people. This is relevant to the current study as it aims to look specifically at how trainees in their teacher training course conceptualise reflection and demonstrate a level of detail in terms of the current discussion on reflection.

The use of focused ethnography is relevant in this study in different ways. These are the short durations of data collection, the focused element, and the reflexivity that characterises it and which all coincide with the particularities of this study. It is also important to highlight that it is those aspects, particularly, the time and focused nature the approach underlies that made me place my research as focused ethnographic research.

The time frame within which data is collected is a defining feature of focused ethnographies. According to Knoblauch (2005) and Higginbottom et al. (2013), focused ethnography does not require being in the field for a long period of time. Rather, it relies on short visits to the field of work. This implies the ability to collect data through different intervals and the possibility of carrying short-term observations of the setting (Chopra, 2020). This is relevant to the current study as data collection was conducted through two phases, with each phase lasting for a month (See Section 1.3.1). The visits during phase one were also restricted due to the partial access given, which made observations of a short-term nature, lacking in-depth detail and thick descriptions as conventional ethnographies require. However, as these were focused on certain aspects of reflection and trainees' views of it, they were of relevance to the focus of the study and provided useful data.

The term 'focused' in focused ethnography is also directly related to the study's focus. Focused in this sense implies the interest in exploring particular aspects of an area in the field in which the researcher has some background knowledge (Bikker et al. 2017). This means that focused ethnography's emphasis is not on everything that happens during field work. Rather, the focus is on the aspects related to the topic of investigation along with an interest in the actions and interactions taking place among the participants. Relating this to this study means putting focus on particular aspects of reflection. As the CELTA course involves different activities including learning to teach, TP, and other related elements, the focus of this study is placed over just one aspect of the course which is reflection. As this area of interest was defined from the start, the focus of the study was also set accordingly. As far as the current study is concerned, the focus is on trainees' experiences of reflection and the perspectives they hold of it along with all the related or relevant aspects emerging from their behaviours, actions, activities, or interactions. In addition, the observations in both phases of data collection were characterised by this focused aspect. In this sense, most of the observations, particularly those in phase one, emphasised aspects of the post feedback teaching practice including discussions, interactions, and actions taken during this activity and moved from 'descriptive to focused to selective' (Higginbottom et al. 2013, p. 5). The observations of the second phase, though a bit extended compared to phase one, were also focused and covered aspects mostly related to the focus of the study.

In addition to observations of the setting, interviews and documents are also used in focused ethnographies to allow variety at the level of data and generate rich understandings of the phenomenon under investigation (Higginbottom et al. 2013). Under the current study, the use of different tools strengthened this focused ethnographic methodology. Conducting observations and interviews, along with analysing trainees' reflective sheets are all part of the focused ethnography approach followed here. The focused observations were a key element to understanding trainees' behaviours and interactions. They provided a clear picture for the setting and allowed me to undertake and shift my roles and tie relationships with the participants. As for interviews, they were primarily important in giving a rich and detailed account of participants' views. The reflective sheets enriched the data as this set provided another dimension into trainees' thoughts about reflection (See Section 3.3.2.3).

Furthermore, reflexivity is of importance in focused ethnographies. According to Higginbottom et al. (2013), this method is focused on making researchers' visible and on explicitly showing their impact on the research process and findings. They add that this is particularly important for researchers having similar experiences of the cultures or settings being investigated. This means that focused ethnography celebrates researchers' reflexivity and acknowledges their subjectivities. In terms of this study, reflexivity constitutes an important aspect (See Section 3.2.2). The use of focused ethnography helped me in putting focus on this reflexivity, which in turn developed into an autoethnographic aspect (See Chapter 4).

In short, focused ethnography characterises the research design of this study. It is manifested through the focus of this study which is the exploration of trainees' perspectives and experiences of reflection. The principles of this method, mainly the short duration spent in data collection, the focused nature of the investigation on certain aspects, and the importance of researcher reflexivity defined my study to a great extent.

In the following section, autoethnography as another methodological orientation distinguishing this research is discussed.

3.1.3.2 Autoethnography

This section provides a brief overview of autoethnography and explains the rationale for its inclusion in this study.

As Wall (2016, p. 6) claims, 'it is of vital importance that we clarify what we mean by the name autoethnography, so we know what we intend to do with it and we are able to recognize it'. By exploring the term, autoethnography appears to fall under the ethnographic tradition. However, the main difference between the two is 'that in an autoethnography, the researcher is not trying to become an insider in the research setting. He or she, in fact, is the insider. The context is his or her own' (Duncan, 2004, p. 30). This implies that following such an approach, the researcher has insider knowledge and relies heavily on the use of personal experiences as a source of data. Additionally, Duncan's (2004) view of the method is in line with several researchers' views. According to Stanley (2014, p. 148), autoethnography is 'an introspective method used to access "hidden" data that cannot otherwise be easily observed'. In the same way, Adams et al. (2017) suggest autoethnography as a method to have access to incidents and moments that cannot be described or captured by the other traditional methods.

Following these descriptions, it appears to me that the term autoethnography suggests a type of method that emphasises personal and lived experiences with the researcher taking an active role. Furthermore, given those views and following Anderson and Glass-Coffin's (2013, p. 67) understanding of autoethnographic researchers' role as:

... to reflect upon the ways in which their engagement with the field had contributed to their understanding of themselves as contingent upon and emerging from the experiences of their lives. The field in this case may involve experiences with other people or it may not; instead, the field may be the 'state of mind' that one assumes when recording one's own experiences and how one is changed by these.

I use the term autoethnography in line with Anderson and Glass-Coffin's (2013) above interpretation. This means that I am including an autoethnographic aspect in this study to further explore my insider experience and its importance in understanding the setting, the data collection process, and the collected data. In other words, I shed light on my engagement in the fieldwork and record the changes that occurred at the level of my thinking and how my insider perspective helped in understanding trainees' views of reflection and framed these in light of such an experience. Doing so implies exploring trainees' accounts and perceptions of reflection through the lens of my own experience. The autoethnographic aspect to this study, therefore provides a closer look of my insider

experience in terms of understanding the data collection process and framing the direction of the research.

Emerging emphasis on autoethnography

The decision to integrate an autoethnography to this study coincided with undertaking a second phase of data collection where I participated as trainee. As I progressed with data collection, I realised that the data I collected was insufficient and this was translated into having another phase of data collection and my participation in a CELTA course. When thinking back about this, I realised that autoethnography is in fact rooted in the decision of collecting more data and better understanding trainees' perceptions as 'autoethnographies begin with the thoughts, feelings, identities, and experiences that make us uncertain-knocking us for sense-making loops- and that make us question, reconsider, and reorder our understanding of ourselves, others, and our worlds' (Adams et al. 2015, p. 47). What I was trying to do at this stage was making sense of the experiences lived by trainees and deeply understanding their conceptualisations of reflection.

Nevertheless, at this stage, this interest in collecting more data was not interpreted in any way as part of doing an autoethnography as my thinking was more oriented toward having a better understanding of trainees' experiences. However, with my participation in the CELTA course and with the growing awareness I started having, autoethnography became a necessity as it provided me with insider knowledge that enabled me to 'foreground [my] personal experience in research and writing [and] illustrate sense-making processes', and offered 'complex, insider accounts of sense making and show how/why particular experiences are challenging, important/or transformative' (Adams et al. 2015, p. 26-27). This means that being an insider and coming to terms with my positionality in the setting and its impact on my understanding of the setting was integral in having a sense of the development of the research. Such an understanding was however difficult to establish.

Self-understanding: a key aspect in decision-making

Coming to terms with how I was understanding the setting was not easy particularly in phase two. The tensions I experienced at the level of being a trainee and a researcher made it difficult to fully understand the workings of the setting especially at the beginning of phase two. In addition, trying to make a clear cut between my roles worsened the situation

as I was always perceiving that the trainee role outweighed the researcher role.

Accordingly, I put much focus on the dangers of being an insider instead of appreciating the subjectivities and the complexities my experience had to bring. However, as the course progressed, I began appreciating those subjectivities as integral elements that I should not only be aware of or eliminate, but also employ in terms of understanding and constructing meanings in the setting. Therefore, I realised that as Maykut and Morehouse (1994, p. 123) argue that:

The qualitative researcher's perspective is perhaps a paradoxical one: it is to be acutely tuned-in to the experiences and meaning systems of others-to indwell- and at the same time to be aware of how one's own biases and preconceptions may be what one is trying to understand.

Based on all of this, came the decision to include an autoethnography to show how my participation in the CELTA course as a trainee and the change in roles affected the way I approached and made sense of the data. The duality at the level of my roles and the shift from outsider in phase one to complete insider in phase two clearly impacted the way I was looking at the setting. In this respect, my insider engagement influenced the way I looked at the data particularly the fieldnotes and reflections I made. In terms of the data collected, I found myself referring to phase one of data collection with a reflexive eye. This implied reconsidering the data collection process and what it has to offer based on my insider experiences. I also revisited the partialities of my thinking and made a more nuanced sense of the different aspects in my data. This meant according to Anderson and Glass-Coffin (2013) in terms of writing an autoethnography, dealing with the data with great understanding of oneself, the setting, and the participants, and reflecting one's actions in relation to and dialogue with others. Based on Anderson's words, I made sense of data from phase one and dealt with data collection in phase two with more awareness and tried to create an understanding that is not only defined by my membership in the setting, but also through making sense of what is taking place in relation to the other trainees. Even after data collection ended, I kept making sense of the data I collected and felt that my thinking was continuously changing, developing, and broadening. All of these aspects reinforced the inclusion of an autoethnographic account (See Chapter 4).

In the following part of the chapter, I provide a detailed account of my changing roles and the reflexivity that defined my research.

3.2 Positionality and reflexivity

This part highlights how my positionality in the field emerged. It then describes the reflexivity characterising this study.

3.2.1 Positionality in the field: from outsider to insider

The degree of participation in the field varies and usually takes place along a continuum that ranges from complete immersion in the field to full detachment. This leads any researcher to adopt different roles depending on the degree of their participation. In this respect, there are mainly two perspectives along this continuum. These range from being either an insider or an outsider. Though the two perspectives are different, ‘both approaches came to be understood as valuable, though each contributes something different’ (Patton, 2002, p. 268).

As researcher roles can range between ‘the hidden or disguised voyeur, who watches from outside or with a passive (even electronic) presence, to the active participant, involved in the setting’ (Adler and Adler, 1994, p. 380), my roles went along such a continuum and thus, I undertook varying perspectives depending on the degree of my membership roles. On one side of the continuum, having an outsider role provides the opportunity to have knowledge of the group being studied and carry discussions with them. On the other side, however, stands the insider perspective where the rapport tied with the participants allows for an in-depth account when reporting data (Bonner and Tolhurst, 2002). As far as my study is concerned, my roles shifted in between the continuum when collecting data from outsider, observing trainees’ behaviours and interactions to insider, being at the heart of those interactions.

Different roles in different phases: outsider or insider?

In the first phase of data collection, I was an observer. I distanced myself from the observed events and participants in order to minimise any influences. At that time, I was not fully aware of how my role was affecting the setting. In this sense, I was just sitting at the back of the room watching trainees’ teaching, then attending the feedback sessions taking place

afterwards. I also believed that being detached from the field would help in keeping bias to a minimum. Accordingly, the understanding I had of being a researcher at the very beginning was limited to only the idea of collecting data through observing, taking notes, then interviewing trainees. I did not recognise that my role as a researcher was not restricted to that only, and that my own presence had an impact on what was happening. In this way, I treated the events taking place in the setting from a distance. In addition, the relationship I had with trainees was restricted to that of a researcher-researched where trainees viewed me as a researcher, conducting research and having some expertise in the field of reflective practice.

In the second phase of data collection, however, I became an insider, as a result of my engagement as a trainee in the CELTA course. I was completely immersed in the activities the other trainees were doing, and I shared the same interests as them. As far as my relationship with the other trainees is concerned, it was more of a friendship than researcher- researched. As data collection progressed, I created good rapport with all of them, particularly those in my group. We also supported each other both professionally and emotionally. Therefore, I have become a participant observer that:

Shares as intimately as possible in the life and activities of the setting under study in order to develop an insider's view of what is happening, the emic perspective. This means the participant observer not only sees what is happening but feels what is like to be a part of the setting or program (Patton, 2002, p. 268).

Based on the role I acquired with my participation in the CELTA course, I gained an insider's view with a much better understanding of the field. In other words, I was fully immersed in the field, and this allowed me to report trainees' experiences as they have been lived in the setting. I also had access to rich data such as, informal discussions and trainees' reflective sheets.

Though the movement from outsider to insider was smooth and natural as I did not strive to be an insider, but was in fact an insider, I constantly experienced the challenge of maintaining an outsider look while being an insider. Accordingly, I first tried to create a balance between my researcher role and trainee role, attempting to keep my bias to a minimum. However, I realised over time that instead of dealing with such roles from a

dichotomous perspective, I could rather ‘explore the notion of the space between that allows researchers to occupy the position of both insider and outsider rather than insider or outsider’ (Corbin Dwyer and Buckle, 2009). Based on this, I managed to understand my positionality in terms of a researcher having an insider’s perspective.

The following section gives details on the process I went through in gaining awareness of my positionality and its impact on developing an understanding of my research.

3.2.2 Developing a reflexive character

Reflexivity in this study

Reflexivity has been accounted for as an important feature in qualitative research as it aims at ‘examining how the researcher and intersubjective elements impinge on, and even transform research’ (Finlay, 2002, p. 210). It also tries to denote ‘the way in which researchers come to terms with and indeed capitalize on the complexities of their presence within the research setting, in a methodical way’ (Holliday, 2007, p. 138). In this sense, the concept of reflexivity moved with research from giving realistic traditional accounts to focusing on some personal aspects. Based on this, researchers’ positionality, and their awareness of their roles in the creation of knowledge became vital in any qualitative research project. Berger (2015, p. 220) summarises what reflexivity is about by claiming that it means:

Turning of the researcher lens back onto oneself to recognize and take responsibility for one’s own situatedness within the research and the effect that it may have on the setting and people being studied, questions being asked, data being collected and its interpretation. As such, the idea of reflexivity challenges the view of knowledge production as independent of the researcher producing it and of knowledge as objective.

In this section, reflexivity is used in line with Berger’s (2015) definition of the term. This means that a particular focus is placed on the reflexivity occurring in terms of data collection and analysis processes to articulate the change in positionality and researcher bias. It is also used to emphasise how this awareness is integral in understanding how the study was developing and how the decision to integrate an autoethnography came.

However, this is not to say that reflexivity was restricted to only the collection and analysis of data. Other aspects of research also consisted of varying degrees of thinking back and forth. This goes with Finlay's (2002) claim on the functions that reflexivity can have in research. According to her, such a concept constitutes an important aspect in the whole research process starting from the formulation of questions to drawing conclusions. Based on this and in line with Holliday's (2007) view on reflexivity and its demonstration in writing when addressing issues in methodology, research procedures, researcher presence and its effects, I believe that reflexivity is displayed over different parts of this research. Though the focus of this section is on the awareness gained in data collection and analysis processes, reflexivity is also exemplified in writing about the rationale behind conducting the study, the articulation of the research questions, my awareness of my positioning in research, and the challenges and ethical considerations underlying the study. It is also demonstrated in writing about the process of data collection and analysis. All these parts allude to how my thinking went back and forth, particularly in making decisions and is exemplified in terms of writing.

Reflexivity as a key feature to my self-understanding

At the very beginning of undertaking this research, I was not aware of how important it is to be self-conscious of the development my thinking in relation to the direction of my research. I had lacked reflexivity in dealing with how the study was developing. My growing awareness of my subjectivities became only more apparent when I became an insider. As mentioned earlier, I assumed the role of an outsider at the beginning of my data collection process but, this role then changed naturally to an insider, living the same experience as the other trainees. I noticed this change when I started becoming conscious of my involvement in the setting during the second phase of data collection. Being a teacher trainee, participating in the same activities as the other trainees, impacted my understanding of the setting and the data collection process. As I became immersed within the field, I reflected back and reconsidered various aspects of my research including the setting, the data collection process and the data collected in light of my insider's experience.

At the level of collecting data, particularly in phase one, I realised that I had dealt with the field with some degree of naivety. Accordingly, some of the comments I took when observing the setting were based on my personal thoughts on what was happening. An

example from the reflections I made in phase one was my belief in the lack of interest I thought trainees showed when writing down their reflections. This example shows the idea I had about trainees' behaviours without fully considering or questioning my subjectivity that was interfering within those reflections. I also did not grasp trainees' views of written reflection as they explained them until I went through a second phase of data collection.

The way I approached the data was also lacking enough scrutiny. When first reading the interview transcripts and going over my fieldnotes, I realised I had a restricted view of my data. I did not allow much flexibility in terms of dealing with the different sets of data. In this sense, I overlooked some aspects. At the level of analysis for instance, I realised that I discarded some important data at a very early stage. An example is trainees' statements about the role of emotions in reflection and how I thought at the time that this was not very important as trainees did not say a lot about it. As for interviews, I found myself not probing enough on trainees' answers. This again implies the impact my presence had on data collection in general. However, when undertaking a second phase of data, and particularly being an insider, I had the chance to first understand more deeply the data collection process and as such reveal different hidden aspects of it. I then managed to build an awareness of the data and how my research was developing.

Therefore, as the study progressed and with my participation in the CELTA course in phase two, the reflexive spirit of my research grew. In this sense, my insider experience in the field allowed a closer look at the setting and in its way helped in getting a better understanding of trainees' views. My degree of awareness in relation to how my presence had affected the setting kept growing, even after leaving the field. Keeping my distance from the data I collected in both phases and allowing some time to rethink of how things went, helped me to come to terms with my positionality and how it framed and reframed the whole research.

Thus, being reflexive was important in articulating my sense-making journey of the data collection process in terms of a story of my own experience in the field, reflected later as an autoethnographic account (See Chapter 4)

3.3 The Research design: participants, data tools, data collection and analysis

This section begins with a description of the setting, participants, and access to the field. It then continues to present the rationale behind choosing the research tools employed in this study. This part ends with a summary of data collection and analysis processes.

3.3.1 The setting, access, and participants

This research is located within the setting of two CELTA courses being done at two different South-eastern UK institutions. The participants are thus CELTA trainees. This setting is relevant to the study's focus of investigating trainees' perceptions of reflection and helps in understanding trainees' conceptualisations of the different aspects of reflection and the factors impacting it as practised in this setting.

Access to the field and participant recruitment

After having determined the field of investigation along with the target population of the study, it was important to seek access and recruit participants.

Seeking access is not as easy as it seems and it is basically 'a thoroughly practical matter' that 'involves ethical considerations, for example to do with whose permission ought to be asked, as well as whose needs to be obtained if initial access is to be granted' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 41-42). In this regard, I approached gatekeepers in both phases of data collection. Gatekeepers are usually 'people who have a prominent and recognized role in the local community; they typically have knowledge about the characteristics of community members and are sufficiently influential to encourage members to participate in a study' (Hennink et al. 2011, p. 92). In terms of this study, there were two important gatekeepers. These were the directors of the CELTA courses at two different UK institutions, and trainers of the courses I collected the data in.

During phase one of data collection, my negotiations with this gatekeeper, who was both the director and a trainer, resulted in gaining initial access to the field. However, this access was restricted in terms of the duration I spent with the trainees. Based on this, permission to go into the course and observe only involved the TP and the feedback taking place afterwards. In addition, as there were two groups of teaching practice undertaken at the same time, I was assigned by the gatekeeper to observe one group of these. This means that

participants in this phase were recruited based on the gatekeeper's help and decision. The gatekeeper also restricted my access to some form of data which is trainees' reflective sheets. The gatekeeper considered these to be personal and private, and as a result, access to them was denied in phase one.

During phase two of data collection, access was also undertaken through a gatekeeper who was also a director and a trainer on the course. However, in this course, I was seeking access as a trainee wanting to take part of the course. As a result, I approached one of institutions that is used to deliver the CELTA and applied to the course as a trainee. In doing so, I followed the procedures of undertaking the course and had a pre-course interview with the gatekeeper and some of the future trainees. The interview was mostly related to testing our knowledge in relation to the English language and teaching in general. This interview, however, was the first step towards gaining access to the field as it involved an opportunity of not only having access, but rather recruiting more participants to the study. According to Hennink et al. (2011), this is called a formal network and provides researchers with a space to recruit participants as it usually involves potential opportunities for data collection through regular meetings, or events where participants usually gather. In the case of my study, as the CELTA course in general could be considered as a formal network where trainees meet on a daily basis, I associate data collection in phase two with this method. In other words, as I was accepted to attend the CELTA course as a trainee, I became part of the formal network of the other trainees and thus, was able to have access to the whole course. I was also able to recruit all the trainees participating in this course as a result of the formal network that trainees and I were part of in this course.

In short, access was partial in phase one data collection while it was complete in phase two. In both phases, gatekeepers determined both the access to the fieldwork and the selection of participants. Along with this, the CELTA course as a formal network particularly in phase two also determined the type of access I had and the recruitment of participants.

Participants in this study

The study involved 12 trainees participating in this study. Trainees from phase one of data collection consisted of four participants belonging to the same group of TP. As mentioned earlier, the selection was mainly granted by the gatekeeper and the inability to observe two

groups as their teaching was held at the same time. Hence, only one group of four trainees was involved. Of all the participants, only one trainee, Emma had a similar teaching experience to that of the CELTA. Two of the others, David and Catrina were involved in teaching differently. The remaining trainee who is Jack had no teaching experience. Hence, trainees were mostly novices in the profession of teaching.

As for the second phase of gathering the data, 8 participants were involved. As with phase one, there were two groups of TP. As I was a trainee myself, I had the advantage to work with both groups and develop close ties with everyone. Of all the participants in this second phase, some trainees had teaching experiences but not in EFL, while others did not.

The 12 trainees taking part in this study were all interviewed with the exception of one from phase two of data collection. All interviews were face to face and took place by the end of the course or shortly after. Profiles of the interviewees are included in Appendix 2.

3.3.2 Data collection

This section provides a discussion about the various data collection tools used in this study. These are observations, interviews, and documents.

3.3.2.1 Observations of the setting

Observation as defined by Hennink et al. (2011, p. 170) is:

A research method that enables researchers to systematically observe and record people's behaviour, actions, and interactions. The method also allows researchers to obtain a detailed description of social settings or events in order to situate people's behaviour within their own social-cultural context.

This implies that observations are generally conducted to gather data and gain understandings based on individuals' actions and interactions within their social settings, allowing researchers to record important events and attend to details and aspects relevant to their studies.

Similarly, Cowie (2009) addresses the potential of using observation as a research tool. He claims that it provides first-hand experiences and new insights and enables flexibility in terms of collecting data.

This method of research is used in this study as it goes hand in hand with the study's focus. As this study looks into trainees' perceptions of reflection in the CELTA course, observations of the setting where the practice of reflection takes place is useful in understanding trainees' views. In other words, observations of the setting would allow looking into trainees' behaviours, actions, attitudes, and interactions as they are naturally occurring in their specific context. This first-hand look, as Cowie (2009) describes, provides an opportunity to look directly into the setting investigated and generate insights and data based on what is being observed, thus, allowing for the collection of 'situationally generated data' (Mason, 1996, p. 62). This was possible in this study, as the observations conducted, enabled gathering insights important to the understanding of trainees' views concerning the application and value of the different aspects of reflection along with the different factors influencing it.

Observations were also used to have initial data into trainees' observable behaviours and interactions which could then be explored via other tools of research (Croker, 2009) As this study uses other research methods including interviews and documents, the observations of the setting work as one of several tools to collect data on trainees' understandings of reflection and the different conceptualisations trainees hold of the concept. Using observations would thus allow many perspectives to emerge, which are then explored when interviewing and analysing trainees' reflective sheets.

Preparing for observations

I followed Cowie's (2009) guidelines on preparing for observations. According to him, there are important aspects that need to be considered when undertaking observations. These are field requirements including access, consent, and the presentation of research aims along with a consideration to what needs to be observed.

As far as field requirements is concerned, I gained access through the gatekeepers of the CELTA course and the formal network nature of the course (See Section 3.3.1), and accordingly observed the setting. During phase one of data collection, the access granted

enabled the observation of the TP and feedback sessions of a group of four CELTA trainees in a UK institution. In the second phase, access to the whole course was given, and as a result, observations covered the whole course. However, as I was a trainee, participating in the same activities as the others, I was assigned to a group of TP which made the observation more focused on my group of teaching.

After gaining access to the field, I provided consent forms to trainees and introduced my research aims to them. In both phases of data collection, the process was nearly the same. This involved providing an explanation of my study aims, what the trainees are required to do, along with some participant information sheets and consent forms for more information on both my research and their participation (See appendix 8).

Adding to these, Richards (2003) points also to the importance of building relationships with participants when observing them and the impact such relationships might have on the direction of the research. In terms of my study, the relationship researcher-researched is of a paramount importance as it evolved throughout the research and impacted the way I collected and interpreted the data (See Section 3.2.2). In phase one of data collection, the relationship I had with the trainees was distant as I was a complete observer, watching them from a distance. However, they all showed their collaboration and support through sharing their views whenever it was possible. As for phase two, my insider experience enabled me to build close contact with all the trainees and as such, our relationship was more of colleagues sharing similar interests than researcher-researched. This relationship acted as a catalyst during the data collection process. At this level, my close relationship with trainees allowed me to gain their trust quickly and access data easily during my daily observations.

As far as what to be observed is concerned, I followed a flexible approach to account for the important features for my research. This is explained below in the observation process.

The observation process

Following Mason's (1996, p. 64) claim on the need to 'select a role on the continuum between complete participant and complete observer', I adopted different roles along this continuum during my field observations (See Section 3.2.1).

During the very initial stages of data collection and throughout phase one, my role could be described as a non-participant observer. This involved watching what is taking place in the setting from a distance with no participation in what trainees were doing. My interaction was also limited to short discussions from time to time and little chats with them. Accordingly, my descriptions were articulated based on the distance I maintained as an observer, and the periphery that characterised my membership.

However, as data collection progressed, in phase two, I became an insider and my membership moved from periphery to the centre, becoming a complete participant, taking part in the core activities the other trainees are engaged in, and sharing similar interests as them. As a result, my observations became more focused and gained an insider's perspective.

This shift in my observational roles from a distant observer to being an insider was important as it allowed my observations to be varied, including insights from both distant and participant perspectives. It also acted as an 'instrument for reflecting on one's own process of becoming familiar and for gaining insights into the field under study, which would be inaccessible by maintaining distance' (Flick, 2009). In other words, the movement of my roles through the observation process contributed to the understandings I developed of myself, trainees, and the setting (See Section 4.1).

As far as my approach to observation is concerned, I put some aspects related to the focus of my study to be observed, while keeping a room for unexpected and new elements that could emerge. In other words, the approach I went about to observe was open and unsystematic, particularly during the first stages of my data collection. This is in line with Richards (2003, p. 130) who claims that:

Data need to be captured systematically, and in order to do this the eye and mind must be trained so that it will be possible to follow standard procedures while at the same time holding on to an openness of viewpoint that snatches the unexpected and unguarded moment.

Based on this, I observed everything in the setting that could generate useful data. This involved paying attention to trainees' interactions, behaviours, and actions. This broad vision into the setting helped me in addressing particular aspects, insights and details

important to the study. It also enabled me to create a focus later on what features need further development.

As my data collection progressed, particularly in phase two, my approach to observation became more focused on relevant aspects to the study. Accordingly, the observations went hand in hand with the focus of the study and the research questions, thus, enabling important aspects to emerge. The observations then involved descriptions that pertain to the focus of the study including relevant incidents and insights on trainees' interactions and actions that relate to reflective practice.

Given the change in terms of my observations, my approach could be understood in terms of stages. These stages are in line with Spradley's (1980, p. 34) three phases which are:

Descriptive observation where broad descriptions are provided with the aim of creating a detailed understanding of the field.

Focused observation which is more oriented towards providing a focused perspective on the relevant elements to the research.

Selective observation which puts focus on further examples and insights related to the focus of study.

This approach to observation was translated through field notes.

Field notes

In the process of observing trainees in both phases of data collection, I relied on note taking as the main strategy to document what was happening and in occasional cases, I recorded my thoughts. This methodological aspect is referred to as field notes. Richards (2003, p. 136) describes field notes as 'a person's version of their encounter with the world', while Cowie (2009, p. 171) believes that this technique enables readers to 'connect a researcher's version of reality with their own'. Hennink et al. (2011) also point to the potential field notes play for the analysis of data.

Field notes constitute a core set of data in my study. These were taken on a regular basis during data collection, handwritten, and typed and developed mostly during the same day

of field work. There were, however, certain occasions when I could not write directly, particularly in phase two due to time constraints. In this sense, I either wrote down key notes and words on my phone or CELTA notebook, then developed these later. I also audio recorded my thoughts whenever there was a chance to.

Along with the descriptions of the field, my own reflections and personal thoughts were recorded. In other words, I noted my thoughts in relation to the setting, trainees, and their interactions. Having both descriptions and reflections on the field enabled a look back at my data and a reconsideration of any emergent focuses, thoughts, or insights (See Appendix 5).

In addition to the observations, interviews have also been used in this study.

3.3.2.2. Interviews

In addition to the observations of the field, interviews with the trainees have been conducted as these are considered as ‘active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results’ (Fontana and Frey, 2003, p. 62), and are aimed to ‘produce situated understandings grounded in specific interactional episodes’ (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p. 48). Interviews are also said to be an important tool of investigation for it provides an in-depth picture of the participants’ worlds and offers an opportunity to understand and explore lived experiences from participants’ views (Richards, 2009).

The use of interviews is relevant in this study given the potential they provide when investigating individuals’ experiences. As this study looks into trainees’ perspectives and experiences of reflection, interviewing constitutes an important tool for uncovering trainees’ experiences of reflection in their course and their understandings of it. Furthermore, interviews, being one of several methods of data collection employed in this study, add another dimension to the research for it helps in approaching the aim of the study differently and in more detail (Mason, 1996). In other words, while observations of the field make it possible to understand trainees’ observable interactions, actions and behaviours, interviews enable an understanding of the unobservable aspects of trainees’ experiences. The use of interviews thus helps in having insights into trainees’ thinking, beliefs, and their different perspectives of reflective practice.

The interviews conducted in this study are individual semi-structured. The choice behind the semi-structured type is that it is the kind of interview:

Where the interviewer has a clear picture of the topics that need to be covered (and perhaps even a preferred order for these) but is prepared to allow the interview to develop in unexpected directions where these open up important new areas' (Richards, 2009, p. 186).

Following Richards' (2009) explanation of semi-structured interviews, I used them as they provided me with a general view of the broad topics to be covered and what questions could be asked. In this regard, when choosing this type of interviews, I designed an interview guide that involved 'a list of questions used by the interviewer, mainly as a memory aide during the interview' (Hennink et al. 2011, p. 112). The interview guide mainly framed my focus as it acted as a reminder of the possible questions I could ask to trainees and consisted of some key questions formulated based on the aim of the study (See Appendix 3).

However, the flexibility characterising semi-structured interviews assisted me in letting a room for other aspects and directions to develop and for trainees to open up. This was possible through the openness this type of interviews provided to ask more questions and continuously probe and prompt on trainees' responses, leading to more aspects of the data to emerge.

All the 11 interviews conducted in this study were individual and face to face. Six interviews took place in the institutions where the CELTA course was delivered, while the other five interviews were conducted in my university's library, with the exception of one interview conducted in a local café. During phase one of data collection, the four trainees were interviewed during the last week of the course as there was less pressure. In the second phase, two interviews were conducted in the last day of the course, while the other five interviews were shortly held after the end of the course. Of all the trainees in the second phase, one trainee could not be interviewed due to personal circumstances.

The interviews were smoothly run. As my data collection involved observations first, then interviews, I had the chance to create rapport with the trainees and gain their trust.

Collecting data over two phases was also helpful. As I gained some practical knowledge

when conducting interviews in phase one, particularly in relation to note taking, listening to what trainees are saying, and probing accordingly, I found myself in phase two more prepared to undertake the task. In addition, the time between the two phases enabled the transcriptions of the first interviews conducted which in turn helped me to make changes to both the questions and my way of asking them. My insider experience in phase two also broadened my perspectives in relation to the interview questions and the close rapport and intimacy that I shared with trainees during this phase was of a paramount importance in the process of interviewing. In this sense, all the trainees were engaged in the discussion and shared their views with me.

Documents were also used as another tool of data collection

3.3.2.3. Documents: trainees' reflective sheets and fourth assignments

Along with observations and interviews, document analysis was also used as a research method in this study. Documents constitute an important source of data which helps in generating understanding of the topic studied (Mason, 1996; Prior, 2011) and are defined as 'words and images that have been created or recorded without the influence of the researcher' (Gross, 2018, 1133) and 'act as some form of expression or representation of relevant elements of the social world' (Mason, 1996, p. 72).

The documents accounted for here are trainees' reflective sheets and fourth assignments (See Appendix 6). As mentioned in chapter one, the reflective sheets consist of the reflections trainees have to write after each TP as part of the course, while the fourth assignment is a general reflection about the learning experience in the CELTA course written in the last week of the course. They are used as a supplementary data collection tool which is used to have insights into trainees' practice of reflection. In other words, the documents used in this study constitute authentic representations of trainees' reflections and show how reflection is manifested in practical terms by trainees.

Furthermore, trainees' reflective sheets and fourth assignments provided evidence of both the contextual data collected in observations and the textual data gathered in interviews. In this sense, using them with the other forms of data acted as a means to 'verify findings or corroborate evidence from other sources' (Bowen, 2009, p. 30). Analysing trainees' reflective sheets helped in clarifying some data from the interviews and the observations

and strengthened the understanding of trainees' conceptualisations of reflection, particularly, the written aspect. As these documents provided real practice of reflection, they enabled looking closely at how reflection is conceptualised and contextualised in the course. They also gave a practical dimension to the perspectives shared in interviews and observations conducted in the setting, allowing a broader view.

Collecting data from trainees' reflective sheets was easy as these were available as part of the CELTA course requirements. The process was also not time consuming and lacked 'obtrusiveness and reactivity' (Bowen, 2009, p. 31). In other words, as these documents were produced for purposes other than this study, their collection was not affected by the research process or my role as a researcher.

Nevertheless, the access to these documents was not easily granted (See Section 3.3.1). In phase one of data collection, the gatekeeper refused to provide a copy of trainees' reflections as these 'can take a very private form or confidential form, and it can be difficult to establish informed consent for their use' (Mason, 1996, p. 78). Accordingly, the gatekeeper considered the private nature of trainees' reflections and the implications of using them in research, and as such, restricted access to them. Counter to this perspective was the attitude of the gatekeeper in the second phase. This latter allowed me to have a copy under trainees' consent. As a result, I asked trainees for their consent, and they all agreed to provide a copy of their reflections.

Therefore, only trainees' reflective sheets and fourth assignments from the second phase of data collection were used in this study. The focus in the analysis was more oriented towards the content and the literal aspects as these directly related to the topic of investigation and supplemented additional data, which was used together, with the interviews and observations. As with the observations, I reflected on the reflective sheets through recording my own thoughts and comments on them.

The data collection process involved some kind of data analysis which was later developed. The following section gives details about this process.

3.3.3 Data analysis

This section gives an overview of data analysis. It describes the early stages of analysis and goes on to explain how themes emerged.

3.3.3.1 Initial data analysis

According to Richards (2003, p. 268), data analysis is ‘neither a distinct stage nor a discrete process; it is something that is happening, in one form or another throughout the whole research process’. Similarly, Dornyei (2007) and Holliday (2016) acknowledge that data collection and analysis are not separate stages or processes, and this makes the researcher move back and forth between data collection and analysis. For this reason, engaging in early analysis is useful as it makes analysis an ongoing process that is not undertaken separately after data collection, and that it is often during data collection and the interactions taking place there, that researchers start developing ideas and thoughts about the collected data (Nowell et al. 2017).

Juxtaposing what these authors have claimed regarding analysis and its iterative character, I realised that data analysis was initially undertaken hand in hand with data collection. When reflecting on this, I discovered that I was involved in some analysis while gathering data. This took the form of constantly looking back at the data collected, particularly in phase two and reconsidering it in light of new data and the interpretations and decisions I was making as part of my insider experience. I was in a way engaged in ‘the process of making sense of the data and discovering what it has to say’ (Holliday, 2016, p. 98). In addition, I was also trying to make sense of my positionality and the impact this could have on the data.

Transcription

Being engaged in early analysis was reinforced during the transcription of interviews (See Appendix 4). As Dornyei (2007) claims, transcribing the data is generally regarded as the very first stage of analysis. This task was undertaken shortly after conducting interviews in each phase. Though it was time consuming, transcription constituted an important part where meanings and patterns emerged (Braun and Clarke, 2006). During this process, I found myself listening to the tapes many times, transcribing and at the same time, making

sense of trainees' answers. I was also taking notes of some ideas which I believed could serve as important themes or categories later.

The first transcription of interviews also allowed me to 'identify issues that may be further explored in subsequent interviews' (Hennink et al. 2011, p. 214). This was the case of the transcription of interviews of the first phase of data collection which helped me develop not only a thorough understanding of the data, but also draw my attention to the way I asked questions, the probes developed, and interruptions of trainees' responses. These issues were all addressed when conducting interviews in the second phase.

Following Hennink et al. (2011, p. 211) suggestion on including 'everything that is said in the interview, and that researchers make their own decisions about any further level of detail that is needed in relation to the purpose of the project', I accounted for everything said by trainees in the transcriptions to cover every bit of the data and avoid the early selection of it. In addition to transcribing interviews, I also tried to make sense of the other sets of data. At this stage, I referred back to my field notes and reflections from time to time.

Though the early stages of data analysis helped in the initial readings of it, using an analytical approach was of a paramount importance. In this study, I followed a thematic analysis approach, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) guidelines and their advice on using this analytical framework reflexively (ibid, 2021).

3.3.3.1.2 Thematic Analysis: from coding data to developing themes

To analyse data, thematic analysis was used. This method involves 'identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79). In this way, it helps in organising data to be analysed and interprets different aspects of research. The choice behind using it is the flexibility that characterises it, particularly in terms of its application. In other words, thematic analysis is used across different qualitative research designs and is applicable to all theoretical frameworks (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al. 2017; Castleberry and Nolen, 2018). Another reason for using such an approach is following Holliday's (2016) claim of the two principles needed to move from raw data to writing about it. These are submitting oneself to the emerging patterns within the data. For Holliday (2016, p. 102) 'taking a purely thematic approach in which all the data is taken

holistically and rearranged under themes that emerge as running through its totality is the classic way to maintain these principles'. Taking this into account, helped in both being submitted within the data and enabled patterns and themes to emerge. Therefore, my analysis of the data is guided by thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), while allowing some flexibility when analysing.

The coding process

Once all data sets were organised, I started reading and re-reading through it to get immersed and be familiar with the different aspects. In doing so, I noted down some ideas and immediately started coding. Codes were given as references for the different bits of the data as these 'are tags or labels that are attached to the raw data. They can take the form of names, initials, or numbers' (Denscombe, 2017, p. 315). Coding, in practice, involved me in highlighting parts of data which I found interesting and giving labels to those chunks (See Appendix 7). It is important to note that coding took place at many levels. In this sense, I coded words, sentences, and paragraphs. As far as the labels I created are concerned, I sometimes used the words of trainees, particularly in interview transcripts and reflective sheets and at other times, I created my own labels which were descriptive of the concerned parts. The labels were also made at different levels. These were either individual words or sentences. An example of my initial coding process, taken from an interview transcript, is as follows:

You have to be of a strong character, you have to have a strong heart, if you see what I mean, for you to take in, because it can be hurtful yeah. Emotionally it can break you, what others say, especially when it's negative (Isaak, interview: 69-71).

When coding this interview, this part was highlighted, and a label called 'emotions' was attached to it. The label was basically taken from the interviewee's words and used as it is as a code.

After initially coding most of the data, I kept going back to it to review the codes I established as 'the process of coding the data is a recurrent one; as new categories emerge, previously coded data must be recoded to see if they contain any examples of the new codes' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 164). At this stage, some codes were refined,

others have changed, and new ones emerged. An example of the changes at the level of coding is included below:

I find it easy to reflect with trainer C with the whole direct approach than with the other one because I will think what this trainer wants me to say, what I'm supposed to say, you know, it's all a bit vague. It's hard enough with those reflective sheets to think for myself what I've just done, but when the feedback I'm getting is a bit too vague, you know, it's harder (David, interview: 103-106).

This part was initially coded with the label 'approach to feedback' as this trainee was referring to the approaches followed in delivering feedback. After re-reading the data again, I changed the categorisation of codes and reconsidered the whole chunk in terms of different codes. These accounted for the different approaches used in feedback, the need for guidance in reflection, and written reflection as an individual process. All these codes were further refined after several readings and contributed to the understanding of the different bits of data.

Thematising

The iterative nature of coding helped a lot in terms of organising the data, reducing its amount, and identifying which parts are more useful than others. Based on this, I moved from working on the level of codes to a broader level which is the theme level. A theme provides a description to a pattern found in the data and organises and interprets some aspects of it (Boyatzis, 1998). In this respect, 'themes are patterns in the codes; they take the numerous pieces of a related code to show a bigger picture of what is being portrayed' (Castleberry and Nolen, 2018, p. 809). I started working on the codes I have developed by grouping similar codes together and identifying relationships between them. This stage is also iterative and involves going forward and backward between the codes to identify themes and sub-themes. While working on the codes, I followed a hierarchy to organise the emerging themes. The hierarchy consisted of putting together similar codes and patterns. A theme then would consist of all the codes and patterns of a similar nature or having different aspects that relate or describe the big theme.

Following this thematic categorisation, I organised the key aspects in the data and outlined them in terms of a summary pointing to the main themes. This thematising process acted as

an important step in the writing up of findings chapters and their structure (See Section 3.4.4).

3.4 Ethics, limitations, validity, and the writing up of the thesis

This part addresses the ethical considerations followed in this study. It then outlines the challenges faced during the research process. This part also presents an account of the validity and a summary of the writing up process of the study.

3.4.1. Ethical considerations

This section outlines the ethical procedures followed in this study. These are: informed consent, privacy, beneficence, and harm.

According to Dornyei (2007, p. 63) ‘social research-including research in education-concerns people’s lives in the social world and therefore it inevitably involves ethical issues’. This means that when conducting research, researchers need to take into consideration both individuals and their context and act ethically. Ethical considerations involve the process of following ethical procedures set by institutions to review the ethics and approve the research (Ryen, 2011) and paying attention to the ethical issues which could arise during the research (Hennink et al. 2011).

Based on this, my research was ‘being subjected to ethical review from institutional research ethics committees to ensure ethical scrutiny’ (Dornyei, 2007, p. 66) and accordingly, I followed the ethical guidelines defined by the university (See Appendix 8). I also accounted for ethical issues including consent, privacy, relationships and beneficence, and harm (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007; Hennink et al. 2011).

Informed consent

As far as informed consent is concerned, it involves telling the participants about the study’s aims along with providing information of their participation in the research (Rallis and Rossman, 2009). In terms of my study, this consisted of giving information about my study’s focus and aims and what they are required to do if they accept to take part in my study. In this sense, I informed trainees that my study is about reflective practice in teacher education and that my interest lies in their views about this social phenomenon. I also

explained to them that observations of the course and interviews will be conducted with them, and a copy of their reflections will be analysed. When explaining this process, I assured trainees that their participation is voluntary and subject to their agreement and that they can withdraw at any time. To ensure trainees' full understanding, a participant information sheet including a summary of my research and trainees' participative roles was handed to them (See Appendix 8).

In both phases of data collection, the process of gaining consent was similar. This was initially verbal involving an oral consent from all the trainees who participated in this study. A written consent form was then given to trainees. In phase one, the forms were given at the beginning of the fieldwork and returned during the course. In phase two, as I developed a close rapport with trainees, I preferred to give the consent forms by the end of the course, as these became a mere formality, and everyone was willing to take part in the study without having to sign any form. When giving the forms in both phases, trainees kindly accepted to sign them.

Privacy

Trainees' privacy was also valued. According to Rallis and Rossman (2009, p. 275):

Qualitative researchers must carefully consider how to treat the identities of participants. This challenge has two elements: protecting their privacy (identities, names, and specific roles) and holding in confidence what they share with you (not sharing it with others using their names).

From the above quote, it seems important to ensure both anonymity and confidentiality of the participants. The former involves removing any identifying parts in the data to protect participants' identities and also 'how researchers publicly discuss information gathered from participants' (Hennink et al. 2011, p. 72). Accounting for this, I anonymised all trainees' identities by giving them other names during data collection, analysis, and the writing up of the study. I also anonymised personal information like their countries of birth. In addition, as the setting involved small groups of trainees in both courses and only two trainers in each course, I thought that trainees could easily be identified when referring to their trainers. As a result, I anonymised trainers' identities whenever they are referred to in

trainees' speech with letters rather than names. This way, trainees will not be identified whenever their responses involve their trainers and no harm will be caused to them.

The latter, confidentiality means 'not disclosing information that is discussed between the researcher and participant' (Hennink et al. 2011, p. 71). This aspect involves explaining confidentiality measures to participants and applying these to the information they shared with the researcher (Dornyei, 2007). In this study, I explained to trainees that the information they share would be used for research purposes and would be reported publicly in the form of a thesis once the study is finished. However, I assured them that during this process, the interview recordings and transcripts, any field notes taken during observations, and their reflective sheets and fourth assignments will be kept confidential and will not be shared with other people.

Trust and benefice

The relationships built during fieldwork along with the trust gained should be addressed ethically as these could have an impact on the participants (Rallis and Rossman, 2009). As my research involved contact with trainees, a close rapport was tied. In phase one, my relationship with trainees was somehow distant and did not involve close contact. However, I was careful on how to leave the field, especially that they put their time and energy in helping me. For this reason, I allowed some time to talk to them further about their beliefs and experiences. Trainees enjoyed the talk and enthusiastically shared their ideas, and the discussion went on to their future plans. Some of them revealed that the interview questions made them reflect on their careers as teachers and how reflection could help them in their future professions. I also informed the trainees that their views would be of a great importance to my research and to the field of reflective practice and teacher education.

In phase two, the insider role I performed allowed me to develop close relationships with all the trainees, which in turn, helped in gaining their trust. In this phase, I also addressed the importance of such relationships. As in phase one, I constantly insisted on how trainees' views would add to the body of knowledge and provided feedback on how they assisted me. In addition, the experience of taking part in research with someone having a similar trainee status was advantageous in terms of accounting to trainees' benefice. In other words, most of the trainees claimed that taking part in my study while doing the course was

an enjoyable experience as it raised their awareness as novice teachers to the topic of reflection in teaching. Trainees also showed their interest in reading my work in the future and, in particular, knowing how their views contributed to the scholarly milieu.

Harm

Following Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007, p. 213) claim that 'being researched can sometimes create anxiety or worsen it, and where people are already in stressful situations research may be judged to be unethical on these grounds', I was aware of any possible mental harm my study could generate.

Given the intensive nature of the CELTA course, and the pressure of internalising information, planning lessons, teaching, and evaluation, I tried not to add in any way to the workload of trainees or the stress they are already experiencing. In doing so, I reassured trainees that any data they provide will be used for research purposes only. I also explained to them that my study is not part of their course and does not involve any kind of assessment of their work.

Furthermore, I made sure that trainees understand that the observations conducted in the setting, particularly in phase one, are not concerned with their teaching performance. Rather, my interest is more oriented towards their practice and understanding of reflection and any other related aspects. In phase two, my trainee status helped in managing any harm caused to trainees. Being a trainee like them made them feel relaxed and more focused on performing their daily tasks.

3.4.2. Challenges in data collection

This section briefly discusses the challenges encountered during the research process. These involve difficulties in terms of fieldwork access, data collection, and analysis.

As explained in Section 3.3.1, access was partially granted and involved the TP and feedback sessions of the CELTA course during phase one. This had implications on my data collection process at two levels. On one level, in terms of the amount of data I collected, I felt that this partial access restricted my ability to collect more data. This was clearly apparent in the inability to access the seminars and trainees' reflective sheets, which if accessed, could have generated more data. On the other level, the limited time spent in

the setting had an impact on the relationship I developed with the trainees. As I did not spend much time with them, I was not able to regularly engage in chats or informal discussions, hence, limiting the amount of data I could have gathered. I thus had to gather any data during this phase with the idea of maximising my chances of including other participants later.

During phase two of data collection, although access was complete, I found it difficult to create a balance between my role as a trainee and as a researcher. This resulted in not being able to focus on everything that happens during the course and allowing an opportunistic approach to collecting data. This means that I embraced both roles and collected whatever data I could while performing my trainee role. Being close to trainees and being engaged in the same activities as them, also assisted me in managing my roles and accessing data easily. This was the case of trainees' reflections which I had access to during this phase.

Furthermore, the challenge of fieldwork access manifested itself through the nature of the CELTA course itself. As data was collected in two full time CELTA courses, this meant that data collection would follow such nature. Accordingly, I had to follow the requirements of the course which allowed the presence in one TP group in both phases and permitted the observations until the end of the course.

Therefore, the access I had in both phases affected my data collection process. In phase one, the observations were limited, and no access was granted to trainees' reflective sheets. In phase two, the complete access I had affected the way I collected the data, particularly, in terms of the observations. Nevertheless, collecting data over two phases was advantageous and allowed me to gather different sets of data, all of which helped in articulating trainees' views.

As for data analysis, I was also confronted with some challenges, particularly when transcribing the interviews. During the transcription of the first interviews conducted, I sometimes found it difficult to transcribe and focus on what trainees are saying. There were also some instances where I could not understand every word said. In this sense, I kept listening to the tapes several times to make sense of what is being said. In addition, when rereading the transcripts, I realised that some questions were unclear and long. I also found

out that I missed some opportunities for following up on trainees' responses. Based on this, I accounted for such issues while conducting the remaining interviews.

3.4.3. Validity

This section presents how validity is manifested in this study. It first outlines the understanding of validity advocated in this research, then explains the framework used to establish validity of the research process. Validity in autoethnography is also articulated in this section.

Validity is used in this study as a redefined concept, repositioned within the qualitative research tradition to fit its purposes (Whittemore et al. 2001; Golafshani, 2003), and is meant to demonstrate 'immediate recognition and understanding within the scientific community, yet does not require direct translation from the quantitative perspective' (Whittemore et al. 2001, p. 527). Validity then becomes applicable to qualitative studies, but not in the same way as in quantitative studies.

As a re-examined concept, I use validity in my research in line with Cho and Trent's (2006) understanding of it as implying the extent to which the representation of knowledge and constructions of reality correspond to participants' experiences and the phenomenon under investigation. I also employ the term with consideration to Cypress's (2017, p. 256) definition of it as 'the state of being well grounded or justifiable, relevant, meaningful, logical, confirming to accepted principles or the quality of being sound, just, and well formed'.

Accounting for such views, underlies a conceptualisation of validity in my study as a process of demonstrating a degree of accuracy in both the research process and communication of findings, by means of approaching these continually in a sound and applicable fashion proper to the goals of the investigation. Juxtaposing this view to my study means that validity is demonstrated throughout the research process from the research design, interpretation of findings to the writing up of the study. In what follows, I explain how validity is established.

3.4.3.1. Towards establishing validity in this study

The process of ensuring validity in this study is of two levels. One level is holistic and in line with Hayashi et al.'s (2019) understanding of the term as inclusive of all parts of the research. The other level is strategic consisting of the application of relevant strategies to the research to establish validity.

A holistic level

This was established during the research process by means of maintaining a reflexive character and accounting for Morse et al.'s (2002) methodological coherence.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity involves an acknowledgement of one's biases and being aware of the impact these would have on the research. For this, 'discussing one's predispositions, making biases explicit, to the extent possible, and engaging in mental cleansing processes' (Patton, 2002, p. 553) is integral in any qualitative research. In addition, bringing attention to the subjectivities of the researcher or any other personal beliefs allows readers to understand how the researcher is positioned within their texts, and builds some kind of integrity in terms of the findings and credibility in the conduct of the research. (Creswell and Miller, 2000; Patton, 2002; Thomas and Magilvy, 2011).

In terms of this study, reflexivity was of great importance in the research process as it enabled me to reconsider the different aspects of my study at different stages. This was clearly apparent in the growing awareness I developed when drafting the research questions to fit the aims of the study, the methodological decisions I made, the data collection, and analysis, and the writing up of the study (See Section 3.2.2).

The reflexive character characterising this study is reported in Section 3.2.2 where I explained how my thinking changed and developed, and how my positionality and subjectivities impacted the direction of this study. Accordingly, I acknowledged how my roles impacted data collection, how my insider role shaped the findings of the study, and how throughout different segments of my work one could feel the reflexive nature of writing. Thus, providing readers with the opportunity to understand the experiences and views of trainees and how these came to be represented the way they are.

Reflexivity, therefore, helped ensure validity in two ways. First, by acknowledging my subjectivities, I provided a truthful and trustful account of how my study was framed. Second, by being reflexive throughout the research process, I was able to respond to reactivity. The latter being concerned with the interactions taking place during fieldwork and any impact this might bring (Patton, 2002). This was accounted for through the integration of an autoethnographic aspect to my study (See Chapter 4).

Methodological coherence

According to Morse et al. (2002), methodological coherence is one way of establishing validity while conducting research and consists of verifying all components of the research in relation to each other to ensure that the whole is coherent. This goes in hand with the emerging nature of qualitative research and involves a consideration to the formulation of the questions, and the methodological and analytical framework and the consistency between them (ibid, 2002).

Juxtaposing this technique to my study, I managed to weave some kind of coherence between the methods of data collection and analysis. In this sense, my choice of methods was varied and open. Varied in the sense that I used different tools to approach the focus of the study from different angles, and open in the way that I was flexible about considering other tools of data collection like analysing trainees' reflections. These tools operated as part of a focused ethnographic approach, aiming at studying reflection as practised by trainees within its social setting. Furthermore, the analytical framework employed to approach the collected data is consistent with the tools used as it is applicable to the analysis of data from interviews, observations, and documents and substantially analyses the data and organises it into themes. This means that there is consistency between the methodological choices made in this study.

Related to this, are the methodological decisions undertaken during the research process. In the case of this study, this involves the decision to collect more data through a second phase and the decision to write an autoethnography of my experience in the fieldwork.

Within a broader perspective, there is also coherence between the paradigm chosen to frame this study and the methodological orientations followed (See Section 3.1.1). The explanations of each part of the study while showing the consistency of how such parts

relate gives readers a sense on how to associate the research with other similar contexts and provide a space where an application of the findings could be possible. Therefore, enabling transferability of the findings.

A Strategic level

The strategies used to demonstrate validity in my study are triangulation and peer debriefing. It is important to note that the use of such strategies was not deliberate as they formed part of the research process.

Triangulation

In the context of this study, triangulation denotes the process of using various tools of data collection to approach the same phenomenon. It was initially used to cover different perspectives on reflection using observations where trainees interact and use reflection, interviews with trainees to know more about their views, and an analysis of their reflections to add a practical dimension to what was already collected.

The use of triangulation contributes to the trustworthiness of the data as it provided an opportunity to consider the various ways of approaching the data (Patton, 2002). In this sense, when analysing the different sets of the data, I accounted for the various and possible ways of organising the data, thus allowing for a more credible representation of the data and the conclusions drawn (ibid, 2002). In addition, the use of this method as a validity check is applicable under the social constructionist paradigm. As the latter ‘values multiple realities that people have in their minds. Therefore, to acquire valid and reliable multiple and diverse realities, multiple methods of searching or gathering data are in order’ (Golafshani, 2003, p. 604). In this study, using triangulation as both a method involving various tools and a validity check was useful as it helped in capturing trainees’ views on the different applications and values assigned to the different aspects of reflection and the possible factors impacting trainees practice of reflection.

Peer debriefing

According to Creswell and Miller (2000, p. 129), this technique consists of a ‘review of the data and research process by someone who is familiar with the research, or the

phenomenon being explored'. They further add that peer debriefers could provide useful feedback and challenging ideas during the research process.

In terms of my study, I was engaged in discussions concerning different parts of my research with two peers. These are two researchers doing their research in similar fields. Such research engagement with them was of a great importance to the development of my research. In this sense, I gained a degree of awareness about my study, particularly at the level of the methodological and analytical decisions I made and the implications such decisions generated. An example of peer debriefing is the useful feedback one of these researchers provided for my coding process. Another example involved reviewing part of my autoethnographic account and discussions on my insider experience during fieldwork. These reviews and discussions came up with insightful suggestions and alternatives on how to better articulate my thoughts, therefore providing credibility to my research.

The next section gives an overview of how validity was established in the autoethnography.

3.4.3.2. Validity in autoethnography

According to Ellis et al. (2011, p. 282), validity in autoethnography entails:

Verisimilitude, it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible, a feeling that what has been represented could be true. The story is coherent. It connects readers to writers and provides continuity in their lives.

The above quote underlies how validity works in autoethnography. It involves truthfulness of the researcher in retelling and writing up the story. Validity in this context also requires creating both a degree of connectedness and responses within readers sharing similar experiences (Ellis et al. 2011).

Taking such a view into consideration, my researcher credibility as an autoethnographer consisted of depicting my insider experience in the fieldwork and how it impacted the direction of my research (See Chapter 4). In doing so, I reflexively narrated my sense making process and the understandings I developed as a result of my experience, thus providing a degree of truthfulness to my account and letting readers with a space to connect with the story being told.

The validity of the autoethnography in this study could also be seen in the time spent during fieldwork (Patton, 2002) and the contributions it makes to knowledge (Adams et al. 2015). As I was a trainee in the second phase of data collection, I spent all my time with the trainees and managed to create close rapport with them, thus allowing more chances for data to be trustworthy. As for contributions, ‘we do autoethnography to reflect on and create understanding about identities, relationships, and/or experiences. We also do autoethnography to share our reflection and understandings with others. As such, contributing to knowledge means extending knowledge and research’ (Adams et al. 2015, p. 103). In this sense, the contribution of my autoethnography consists of extending knowledge about the process of self-understanding and sense making and their importance in articulating and framing my study (See Section 7.2.1).

To sum up, this section outlined the understanding of validity in this study and the framework used to demonstrate it throughout the study.

3.4.4. Writing up the study

In this section, I will first explain the process of writing about the data in general, then outline how the autoethnography in this study was developed and written.

3.4.4.1 Writing up the data chapters

In writing about the data, I organised the themes that emerged following Holliday’s (2016) three stages of writing. The first stage involves presenting the argument which revolves around what has been found and outlines the structure of the discussion. In practice, this entailed giving an introductory description of the theme and what it constitutes or attempts to deliver. Once the argument is provided, data extracts are then added to give evidence and support for the argument. In this regard, some extracts from the different data resources including interviews, field notes, and trainees’ reflective sheets were presented as evidence for each argument. What comes later is ‘a discursive commentary’ (Holliday, 2007, p. 90) that clearly shows how the different bits of data are important and why. Following this, I provided explanations concerning the importance of data.

This way of presenting themes is reinforced by what Holliday (2016) calls ‘interconnection’ that demonstrates the relationship not only between the three stages, but

also between the different parts of data and how they relate to each other. The presentation of themes and their discussion goes hand in hand with what qualitative writing is about and thus becomes ‘an unfolding story in which the writer gradually makes sense, not only of her data, but of the total experience of which it is an artefact [...] and ‘a complex train of thought within which her voice and her image of those of others are interwoven’ (Holliday, 2016, p. 129). This is shown in the data analysis and discussion chapters which clearly represent the character of the data.

In short, each theme developed in this study starts with a section that describes what the theme is about, then this goes on to present some data extracts as evidence that help in defining the theme. An interpretation of how the theme is important and how it relates to the other themes is included.

As for the chapters, the organisation of the themes followed a thematic analysis approach (See Section 3.3.3.1.2) and appeared as follows throughout the three chapters:

1. The conceptualisation of my insider experience as revealing aspects of the data collection process and enabling an understanding of trainees’ perspectives as reflected in the other two chapters.
2. The perception that the different aspects of reflection are applied and valued in different ways.
3. The perception of written reflection as an idiosyncratic process, viewed and applied as a chore that is methodical in nature.
4. The view of observations and the oral feedback as a social interactional process where reflection is conceptualised, applied, and valued as a social practice that is interactive in nature.
5. The conceptualisation of a number of factors, being psychological, contextual, and social impacting trainees’ practice and understanding of reflection.

Following a thematic analysis framework, and using Holliday’s (2016) writing up stages, the themes presented above were split over three chapters. Chapter one of data analysis includes a discussion of my insider experience and its role in understanding the data collection process and trainees’ views and framing them in the other two data chapters. In this sense, I explain how my insider experience was important in terms of having a grasp of

the data collection process through revealing hidden aspects of the data useful to the understanding of trainees' views. I also outline the sense making process underlying my experience in relation to trainees' perspectives.

In the second chapter, trainees' views, conceptualising the application and value of the different aspects of reflection are presented. In what concerns the written aspect, this chapter frames trainees' perspectives in this regard with the practice of reflection being idiosyncratic. It then describes their different views on its application in routinised and systematic nature. The practice of reflection through observations is also articulated in this chapter as a social process while the oral aspect is defined in terms of interaction.

In the final chapter of analysis, trainees' views on the factors influencing their understanding and practice of reflection are detailed. This involves a discussion of the factors at psychological, contextual, and social levels. The psychological level puts focus on emotions and their interference in reflection, while the contextual factors account for the context, trainees' status as novice teachers, the role of experience, and the guidance provided in impacting the practice and understanding of reflection. The social factors involve a discussion on themes related to group dynamics trainees are part of and the impact such dynamics have on trainees' reflections.

The next section gives an overview of the writing up of the autoethnography.

3.4.4.2 Writing up the autoethnographic aspect

This section first outlines the form of autoethnography employed in this study, then explores the writing up process followed.

3.4.4.2.1 Between realism, expressionism, and impressionism: a moderate perspective to autoethnography

The form of representation I followed to write my autoethnographic account is a combination of Adams et al.'s (2015) realism, expressionism, and impressionism, with a particular focus on the two major types of autoethnography, namely analytic and evocative autoethnographies, belonging respectively to realist and expressionist modes of representation.

Realism

According to Adams et al. (2015), realist autoethnographies are written mostly from the perspective of the researcher and that of the participants and is generally used to fully understand the experience by moving from the story to the analysis without using storytelling as an approach to writing. A good example of the realist form is analytic autoethnography which Anderson (2006, p. 378) suggests as a form that can be employed to depict personal experiences in an analytical and scholarly manner. When explaining this form, Anderson proposes the following aspects:

- (1) Complete member researcher (CMR) status, (2) analytic reflexivity, (3) narrative visibility of the researcher's self, (4) dialogue with informants beyond the self, and (5) commitment to theoretical analysis.

Drawing on Anderson's (2006) analytic autoethnography, my study strongly goes hand in hand with his key features. Having dual roles in the setting made me consider myself as 'complete member researcher'. I was both a researcher and a participant in the fieldwork sharing the same interests as others and taking part in the activities they were doing. This is as described by Adler and Adler (1994) as complete membership where the researcher is originally integrated as a member in a group. In this sense, my presence in the field became more apparent in phase two compared to phase one of data collection.

Moreover, the act of regularly reflecting on my data made me think of the different ways my presence is shaping and being shaped by what was happening. Accordingly, I reflexively considered the change in my roles and got involved in a sense making process throughout phase two of data collection and later the analysis. Thus, I was analysing the development of my thinking based on my continuous reflexive engagement.

As for my researcher visibility, I was continuously engaged in the setting and developing rapport with the trainees. This involvement along with the close contact with the others, in phase two, helped in co-constructing meanings based on my interactions with the trainees and developing an understanding of what was happening in the field. This engagement was also crucial in referring back to trainees to have better explanations of the data, thus maintaining dialogue which is the other aspect of analytic autoethnography.

I also maintained a link to theoretical analysis through relating my autoethnographic account to the understandings articulated in the other data chapters.

Expressionism

As opposed to realism, expressionism focuses on the emotions and feelings the story may evoke in readers. According to Adams et al. (2015, p. 87) ‘expressionist autoethnographies focus on expressing a researcher’s internal feelings and emotions, presenting personal/cultural experiences from a thoroughly subjective perspective’. This mode thus relies on feelings and evoking them. It also puts a focus on the story as a way to thread the interpretation with the analysis. One popular type of this form is evocative autoethnography.

While my autoethnographic account incorporates elements of the analytic version, it also connects very slightly with the evocative form in the sense that it tells the story of my insider experience and how I made sense of the setting and the data.

Impressionism

Impressionism emphasises the use of transformational moments. According to Ellis et al. (2011), doing an autoethnography calls for the use of some transformational moments which belong to particular groups or individuals. Those moments are called epiphanies and autoethnographers analyse them in an attempt to depict lived experiences. Adams et al. (2015) argue that this mode of writing provides readers with a general sense of the researchers’ personal account and help them identify and feel the experience. The authors also add that impressionism does not seek to separate storying and analysing, hence providing a clear account for readers.

Based on the aims of impressionistic writing in giving a clear picture of personal experiences, my approach of writing about the autoethnographic aspect in this study integrates the use of some important moments as a key feature in explaining how I came to an understanding of my data. Similarly to the integration of the expressionist element, I use transformational moments in writing my autoethnography mainly to give a better view into my sense making process and to create in readers a general sense of my experience and make them identify with it.

As each of the types of autoethnography provides interesting ways of representing lived experiences, several researchers (Stanley, 2014; Wall, 2016) call for a middle way approach that lies in between its different forms. In talking about the different forms of autoethnography, Wall (2016, p. 7) for instance encourages what she labels a moderate form and calls for ‘a balanced perspective that lies between the warring factions of evocative and analytic approaches to this method, one that captures the meanings and events of one’s life in an ethical way that moves collective thinking forward- a moderate autoethnography’. This means that expressionist-evocative and realist-analytic autoethnographies can be seen more than mere dichotomies. They can stand together to form a new way of approaching personal experiences. Stanley (2014), in the same way, suggests taking strong points from both types of autoethnography with the focus on producing an evocative account of the lived experience and the aim of creating a theoretical understanding from the data that would be relevant to other people in different ways.

Though researchers call for a way in between analytic and evocative forms of autoethnography, I add to this, aspects from impressionism, particularly, the use of epiphanies, making the moderate way I am following comprise features of realist, expressionist, and impressionist autoethnographies.

Therefore, based on descriptions of the different forms of representation above, my autoethnography is explained in a way that draws from realist, expressionist, and impressionist forms of autoethnography. The realistic analytic aspect manifests itself in the use of insider knowledge to critically analyse and understand myself, and accordingly the setting and trainees’ views. It is also apparent through the reflexivity with which I dealt with and interpreted the setting and the data. The expressionist evocative aspect is, however, used and combined with the analytic bits of the autoethnography as a means of recounting my experience as moments that were crucial in understanding the development of my thinking. In this way, expressionism is particularly apparent in the way of writing about the data in terms of a story of my personal experience of understanding my positionality and revealing the viewpoints I held, and the confusions I faced and making them accessible to anyone with a similar experience. Impressionism goes hand in hand with the other modes, particularly, the evocative form and manifests itself through the use of epiphanies as transformational moments in the course of my research. Such epiphanies are

especially useful in structuring the storytelling and analysis processes, helping readers to understand my account and its impact on the development of the study.

Therefore, the analytic aspect is more apparent in analysing my experience and the development of my thinking and thematising such an experience critically to serve the understanding of study and its development. The evocative element together with the impressionist bits are more concerned with the way these changes are being weaved together and told as a story that clearly outlines the process of development I went through, and the possible ways readers can identify with my account.

The following section gives details on the epiphanic mode used in writing about the autoethnographic aspect in this study.

3.4.4.2.2 Using epiphanies to write the autoethnographic aspect

I followed one of the techniques of writing up about experiences as presented by Adams et al. (2015). They refer to this approach as ‘merging the self and culture, personal experience and fieldwork’ (ibid, p. 76). This method consists of considering the moments of realisation and learning within the fieldwork, recording them, and then expanding them. Based on this, I put together the transformational moments that were crucial in showing my understanding of the data, made sense of them, then used them in my account. In doing so, I went back to the data collected and looked for useful patterns and epiphanies for the autoethnography. This involved field notes taken during data collection, interview transcripts, and discussions with trainees. Furthermore, to better organise this set of autoethnographic data and following the above-mentioned technique of writing up, I was engaged in a thematising process (See Section 3.3.3.1.2). Themes thus included similar thoughts, notes, discussions, and impressions which helped then in weaving together the autoethnographic chapter.

Those themes are broadly grouped and focused on the following elements:

- The emerging awareness of understanding both the self and the others and making sense of the setting and the data collection process.
- Further understanding of the partialities of my thinking and gradually making sense of trainees’ views.

As outlined above in the grouping of themes, there is a particular focus on the self in relation to the others. This means that the autoethnographic chapter focuses on my sense making process of the data and the process of collecting it in reference to the other trainees. In other words, the construction of meanings out of trainees' views is understood and made in light of my insider experience. This implies that though the chapter is going to be autoethnographic, the focus is not merely restricted to the depiction of myself and my thinking, but also on how this thinking has been developed in regard with the other trainees' views and interactions. This calls attention to one aspect of the technique of writing that I am following which is the creation of characters (Adams et al. 2015). Characters in my study are the trainees who took part in my study and played a role in my understanding of the development of the study. In this sense, both first person and third person narration are employed. The former consists of the I of the researcher and focuses on the depiction of my experience and its impact on understanding the study. The latter, however, involves the voices of trainees, their views and experiences which help in identifying 'the narrator's personal/cultural analysis as accurate, complete, and true' (Adams et al. 2015, p. 79).

To sum up, the writing up of the autoethnographic chapter is based on the use of epiphanies basically found within the data collected. The technique employed to go about writing mainly involves grouping epiphanies together, creating themes, and showing the merging nature of the self and fieldwork. Those aspects together helped in providing an account of my insider experience and its importance in gaining an understanding of the data. This is detailed in the next chapter.

Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology underlying the study. It is organised in terms of four sections. Section one discussed the philosophical framework guiding the whole study and the methodological choices followed. In this sense, a social constructionist framework frames the study with a qualitative research approach involving the use of a focused ethnographic methodology along with an autoethnography of my experience in the field. Section two of the chapter provided an overview of both my positionality in the field and how it was changing across data collection phases and the reflexivity that is characterising the whole research. In section three, the research design including access and participants

was presented. This section also involved a summary of data collection and analysis processes. Section four consisted of a discussion of ethical considerations, challenges in terms of the data, validity, and the writing up of the study.

The next chapters 4, 5 and 6 provide a more practical account of the methodology detailed above by presenting the findings of this study.

4. An autoethnography of the researcher's I: between self-understanding and listening to voices

This chapter, which is the first of the three data chapters, presents an autoethnographic account of my experience during data collection and its impact on the understanding of the data collection process and accordingly trainees' perspectives of the different aspects reflection and the factors influencing it. This chapter outlines the importance of revealing different aspects of the data and underpins the understandings gained during fieldwork as reflected in terms of the next two chapters.

The chapter is composed of two sections. Section 4.1 discusses the impact of being an insider on developing an understanding of myself and the setting and coming to terms with the development of my thinking in relation to the data. Accordingly, a particular focus is placed on the group dynamics of the setting and the insider's perspective I obtained and their role in deepening my understanding of the data collected. Therefore, Section 4.1.1 sheds light on my insider's experience in the CELTA course and its impact on the researcher role I performed when collecting data. Section 4.1.2 frames how such an insider account was important in terms of the understandings I gained of the setting.

Section 4.2 presents the partialities of my understandings and the beliefs I held about the data and how these gradually changed and were framed in light of my experience during data collection. Section 4.2.1 explains the partialities of my understanding, particularly in terms of trainees' practice of reflection at a written level. Section 4.2.2 then provides an account of the new insights I developed in terms of trainees' interactions in the oral feedback, while Section 4.2.3 outlines a broader vision of emotions in reflection.

4.1. Insider experience and group dynamics: understanding the self and the others

This section explains the insider experience I lived during my participation in the CELTA course and its implications for the understandings I gained of the setting and accordingly the collected data. This was apparent through both the opportunities this experience provided at the level of my research and the understanding of the particularities of the setting my trainee status allowed.

The section first outlines the researcher opportunities of my insider experience, then gives details of some aspects of the data my shared trainee status revealed.

4.1.1. An insider's experience: researcher opportunities

My insider experience had an impact on my researcher status. This was particularly apparent in the access I had to different forms of data and the understanding I gained of my positionality in the setting.

Unlike phase one of data collection where access was partial, in the second phase, access was fully granted to the whole course as being an insider (See Section 3.3.1). This was promising in terms of having access to data which I could not access in the earlier stages of my data collection process. An example of the data I accessed as an insider is trainees' reflective sheets and fourth assignments. The following notes show the accessibility I had to one of the sets of data in my research:

Discussion with Isaak: between confidence and access to data

Isaak: ... So how are you doing with your studies?

Soumia: I'm trying to note down some aspects related to my research. The interviews I'm going to have with you and the reflections will help also.

I: That's good

S: I need a copy of your reflective sheets.

I: Do you want me to copy mine after teaching?

S: No, I'll copy everything once we finish the course (field notes: November 2019)

In a similar incident, I wrote:

Course closure

On the last day of the course, we had only one seminar, then the time left, was just spent in organising our portfolios. Cara, a trainee, copied her reflective sheets and fourth assignment for me. She also reminded the others to copy their reflections for me. She said, 'please don't forget to copy your reflections for Soumia'. The other trainees all went downstairs to copy their reflections. They handed them back to me (field notes: November 2019).

In the above notes, it is clearly apparent that access to trainees' reflective sheets and fourth assignments, which constituted part of my data, was easily granted. The above incidents

also reveal the confidence and trust trainees approved when sharing their personal data without further consent or explanations on how this data would be used. This points to the merits of being an insider in accessing a set of data and was useful to the findings reached in this study. It added a level of detail to the understanding of trainees' perceptions of the different aspects of reflection, as detailed throughout the next two chapters. The reflective sheets and fourth assignments also provided a practical dimension to the views trainees articulated in the interviews in regard with the written aspect of reflection (See Section 5.1) and (See Section 5.2.1).

Furthermore, my insider experience had an impact on realising my changing roles. As I worked closely with trainees and shared similar interests to them, I gradually gained an understanding of my positionality and how it changed from outsider to insider and accordingly was aware of the rapport I was able to create with the trainees. Below is a chat between the trainees in my TP group, and which was crucial in understanding the shift of my roles in the setting and defining both my reflexivity and positionality:

First emotional moment

After the feedback, trainees in my group and I had the following discussion:

Isaak: I'm still feeling overwhelmed by my teaching. I'm stressed.

Cara: I'm teaching tomorrow. I don't understand what I'm going to teach... I have lots of things to do. I can't live with the stress.

Claudia: it's hard but you'll do it.

Soumia: your lesson plans have always been the best Cara. You taught already. You'll do it again.

Isaak: you'll be fine Cara. We're all going through the same thing. I was about to leave last week.

Claudia: it's important for us to help each other. We do have a solid group of peers.

Cara: thank you guys (field notes: November 2019).

My first teaching practice: a community of peers

My first teaching session was listening. I forgot to take the CD with me to listen to the audio and was worried about it because I only read the script of the conversation.

James said this happened with him, but everything was good. His words made feel less worried (Field notes: November 2019).

Late at night, I received this message from him:

Hey Soumia! I just wanted to tell you that your lesson was brilliant! I felt I didn't give enough comments today, so I thought of reminding you that your lesson was really good. I really liked it. Well done! (Message from James, 2019).

The above extracts show the closeness which I acquired during my insider experience in data collection. Being part of trainees' community and sharing the same experience as them, I was able to reconsider my outsider role in phase one and how such a role changed to an insider perspective, looking more deeply into the lived experiences of trainees, and allowing more descriptions of such experiences as they have been felt and lived. In the case of the above extracts, the change in my positionality is apparent in the way I interacted with the trainees as an insider and also the level of detail this perspective permitted in understanding the data collected. The above incidents, for instance, constitute a good example of my ability to clearly discern the community of trainees which I was part of and the underlying peer support characterising trainees' relationships which I overlooked as an outsider when I first started my data collection (See Section 6.3.1).

Based on the above incidents, it is evident that my insider experience impacted my research at different levels. I was able to have another different set of data, that is, reflective sheets and fourth assignments, which in turn added details into trainees' descriptions of reflection, particularly the written aspect of it. On the other hand, my positionality became clearer, and I started to reflexively think of my changing roles and their impact on the direction of my research. This, as outlined above, was illustrated in terms of my positioning in the setting and my engagement with the trainees as an insider. It reflects Anderson and Glass-Coffin's (2013, p. 67) claim that 'autoethnographic fieldworkers are encouraged to reflect upon the ways in which their engagement with the 'field' has contributed to their understanding of themselves as contingent upon and emerging from the experiences of their lives'. Within this view, I gained an understanding of myself as an insider and the implications this had on the data and the setting.

The following section continues to describe my insider perspective, but in terms of understanding the setting.

4.1.2. Different people, similar encounter: an insider's look

The trainee experience I shared as the other trainees revealed an understanding of the setting, being the CELTA course, in terms of its underlying structure, and pressure.

As I have previously outlined in Section 1.3, the CELTA course consists of seminars, ALP sessions, TP, and post feedback sessions. This knowledge of the CELTA course defining elements remained abstract until I started my data collection. During the first phase of data gathering, I managed to build up an understanding of the setting, but my access to merely the TP and feedback sessions provided an outsider perspective into the setting. Nevertheless, with my insider lens during phase two, I became familiar with the particularities of the setting and developed a clearer vision.

One of the realisations of what was hidden to me in the setting was the seminars of the course that trainees were engaged in every day. As an insider, I participated in such seminars and noted an aspect relating to the practice of reflection. This was the way writing a reflective sheet was introduced and dealt with along with trainees' reactions to it. In this sense, I kept record of the following moments:

Initial encounter with reflection

It's week two of the course. Reflection was introduced by trainer A. A said that it's something that we should do and keep in our portfolios. A also emphasised doing it immediately and added that the reflective sheet has three parts (what went well, what did not go well, and what to do next). A said again that this paper needs to be completed after teaching and kept with the other documents in our portfolios (field notes: November 2019).

Shortly after this brief introduction, I had the following discussion with Isaak:

Reflection between expectations and reality

Isaak: What are we meant to do exactly?

Soumia: Just write your thoughts on your teaching when you finish. There're prompts in the sheet.

I: Ok, but I didn't understand... what to write exactly. It's the first time we do it.

S: It's just feedback. I think like the oral feedback.

I: Ok (field notes: November 2019).

As mentioned in the above incidents, the introduction to writing reflections seemed to lack enough explanation on the process of doing it, with an apparent focus on the completion of the task as required. In introducing reflection to us for the first time, there was an underlying descriptive nature to its process, emphasising the product that each trainee should achieve, that is, writing a reflective sheet. The little chat with Isaak afterward also revealed the little understanding trainees felt when writing the reflection. As can be seen above, Isaak admitted that he did not fully grasp what he was meant to be writing and my reply to him denoted a certain degree of confusion on writing a reflection. My words also implied more understanding of reflection in its spoken form and Isaak's silence afterwards strengthened this understanding.

Within this view, I reconsidered my previously collected data and realised that I had overlooked this aspect. As I did not have full access to the course, I missed the opportunity to observe and note possible relevant data in relation to this. However, with my insider engagement, I made record of the above incidents as important to my data and referred to them in the interviews to know more about trainees' conceptualisations of the written aspect of reflection, the way of doing it, and its position in the course. These were later important in revealing trainees' views on the need for direction in practising reflection (See Section 6.2.4) and in showing their perception of written reflection as a required task (See Section 5.2.1), and the significance the novice status plays when reflecting in such settings (See Section 6.2.2).

Furthermore, my shared trainee experience had an impact on my awareness of the observations carried out in the setting. As these were not part of the observations, I conducted during my fieldwork in phase one, I assumed that both peer observation and experienced teachers' observations had a similar nature and as such, I asked general questions in the first interviews and did not probe. The following interview extract shows my limited awareness concerning the observation of experienced teachers:

Soumia: What do you think of observing others in the course?

Jack: Watching someone teach is helpful. You know, you'll think about it and how they did it.

S: Do you mean other trainees?

J: Not just trainees, but you know, we've had to do some observations, so I was looking at, observing, and thinking okay, maybe I could do it.

S: Did the observations help?

J: yeah, definitely, the observations really helped, just to see you know, what we should be aiming for (Jack, interview: 169-177).

Similarly, I wrote down a comment demonstrating my unfamiliarity with the setting and what was taking place there as 'during the feedback session, David talked about a teacher he observed. He liked her drilling and pairing strategies. This as peer observation seems to be useful' (field notes: May 2019).

The above extracts exemplify my naivety in dealing with the workings of the course. Both the interview and note above show the little knowledge I had of the observations of experienced teachers and trainees' thoughts on them. Accordingly, these were treated in broader terms as observation of others, making the process underlying them like the one of peer observation, so potentially missing any insights this aspect could generate.

However, my insider perspective enabled me to form an in-depth picture of how the course operated. In this respect, I knew more about observing experienced teachers and attended, together with the other trainees, six hours of these observations. I remember, in the first observation session we had, a trainee, Isaak, and I were assigned to observe the same teacher, and the following conversation took place at the end of the session, which was an enlightening moment in terms of my data collection:

Realities of observation

Isaak: I liked the way she (teacher) recycled the language. Students were engaged.

Soumia: Yes, it was a good strategy to remind students of the vocabulary learned previously.

I: There were lots of good things like error correction. I think we can't do everything we've just seen in our classes as they're different.

S: What do you mean?

I: I mean this is a real classroom. She didn't do ICQs and she talked a lot. She didn't do most of the stuff we're asked to do.

S: Yes, it's different from our teaching and there were no FP.

I: yeah, it's different from our teaching (field notes: November 2019).

In light of the above conversation, I realised that the reflections trainees made when observing peers and experienced teachers were different and that trainees have different perceptions of each type of observation. In this sense, my moment with Isaak drew my attention to one view of observing experienced teachers as a practice that is useful but not very practical in terms of trainees' teaching. Based on this, I reconsidered my data in terms of this incident and as such, asked questions about such observations, probing more in the interviews to have a better understanding of trainees' perceptions of this aspect (See Section 5.3.1.2).

Being an insider also allowed a closer look into the intensity of the course and the possible impact it has on trainees' practice of reflection. As an observer of the fieldwork, I was aware of trainees' responsibilities and the resultant pressure. However, going through the same experience, I developed more awareness of the nature of the course and made more sense of how the context of the CELTA course could be closely related to reflection. The following moment gives insights into the nature of the course and its impact on the reflections produced during the course:

A lot of distractions

Today, we had an observation of an experienced teacher, and we were assigned to watch different classes. Isaak and I were in the same class. A few minutes after starting the lesson, Isaak told me that he couldn't concentrate on observing the teacher and that he is thinking of his lesson which is going to take place in the afternoon (field notes: November 2019).

And in my interview with a trainee, Cara, said the following about the intensity of the course and how it prevented her from fully reflecting and learning from her peers' teaching:

Cara's reflections on the course structure: lots of things to do

... If you were about to teach towards the end of somebody's lesson, you would be shuffling your own papers around and thinking about oh I'm the next. And if you have just taught, you would come in and would've missed the context build, so therefore, you run away back and forth because you didn't know how they introduced the subject. You might just still be ruminating over your own lessons, you probably only, you know, if you were just about to go on to teach, you probably switched off about ten minutes before the other person's finished and if you have just taught, I would guess, you probably missed the first ten minutes of their lesson actually. So, you weren't always given a complete overview of what you're watching which is not so good as you might miss a lot of useful things (Interview 2, Cara: 205-212).

Having been involved in other tasks, Isaak could not properly focus on the experienced teachers' teaching and his reflections were distracted by thoughts about his teaching. Similarly, Cara provided an accurate representation of what trainees go through every day and explained the daily requirements she and her peers had, and how this had an impact on the reflections she could make based on her peers' teaching, highlighting the importance of the context where reflection is practised.

Those incidents and others made me reconsider different instances in my data that could relate to the setting itself and its relationship with reflection. This then led to the findings articulated in Section 6.2.1 and the various explanations of how the context where reflection is practised is one factor influencing the way reflection is done.

As it has been articulated throughout this section, being an insider was crucial in revealing hidden aspects of the setting and understanding how trainees feel and think about such aspects. In this sense, I came to terms with the structure of the CELTA course, particularly in terms of its seminars, observations, and the pressure trainees felt during their course of study. I also managed to relate these to the focus of the study, trainees' perceptions of reflection, and constructed meanings, as shown above, connecting to the social setting where reflection is investigated and accordingly realised that there could be different factors influencing trainees' understanding and practice of reflection in different settings. This was possible by being positioned as an insider and as Adams et al. (2015, p. 70) claim:

In connecting with others, we move from what is happening inside our bodies, hearts, minds, and lives and out into what is happening in culture. Indeed, we are always in culture and culture is always in us, but a new awareness around an experience encourages us to connect ourselves and others' selves in tangible and meaningful ways.

Therefore, I developed a grasp of the setting where reflection took place and managed to broaden the scope of my understanding concerning trainees' experiences of reflection based on the connections I made with trainees and the setting as an insider.

The next section explains the development of my thinking vis a vis the collected data.

4.2. Revisiting the data: understanding the partialities of my thinking

In this section, I provide an account on how I gradually made sense of trainees' views of the different aspects of reflection, including both written and oral aspects and how I reconsidered the partialities of my thinking in light of my insider experience.

My understanding of the practice of reflection was developmental. My outsider role in phase one provided a distant perspective into trainees' experiences of reflection and as such, I sometimes made comments consisting of beliefs and misconceptions based on this vision about trainees' practice of reflection in written and oral forms. However, with my insider lens, I reconsidered this data and made a more nuanced sense of trainees' views on the different applications of reflection and realised that there were a number of factors influencing such practice.

4.2.1. Writing reflections: why aren't you reflecting appropriately?

My understanding of writing reflective sheets in phase one of data collection was partial and consisted of the view that this practice was not appropriately undertaken, lacking both understanding and interest. In this sense, I focused on the observable characteristics of trainees' practice of written reflection including their way of writing reflections and built up my view accordingly.

In explaining trainees' attitude to writing reflections, I noted down comments showing my belief in trainees' inattentiveness to writing reflections, with little awareness of the process

of writing and how trainees perceived it. The following extracts include notes taken during phase one and my reflections on them at that time, exemplifying my misconceptions:

Emma taught today and when she finished, she didn't want to fill her reflection and said that she's tired of doing it every day.

Emma didn't seem to be interested in writing her reflections and didn't take it as an important task (field notes: May 2019).

Trainees struggle to think. Jack and Emma said they're tired, and don't want to write. Emma insisted that she can't see the purpose of writing while having the feedback.

Trainees still don't understand the benefit of reflection and don't give it time or importance compared to the oral feedback (fieldnotes: May 2019).

The above notes portray some of the trainees' attitudes to reflection which, as an observer, I interpreted in limited terms as both a lack of interest in and understanding about writing reflections. In this respect, I put my focus on what was observed by me as trainees not wanting to fill their reflections and their complaints about it. In addition, though my first interviews addressed such aspects and gave me broad understanding of trainees' views, it was not until I become an insider that I was able to move from my interpretations of this aspect as not reflecting appropriately to looking at the different ways trainees approached written reflection and their different conceptualisations of it. An incident revealing trainees' different thoughts on written reflection was a conversation I had with a trainee regarding the writing up of reflections:

An insiders' look: changing perceptions of reflection

The trainer gave us some sheets to fill while the trainees concerned with teaching teach. It was Cara's turn. Isaak was a bit late in coming in for the teaching practice, and as a result, the trainer left his sheet with me. When he came in, I handed him the paper and said it's for Cara's teaching. He sighed and told me: 'oh my god, I don't want to do it. I already have my teaching to think of and other papers to fill. I don't want to do it really'. I asked him why he doesn't like writing reflections. He said 'it just feels like a chore and we're doing it every day' (field notes: November 2019).

The above incident was a starting point in developing my understanding of trainees' views of written reflection and in reconsidering the data already collected along with the misconceptions I made of this aspect of reflection as not being done as it should be. Accordingly, I realised that trainees' interest could be distracted when writing down thoughts and that their understanding of the task is different, entailing various views of the written aspect of reflection and underlying different explorations and values attached to it (See Section 5.2).

Having trainees' reflective sheets also enabled me to understand the attitude articulated in the observations and look more closely at the routine practice trainees were referring to during fieldwork and interviews (See Section 5.2.1), and the idiosyncratic outlook characterising this aspect of reflection (See Section 5.1).

Similarly, to writing reflections, I also had a limited understanding of the oral reflections.

4.2.2. Trainees' interactions in the oral feedback: going beyond partialities of thinking

One of the recurrent assumptions I made in relation to trainees' interactions in the oral feedback sessions was what I believed to be the low levels of interaction taking place. By this, I mean trainees' degree of engagement in the feedback compared to the role played by their trainers.

Though I was able to make sense of the interactions taking place during the feedback and the value trainees attributed to such interactions (See Section 5.3.2), I made comments describing the nature of such interaction by terms like 'low interaction', 'less interaction', or 'trainees are not active' and wrote down notes such as 'while discussing their teaching, trainees were not very interactive. They whether agree or disagree with their trainers or add some aspects for discussion based on trainers' feedback' (field notes: May 2019).

When taking such notes, I was aware of the way the feedback was initiated and the guidance provided by trainers to trainees. However, I was not able to see the whole picture of such interactions or clearly discern what I interpreted as low levels of interaction. At this stage of my data collection, I could barely understand trainers' guidance in feedback delivery and their expertise in providing accurate comments which trainees referred to in their interviews later. However, my insider experience allowed a more developed vision of

the workings of the feedback sessions and revealed an important aspect which I had overlooked in my analysis of the collected data earlier. This was the trainee-trainer relationship and the impact it had on trainees' articulating reflections. A defining incident was what I noted as part of my insider involvement during my fieldwork:

Trainees' side of reality

Cara taught today and the following is what she said once the feedback ended:

Cara: if I didn't make changes, I would've had enough time for FP, but I couldn't say this to trainer B. I didn't feel comfortable saying it.

Isaak: you reminded me of when I said I reduced my TTT, and everyone agreed, but trainer A said no, and I just said ok (field notes: November 2019).

The above conversation made me reconsider the interpretations I had made in phase one in relation to trainees' interactions in the feedback. I was also able, through this incident, to look at the trainer-trainee correspondence and how trainees perceived it in terms of the reflections they made. Thus, my insider outlook allowed a perspective that helped in re-examining and organising the different parts of the data connected to the relationship of trainees to trainers and enabled further explorations of trainees' experiences of reflection and the impact such a relationship played on the product of their reflections. An example is Cara's thoughts above, which were later expanded upon in her interview and used to develop the theme of trainer-trainee relationship in Section 6.3.2, which revealed the characterising features of the trainer-trainee relationship, explained through statements made by trainees throughout the two phases of data collection, and incidents similar to the above, all of which was framed through the lens of my insider experience.

Furthermore, another incident that was critical in strengthening my grasp of the workings of the trainer-trainee relationship, and its impact on trainees' understanding and practice of reflection was a briefing on assignment four, a reflection on the whole course:

Assignment four: one-sided reality

Paragraph 1: experience on the CELTA course.

Paragraph 2: strengths/ weaknesses.

Paragraph 3: how you intend to develop your skills (use the paper trainer gave/ you

don't have to explain why).

Paragraph 4: what you have learned from observations (reference to observation of peers and experienced teachers/reference to the level).

Note: don't mention names of teachers or peers and don't criticise them (field notes: November 2019).

Later in the coffee break, trainees of my group had the following chat:

Isaak: don't criticise me in your assignment

Soumia: of course, I won't. This is what we're told to do.

Cara: Why shouldn't we say the truth? This is a reflection

Lily: I don't get it. We're not going to criticize them. I think we should mention their mistakes and what we got from them.

(field notes: November 2019).

The above extract, which I noted as a trainee being required to complete the fourth assignment (See Section 1.3), was another important moment of realisation for me concerning the influence trainers played in relation to the trainees' process and product of reflection. The briefing above and the chat following afterwards made me reconsider aspects of trainees' relationship to their trainers and its possible impact on their reflections, not only in terms of the oral feedback sessions, but also on the writing up of their reflections, leading to more detailed understandings of trainees' views on reflection (See Section 6.3.2).

4.2.3 Emotions: are they really important?

One of the partial understandings I had in phase one concerned emotions and my belief that these were part of the reflection process. In this sense, I was aware of the existence of emotions in reflection but did not fully realise its impact on trainees' reflections.

Emotions was one of the aspects I noted down during phase one of data collection and interpreted as being part of the reflective process of trainees. The following note portrays one of the emotional moments I attended during phase one and which I interpreted at the time as part of the emotional dimension of reflection.

Catrina's teaching practice:

Catrina taught today. She was unhappy about her lesson and described it as horrible. Even if the lesson didn't look as she claimed, she insisted that the lesson wasn't of a good standard. Catrina expressed the need to leave the room before the start of the feedback and she was about to cry. The trainer advised her to stay as the discussion would be useful to her. Catrina was very nervous, and her nervousness affected the way she viewed her teaching practice. When Catrina was asked about the positive aspects in her lesson, she said she had to think because she cannot see any. She could not address any positive aspects. The others, however, spotted good aspects in her teaching like maintaining confidence while dealing with a technical issue (field notes: May 2019).

Though the above incident shows not only the emotionality of reflection, but also the impact emotions could have on trainees' thoughts, I only managed to look at the existing feelings Catrina showed, paying little attention to the way such feelings affected her reflections. In addition, as this was the only emotional moment I witnessed during my fieldwork, I did not consider other similar instances or views which could provide further useful data. I also had a narrow vision of this aspect and did not probe on trainees' statements referring to emotions and contended with what two trainees, Catrina and Jack, pointed to in their interview responses.

Later in phase two, there was a moment that reminded me of the above emotional moment and drew my attention to my restricted understanding. This was a chat with one of the trainees during the second week of the course after the TP:

Barbara's emotional charge

After finishing my teaching, I went to the other room to write my reflections. I met Barbara who also taught and was crying. We had the following chat:

Soumia: are you okay?

Barbara: my lesson wasn't good. It didn't go as planned; students didn't understand the past tense. I'm going to fail.

S: you'll be fine. I'm sure trainer B won't be harsh on you.

Few moments later:

Barbara: I don't know what to write. I feel I'm blocked.

Lily: just relax. We all've been through this. You're still stressed (field notes: November 2019).

The little chat with Barbara and other similar incidents that followed every day enabled me to recall Catrina's moment and see similarities in the reactions those trainees had regarding their emotions and to better understand this aspect. Based on this, I was able to look more closely at trainees' emotions and develop a better sense of the impact these could have on their reflections. I also paid particular attention to incidents where emotions were present, asked more questions in the interviews to elicit more data on trainees' views, and considered data from trainees' reflective sheets and fourth assignments. These, together, contributed to broadening my understanding in relation to the role played by emotions and its impact on trainees' reflections and accordingly made sense of trainees' perceptions of emotions as a filter blocking them from fully reflecting at both written and oral levels (See Section 6.1.2).

As detailed in Section 4.2, I reconsidered the data and revisited the understandings and beliefs I made during my fieldwork. This, as mentioned above, was evident in the way my thinking was developed and broadened in relation to trainees' views of written reflection and the different conceptualisations they held of it, along with my understanding of other related aspects including the trainer-trainee relationship based on their interactions in oral and written forms. The emotions existing in the process of reflection and their possible impact on trainees' reflections were also among the understandings gained. This reconsideration was possible through my insider perspective, through which I was able to look closely into trainees' lived experiences and conceptualisations of reflection. As such, I was able, as Adams et al. (2015) argue, to 'offer complex, insider accounts of sense making and show how/why particular experiences are challenging, important, and transformative' (p. 27), and gained insider knowledge which was 'used to call attention to the complexities of commonly held, taken for granted assumptions about these cultural phenomenon (ibid, p. 31). In line with such claims about autoethnographic accounts, my insider experience allowed me to explore insights and aspects of my data of which I had an incomplete understanding and prompted me to rethink of my interpretations of the data, leading to

more in-depth explorations of trainees' views of the different aspects of reflection and greater awareness of the factors influencing trainees' understanding and practice of reflection in pre-service teacher education.

Summary

This chapter, which relates to the autoethnographic aspect of my study, presented my insider experience and its implications in terms of revealing different aspects of the data and gaining new understandings of trainees' views, as articulated in Chapters five and six. Throughout the different sections of the chapter, I explained how my insider experience was a defining aspect in understanding the particularities of the data collection process and the data itself, hence, contributing to the construction of the findings in the next two chapters. Section 4.1 provided an account of my insider perspective and how it was insightful in terms of creating some opportunities at the level of my research and in framing new understandings of the setting. Section 4.2, however, outlined the developments in my thinking and the gradual movement from partial understandings and beliefs to a more developed sense where different aspects of the data were revisited.

5. Perspectives on reflection: between application and value

The three data chapters together reveal trainees' different conceptualisations of the understanding and practice of reflection in pre-service teacher education and the different explorations they assign to it. As reflection is practised within a social setting, in the case of this study, the CELTA course, and is presented through the lens of my experience as part of this social setting, the views of trainees are framed within a social perspective. This perspective shows the interplay existing between trainees' different conceptualisations and enables a closer look into the particularities of the application of reflection and its value within its social setting, along with the different factors influencing it.

While the first of data chapters, which is an autoethnographic account, presented how my experience as an insider contributed to the understanding of trainees' perspectives, this chapter and the next one provides detailed descriptions and insights into those perspectives, first by shedding light on the application of reflection in this chapter, then the factors influencing such application in the next chapter. While each of these chapters frame trainees' views in terms of different themes, there is an overlap between those themes in both chapters, and whenever it was possible, this overlap was shown throughout those chapters.

Therefore, this chapter looks at findings on trainees' perspectives on both the application of the different aspects of reflection and how these are explored in the setting. In this sense, this chapter outlines the different applications of reflection as articulated by trainees, considers the different conceptualisations trainees identified as underlying those applications, and gives insights into the different ways they explored and valued such aspects across the different parts of this chapter.

This chapter consists of three main sections. The first section describes the applications of the different aspects of reflection, written and oral, in terms of idiosyncrasy and interaction respectively, and shows a kind of contrast between them. The second section however provides a detailed account into the views trainees held of the written aspect of reflection. This section starts first by presenting views on the written aspect of reflection as a chore that is practised and applied in a routinised manner and seen as an additional required task. It then moves on to reveal other views into the methodical practice of reflection in a written

way and gives insights into trainees' explorations of it. The final section frames further perspectives on both the practice of reflection when observing others, and in an oral form within a socio-interactional outlook. In this respect, this section first highlights views related to the observational practice of reflection in terms of a social practice. It then sheds light on the oral aspect of reflection as an interactional process.

5.1. One concept, different applications: between idiosyncrasy and interaction

Trainees referred to different ways of applying the different aspects of reflection in their course, which are idiosyncratic and interactional applications, explained and contrasted with each other. In this sense, Trainees described the written aspect of reflection as an individual process involving a restricted individual vision when compared to the oral aspect of reflection, which is according to them, broader in perspective.

In this part, the idiosyncratic process of reflection is emphasised, while the interactional view is further explained later (See Section 5.3.2).

As explained in Section 1.3, reflection is promoted both in written and oral ways in the CELTA course. The written form consists of filling some reflective sheets (See Appendix 6) which are to be completed immediately after teaching. In such forms, trainees write their thoughts about how their teaching went. The reflection sheet usually contains some guiding prompts on what to reflect on. These are what went well, what did not go well, and what should be done for the next teaching practice. The oral form, however, consists of the feedback sessions or post-observation sessions taking place after teaching and consisting of a discussion where trainers and trainees share and exchange ideas on teaching.

The different applications trainees conceptualised of reflection and its different aspects was built upon their perception of each aspect and the extent to which they believed it was useful for them. Lily for instance admitted that '... I think I'm little blind to my own strengths and weaknesses. I think the reflections that I wrote about me were fine, but I got a lot more information from hearing other people' (interview: 156-158). For Lily, it is clearly apparent that the written aspect of reflection is an individual process consisting of individual thoughts about oneself, while discussion with others seems to be more valid as it involves more information about one's teaching. Sharing a similar view, Anastasia, believed that:

I think the oral feedback is better because it comes from the others, and you can talk about it with them. It's not just here is my feedback, read it. It was that they actually told you and you can say, oh really, why, for example if they say, I think you rushed the context build and it wasn't appropriate, then you can say what do you think, what could I've done to make it better. You can ask for opinions and have a discussion, other than just that kind of sheet (Anastasia, interview: 45-49).

From the above statement, it seems that writing down reflections is considered by Anastasia as an individual process lacking communication. Juxtaposing this with the oral feedback, Anastasia referred to the interactional talk that underlies the discussion with peers and trainers and its potential in initiating more information and stimulating one's thinking about different aspects of teaching.

In addressing such applications, the same trainee further explained the practice of idiosyncratic reflection as lacking experience and self-confidence:

If it was just me doing the reflections, I'm not sure how much I trust it really because it's coming from me, who is not an experienced teacher, who wasn't watching from the side lines as intensely. So, if it was me, and like the tutors wouldn't look at it or anything, then I wouldn't really trust it or follow it because it's just me (Anastasia, interview: 102-105).

Based on the above quote, the idiosyncratic written aspect of reflection seems to lack the needed experience and self-confidence to undertake it which the interactional talk would provide. As in the case of Anastasia, she believed that both experience and self-confidence are important to reflection. In fact, her words showed little readiness to trust her individual reflections and the view of a more knowledgeable and competent trainer to help undertake the task of reflection is crucial and complementary to the validation of her self-reflections.

Anastasia's words also reminded me of the practice of written reflection. which as a trainee, I believed lacked the required exchange between trainees and trainers. Even though the written reflection was reviewed by trainers and handed back to us, usually with comments, I, most of the time, did not understand trainer's comments, particularly those in opposition to mine and always felt a need to understand their feedback more clearly. Their comments remained abstract as they did not provide clear validation or a clearer view of my teaching,

especially in the first lessons. I rather relied on the feedback sessions, as most trainees did, to analyse my teaching. An example is of the first reflective sheet I filled with the comments of the tutor:

Name: Soumia Boumazou

Date: 19/11/19

1. What went well in my lesson (e.g. FMP in language lesson, enough concept checking, variety of tasks, appropriate skills staging...)

- Aims were achieved (students seemed to understand most of the words + they used these words in the free practice)
- My time management skills are improving compared to the previous 2 lessons (students had enough time to discuss at the end).

2. What didn't go so well and why.

- I forgot to remind students to pain check their answers for task 1.
- Some words were not clearly elicited (e.g. famous). Concept questions for this word were not clear.
- Two activities of the same type (2 matching activities).
- I didn't monitor the controlled practice.
- I could have elicited more before starting the activities and checked meaning. / I didn't guide students to get the meaning.

3. Were my AIMS for the students achieved? (If not, why not)

- The aims were achieved but would have done more eliciting and concept checking to make sure they understood.
- Students had some time to discuss, but just little time for feedback and error correction.

4. What I'll do/try next time.

- Keep working on my pace.
- Guide students more.
- Minimise my talk when giving instructions + explanations.

A really good lesson & accurate reflection - well done!

Tutor signature: _____

The 2 matching tasks were so different & would consider this as "what went well"
- variety of task type is important.

(Soumia, reflective sheet: lesson 3)

The above reflection includes both my own reflection and the trainer's response to it. By the end of it, the trainer says that my reflection is accurate, however, I did not understand what an accurate reflection is due to the silent written communication, and I only supposed that it is accurate because most of the points I mentioned were validated and agreed on by the trainer. This again could be related to the nature of practising reflection through writing and also how the meaningfulness of such method is left unclear for trainees (See Section 6.2.4).

Additionally, even if the task of writing down a reflection was immediate and proceeds the oral feedback, there was a claim by trainees that this latter invalidated the purposefulness of the reflective sheet as it is used to record thoughts without being reviewed by trainers immediately and the discussion taking place afterwards was inclusive of everyone's views and targets different aspects which the reflective sheet does not do. This is articulated by Isaak who pointed to the immediacy of reflection and its implications. He said that:

It (reflective sheet) made you think about probably how you could improve your lesson in that way at that moment because it's fresh soon after you've just taught [...] but other than that, I really didn't look at them. So, I think between the two [written reflection and oral feedback], I would've found the oral aspect of it probably better' (Isaak, interview: 132-135).

While appreciating the practice of writing a reflection sheet and understanding the principle of it, Isaak could see more potential in having group discussions. Given such an attitude, it seems that Isaak believed that the act of writing is immediate, making written reflection of a personal, short-term use and helping only in the post-teaching stage. Not reviewing his written reflections emphasised such a perception.

While the majority of trainees explained the application of written of reflection as an idiosyncratic process and contrasted it with discussion, a trainee, Mohammed stated that both applications are useful and complement each other as they provided a look into both personal and communal perspectives. In this sense, he said that 'I think both are essential because the written part is more from your own perspective, your own reflection on the

course, while in the group session, you get more perspectives and insights from different people' (interview: 156-158).

Overall, it appears that the written aspect of reflection is conceptualised as an idiosyncratic process. As it has been mentioned throughout this section, the idiosyncratic application of reflection is evident in trainees' statements and is described as a personal, non-communicative and immediate process that requires experience and self-confidence. Further, it appears that the majority of trainees favoured the practice of reflection in an oral form as a more helpful tool of thinking (See Section 5.3.2).

Writing down one's thoughts after teaching is reported in the literature as one of the strategies that enable student teachers to engage in reflection (Lee, 2007; Mathew et al. 2017), which is the case of trainees in this study. However, this engagement was undertaken at an individual level and was described to be lacking enough communication or interaction, generally practised in a retrospective manner and involves a restricted view. This conceptualisation of reflection is similar to Mann and Walsh's (2013) belief that reflective practice is an individual process, advocated and dominated by writing, and Akbari's (2007) claim on the nature of writing, consisting mainly of reporting thoughts and ideas retrospectively. However, this finding adds insights into the characteristics of the application of reflection in writing and provides a trainee perspective into this idiosyncratic process. This, as stated throughout this section, could be seen in the nature of this process which is purely individual and narrow, lacks experience, communication, and self-confidence, and is done for short term retrospective purposes.

Writing reflective sheets was also contrasted with the feedback taking place afterwards and was considered to be less effective than talking. Such a view is related to trainees' understanding of the written reflection to be initiated by oneself to oneself, therefore, leading to its conceptualisation as a pure idiosyncratic process consisting of reporting one's thoughts on paper. This could then imply the little awareness of trainees of the potential of written reflection. This is in line with Farrell (2019, p. 84) who emphasises the importance of the purposes for which the reflection is used by saying that 'it [writing] all depends on why they write'. Within this view, having a grasp of the meaningfulness of one's written reflections which was partly missing in this study, is crucial as it defines its usefulness and purposefulness (See Section 6.2.4).

5.2. Perspectives on the written aspect of reflection

In this section, trainees' views on the practice and perceived value of reflection in a written way are explored. First, the view of written reflection as a daily chore is outlined in detail. Then, a particular attention is paid to views on written reflection as a structured form.

5.2.1. I reflect, but life goes on! reflection as a chore

Many trainees viewed written reflection as no more than a chore to be completed. In their responses, they described such view as a routinised pattern that is both dealt with as an afterthought and a requirement.

Reflection as a routine task

Such a view towards written reflection was shown in trainees' statements in different ways. An example is Lily who looked at written reflection as a routinised activity that is done with little consideration to its importance or value. She stated that:

I just shut it (reflective sheet) in the folder and move on. I wrote very similar things. I put something like I reduced my TTT, I think my students, they hit their aims because they completed this task, and that task, they did freer practice (Lily, interview: 113-116)

And added that 'you're just going to the pattern of it. It just becomes a thing you do it routinely and then, it's like right, it's time to move on to the next one' (Lily, interview: 216-217).

Similarly, another trainee, Barbara, acknowledged the repetitiveness characterising her written reflections by claiming that 'my three positive points were always the same: the visuals were good, the students were involved, and the aims were achieved, that's it, always the same' (interview: 125-127).

When looking at her reflective sheets, Barbara's positive aspects were articulated in the same way. The following are extracts from her reflective sheets in two lessons:

Name: Barbara

Date: 19.11.19

1. What went well in my lesson (e.g. FMP in language lesson, enough concept checking, variety of tasks, appropriate skills staging...)

- I GOT THROUGH all the exercises I wanted.
- Most of my instructions were clear (not all).
- All students were engaged.
- I did manage to ask concept/information questions with positive responses.

(Barbara, reflective sheet: lesson 3)

Name: Barbara

Date: 21.11.19

1. What went well in my lesson (e.g. FMP in language lesson, enough concept checking, variety of tasks, appropriate skills staging...)

- students enjoyed the ~~in~~ contextual story.
- MFA were included.
- students completed the controlled practice fairly well
- did model + drill.

(Barbara, reflective sheet: lesson 4)

Based on such views, reflection is clearly conceptualised and applied in a routinely manner. In the case of Lily, she looked at writing reflections in terms of a product that she needs to achieve by completing it only and underscored the value and the purposes of doing it. Barbara, however, referred to her practice of written reflection as no more than an activity involving the same thoughts every day. This means that written reflection is treated as no more than a technical tool to put into paper similar thoughts on a daily basis.

Another point was advocated by another trainee who referred to the practice of written reflection as a redundant unclear task by saying that 'why do I have to like put my thoughts into words, why do I have to write them down' (Emma, interview: 73) and 'I think it's a bit redundant. I think I will just remember that, and I'll do that next time' (Emma, interview: 85). Here, Emma did not only describe reflection as a repetitive task, rather, she addressed

that retrospection should only involve mental processing rather than necessarily writing and expressed her confusion concerning the potential of written reflection and the aim behind doing it.

Reflection as an afterthought

Other trainees however explained the act of reflection through writing as an additional reviewing task. David's words illustrated this as:

Doing a reflection sheet is on the list of important things. I think important is down the bottom [...]. You know it's supposed to help you but it's almost an afterthought, oh I haven't done my reflection sheet, I'd better do it' (David, interview: 253-256).

Similarly, in the field notes, I wrote down the following:

Most of the time, trainees write and hand their reflections a day after their actual teaching. Jack, who taught yesterday, handed back his reflective sheet to the trainer today. The trainer didn't say anything (field notes: May 2019).

Later when I asked him in the interview, he said that '... I've done that once, I finished late and was busy with my teaching, so I did it the next day (Jack, interview: 222-223).

In the above statements, reflection is looked at as a task that is not as important as other tasks such as teaching or preparing lessons. David, categorised writing reflections at the bottom of his priorities and his statement denotes reflection as a mere reconsideration of one's thoughts after teaching ends with no need to go further with it. Similarly, Jack's delay in writing his reflections and his trainer not commenting on his delay and others' delays, could reveal insights into the position of reflection in the course and how it is reduced to an extra task to be done when all other tasks are finished.

Furthermore, I put a note on another trainee's reaction to writing down comments:

The trainer gave us some sheets to fill while the trainees concerned with teaching teach. It was Cara's turn. Isaak was a bit late in coming in for the teaching practice, and as a result, the trainer left his sheet with me. When he came in, I handed him the paper and said it's for Cara's teaching. He sighed and told me: 'oh my god, I don't

want to do it. I already have my teaching to think of and other papers to fill. I don't want to do it really'. I asked him why he doesn't like writing reflections. He said 'it just feels like a chore and we're doing it every day' (field notes: November 2019).

Based on the above extract, I managed to build an understanding of trainees' perceptions of written reflection and how they approached it differently rather than not reflecting appropriately as I used to believe (See Section 4.2.1). As stated above, Isaak prioritised his lesson preparation over reflecting, showed little willingness to write his thoughts, and preferred to spend his time completing the other tasks than writing down thoughts. While this is similar to the above incidents, this extract adds a closer look into the day of a preservice teacher managing to do several tasks, including reflection and shows a level of detail into why reflection is positioned as an additional task (See Section 6.2.1). In this sense, Isaak's reaction to writing down reveals his interest which is more focused on accomplishing his top priorities like teaching and how such an interest could be distracted by writing reflections on oneself or on others' teaching (See Section 4.2.1).

Other trainees however indicated that they used the written reflections only for certain purposes. This was the case of Anastasia who used her self-reflections to review areas that needed development by saying that 'in the reflections, when I notice that there are things I should improve on, I really did focus on trying to get those into the lessons' (interview: 209-210), and James who claimed that it served to clarify some aspects of his teaching by arguing that 'I just reflected on points that have been quite persistent throughout the course' (interview: 85-86) and added that 'it made things that I need to work on, or things I've done well, or things I knew I've done well clear' (interview: 190-19).

Lily, another trainee, though she claimed that she used to reflect, and her reflections were honest, she acknowledged that '...I reflected I think I was honest but didn't spend time on it. I didn't put a lot of priority on it. It was something I did quickly' (interview: 379-380). Lily's position was explained in relation to the way written reflection was dealt with and the nature of the course which according to her advocated for such a view. She said the following:

I think it's [reflection] much more valid in a situation like if you teach a course and you teach the same lesson a number of times, your reflection is meant to help you for

the next time you teach that lesson, so if you're doing a grammar lesson or whatever, you look at that reflection and you say that worked well, that didn't go well. Next time I teach that lesson, I'll do it differently and it could be much more specific. I think if I was doing that, I would then go back to my reflections, and also exactly what the tutors wrote, and then tweak my lesson plan or whatever (Lily, interview: 106-112).

Based on her statement, Lily believed that writing down reflections is not prioritised as teaching in the CELTA is not of a continuous nature. In saying so, Lily referred to the course requirement of teaching different lessons each time over a period of a month. In fact, on a CELTA course, trainees are required to complete six hours of observed teaching and the lessons delivered go in accordance with both the syllabus and the content the school sets (See Section 1.3). Such nature made Lily think that reflection would work best if teaching was of a long period and that reflections in this sense would be more purposeful and specific, helping in making changes and improving practice. However, in her case, the written reflection was no more than a task to be completed quickly (See Section 6.2.1).

Reflection as a requirement

Written reflection was also conceptualised as a requirement in the course. This was illustrated in some of the trainees' interview responses. A trainee, Barbara, for instance, suggested that 'for me, it's more of a professional document' (interview: 225), while another one, Isaak said that 'to be honest with you, I did the yellow sheets because we had to' (interview: 112-113) and believed that:

It was a requirement, but a good requirement [...]. I don't know, but it's just another chore, I suppose. I would probably do it, but probably not as well as, not as good as you know, when you're required to do it as a requirement (Isaak, interview: 115-120).

Furthermore, as a trainee, I noticed that reflection was dealt with as no more than a task to be completed by trainees. I remember the introduction of our trainer in regard to filling the reflective sheets for the first time. I wrote in my notes the following:

It's week two of the course. Reflection was introduced by trainer A. A said that it's something that we should do and keep in our portfolios. A also emphasised doing it

immediately and added that the reflective sheet has three parts (what went well, what did not go well, and what to do next). A said again that this paper needs to be completed after teaching and kept with the other documents in our portfolios (field notes: November 2019).

This extract emphasises the commitment trainees should show in filling the reflective sheets and which overweighs their functionality. In addition, this comment, which is noted as part of my data collection, reveals the impression I had as a trainee of the place of reflection and its practice as part of the course structure we all had to go through. In this sense, and in accordance with the above statements, it seems that what appears important is completing the task rather than how you go about doing it or how important this reflection is to the TP.

Overall, trainees' views could provide useful insights into the practice of reflection in a written form. The view of reflection as a repetitive requirement that is not prioritised reveals that trainees consider reflecting in a written form as a mechanical act that is unclear and not very meaningful, and as such, reflection became an end to be reached, with little willingness in doing it and little consideration to its process. This is reflected by Farrell (2019, p. 126-127) who addresses this point:

Many scholars and practitioners over the years seem to have focused solely on the strategies and methods with achieving some fast and neat end product of reflection. This has resulted in turning reflection into a mechanical act that practices what Dewey warned against, reflection as routine action.

Farrell's (2019) view is in line with trainees' claims on reflection and its application as a chore that is practised in a routinised fashion and dealt with as no longer than an additional requirement to be completed. Bager-Charleson (2010) also explains Dewey's routine action as a response to some events without any careful consideration. This is evidenced above where trainees shared their conceptualisation of the routinised character of reflection and how they reacted to filling the forms as an extra task to be done. This is, as Farrell (2019) put it, is related to the focus on the product. This again could be juxtaposed with trainees' statements which show the focus on moving forward with their writings and completing the task as a chore. This then undermined the importance of the process of reflection and

putting a focus on the product, confirming the influence of both Dewey's and Schon's models of reflection in teacher education and making reflection look like a mere mechanism to be neatly followed.

The view of reflection as a chore also made trainees think of writing up their thoughts as a required task. This is claimed by Mann and Walsh (2017, p. 27) to be the case of many educational settings where:

RP [reflective practice] is regarded as an institutional requirement, either as a central element of a teacher education programme or as a means of evaluating professional performance. Put simply, the issue is that RP is predominantly viewed in these cases as an evaluative tool which is used for assessing competence.

The view the authors share is clearly apparent in some of the data extracts above. As explained earlier, trainees filled the reflective sheets as they were required to do, and such a requirement was defined to them by the course trainers from the start. As such, written reflection was regarded as professional obligation that is meant, as Mann and Walsh (2017) explained, for evaluation purposes.

Trainees also described the process of writing their reflections as having a methodical nature.

5.2.2. The Methodical nature of reflection: is it really helping?

Trainees outlined the practice of written reflection in terms of a prescriptive activity whereby their thoughts must be shaped accordingly. However, there were different understandings to whether this structure was helpful or not.

While most trainees believed in the systematic nature of writing down reflections, some found it difficult to cope with, and others enjoyed such structure (See Appendix 6). David's view illustrates the procedural nature of written reflection and how it prevented him from properly thinking by saying that 'it's actually quite hard for me. I actually, I think about what I've done, and then to think structurally I could've done this, I could've done that because I don't usually think that way' (interview: 49-51). He further explained his point by contrasting the linear process of writing with the natural flow of ideas when speaking 'I'd rather talk to trainer C or trainer D or any of the others about the backwards

and forwards than just filling a blank form [...] but me just thinking in that way oh what can I write' (David, interview: 66-70). For David, following a certain format to write restricts thinking and causes him confusion to what exactly needs to be written. For him, writing under guidelines generates a kind of a linear retrospection which is difficult to articulate in writing. Rather, David believed that it is much easier and smoother for the reflection to be done through talking.

Similarly, Lily described the structural nature of reflection as 'it was just kind of, not quite boxed but it did seem like that sometimes' (interview: 56). She added that this created an indifference in her when doing it and prevented her from fully exploring this written aspect. The following is what she said:

You just want to get something on paper. I understand the principle of it, but I think it was a bit of a boxed tick in this case. I mean maybe other people really pour their heart on it, writing amazing stuff, but if you see mine, well, I didn't (Lily, interview: 68-70).

Furthermore, Barbara mentioned the incoherence she felt her thoughts carry whenever she writes. She stated that 'when I write, it's all like mumble jumble in my head that comes out and I cannot go back and correct it and I don't know how to explain it' (interview: 113-114). This trainee's statement highlights the importance of consistency and clarity as key features when it comes to writing down reflections in an orderly manner.

Mohammed, however, pointed to the proficiency needed in generating the right thoughts about one's practice when writing his reflections. He expressed this as follows:

I usually would prefer to bullet point everything, but I struggle to put in the yellow sheet cause I don't really know if I did good or bad. That's the difficult part, I'm not sure if I did it well or I didn't do it well (Mohammed, interview: 120-122).

For Mohammed, the difficulty does not raise from the structure itself, rather, it is the expertise needed to articulate and address his thoughts under such a structure that is challenging and his inability to know exactly if his thoughts are effectively articulated. The view of experience in reflection is further articulated in Section 6.2.3.

The views expressed above highlight the difficulty of processing thoughts in writing under a certain structure. Such difficulty is according to trainees related to the restricting guidelines and the needed expertise to outline their thoughts.

In contrast to such view of reflection being shaped by a certain format of representation, other trainees expressed a different view of such format which they found open and useful. Cara for instance, stated that ‘as far as I was concerned, it was a gap fill reaction for me. But I think the gap fill thing is quite useful personally’ (interview: 140), while Isaak, who pointed to the insightful nature of the reflective sheet similarly said that:

It gave you structure, so for example what went well, and why, you know. I think it gave you a structure to reflect on your lesson, and also what you think didn’t go well and how would in the future do that. I think it was useful in that way (Isaak, interview: 64-66).

Another trainee described the structure of the reflective sheet as an all-encompassing process that is constructive, logical, and prospective:

It made sense that ‘the what went well’ question was at the top because they want you to write something positive first before you start analysing yourself. It seems logical the way they asked those questions in that order, and then the last question I think was asking to evaluate ‘what did you achieve in your aims’ and ‘what would you do next’. They seem the right questions for me to ask, and I was able to produce something for each question (James, interview: 39-43).

James added that such a structure was also helpful in terms of saving his thinking time and giving direction to his thoughts:

...But with these prompt questions like um, what will you do next time, were the aims of your lesson achieved; I think it was helpful to have that, so you didn’t have to spend too much time thinking oh what, what should I write down, um, a lot of thought but how should I lay it out, I thought it gave some structure to the feedback (James, interview: 66-69).

From the above extracts, it seems that the structure underlying the reflective sheets for James was helpful in terms of articulating his thoughts and putting them into a written

record. What helped according to him is the stimulation of reflection through retrospection, evaluation, and prospection and the little time he had to spend to write down.

Overall, reflection is thought to be a method implying a systematic nature that has to be followed. However, the structure followed to outline their ideas seemed for some trainees to be very prescriptive restricting their thinking, while for the others, such a systematic nature was especially helpful in terms of voicing out their thoughts in an organised way. This systematic nature could relate to Dewey's rationalised view of reflective thinking as a structured process moving the individual through several stages until reaching a solution (See Section 2.1.1.1). In the case of written reflection as a methodical practice in this study, Dewey's understanding of reflection is apparent in some ways in the application of reflection through writing. This is evident in following a certain structure that is systematic and paralleled with making sense and ending doubts.

Furthermore, the different views expressed above could imply that there are individual differences and preferences for practising reflection which are not accounted for in the course. In other words, since all trainees are required to fill the same reflective sheet in the same way, this means that their disposition for reflection is regarded as being the same which the statements above contradict. This was the case of both David and Barbara who objected the structure shaping reflection and also the method of writing it. This then could give insights into the unchanging nature of writing throughout the course and its impact on trainees' reflections.

While the previous section was devoted to views on the written aspect of reflection, the following section entails the different conceptualisations trainees held of the practice and value of reflective practice carried through observations of others and oral feedback sessions.

5.3. Perspectives on observations and oral feedback: a socio-interactional view

Most of the trainees described reflections through the observations they carried during the course and the feedback taking place afterwards as a social practice that is rooted in interaction. In this section, trainees' views of reflection as a socially bound activity are first explored, then the interaction reflection entails during the oral feedback is detailed.

5.3.1. The Social practice of reflection: the scaffolds of observation

Most of the trainees referred to the reflections made on both peers' and experienced teachers' observations in terms of a scaffolded social process.

As discussed in Section 1.3, on a CELTA course, trainees are involved daily in watching their peers' teaching in their groups of teaching to reflect on it later in the feedback sessions. The course has also a requirement for trainees to attend six hours of experienced teaching practice either in real classrooms, watching videos of experienced teachers, or a combination of both. In the case of this study, observations of experienced teachers involved both watching videos and attending classes of teaching.

5.3.1.1. Peer reflection

Trainees explained the process of reflection when observing peers as a valuable social activity.

Such a social nature was apparent in some of the trainees' following statements: 'observing my peers has been an excellent way for me to observe what works and what does not' (Isaak: 4th assignment); and 'watching my group peers in class proved to be beneficial to my own teaching' (Mohammed: 4th assignment).

Such statements clearly show how the act of being involved in a group with others and how watching was valuable for trainees in terms of identifying their areas of strengths and weaknesses and creating focus when thinking about their teaching.

Similarly, Cara pointed to the importance of the social dimension of reflection while observing and its implication on widening her own individual perspective. She claimed that:

Everyone is different, everybody notices different things. So, I would imagine that without realising it subliminally, I was probably watching for things that somebody did well that I don't do well because I would've been watching them, like I used to watch your concept check questions, they were so natural, and they went so well and everything else and used to sit and watch and say, oh I wish I could do that. So, I suspect that I might've been watching that so closely that I might've missed

something else. So, I think when you have a group generally, people observing different things and therefore, you'll probably get more information than you would've done (Cara, interview 2: 52-57).

Peer reflection conducted in groups, as Cara stated, helped her generate more information on teaching. While she referred to the reflections she made at an individual level when observing as being more focused on aspects that interested her, she clearly acknowledged the importance of having her peers in the group also observing what is taking place. Such a collective view, according to Cara, allows for a variety at the level of reflection and provides an opportunity to share different perspectives and help each other.

James, however emphasised the analytical process he was involved in when observing his peers and how this has positively impacted his ability to reflect:

It was an insightful experience to be someone observing, making comments although at times, the comments I produced may not have been, sometimes, they were useful, sometimes they weren't. but I suppose that's part of learning how to carefully analyse a class of teaching experience, to observe it and be helpful (interview: 118-121).

Based on the above statements, it is evident that group observations provided a social dimension to reflection which in turn contributed to the development of trainees' thinking. This was exemplified above through the positive implications peer observations and the reflections resulting entailed and the different levels of focus it created at the level of trainees' teaching awareness and practice.

Further, the social process followed to reflect during peer observations proved to be of help and of direct influence on trainees' TP. Mohammed pointed to this by saying 'whenever you're observing a peer, you pick up something they did you think is brilliant so to incorporate in your own course' (interview: 180-181) and continued 'some peers may have brilliant ideas to present the language, or a good idea to use visuals to make meaning clear so you can pick up on that' (interview: 192-193).

Isaak's story however illustrated such help in terms of a modelling process he followed based on one of the reflections he made when observing a peer. He stated that:

In my last lesson, I think Claudia [a trainee] went first, and so, I had prepared my tasks, my guided discovery, but I'd split it into little bits. Then I saw what Claudia did, and thought, oh, now I think splitting it into little bits would take a lot of time, but if I gave them like two exercises, so that's why I went out. I went to re-photocopy some of the tasks I've done, put them in one sheet, instead of dividing them up into bits like that. So, I think like observing others teach, I think you learn a lot out of it because you compare yourself to how the other person is going about the business and what your strengths and weaknesses are, and therefore, in your next lesson, you try to model on yourself on some of the things which others have done (Isaak, interview: 196-203).

In the fourth assignment which is a reflection on the whole course, there was a mention by Anastasia about the way she appropriated her peers' strengths and weaknesses into her own practice:

...I've also been able to see some activities or exercises that they [peers] have done and which I have thought were great ideas and have adapted them and incorporated them into my own lessons. Through their weaknesses, I've also been able to improve upon my own, as in some cases they do the same things as I do and I'm able to watch and see how they affect the students (Anastasia: 4th assignment).

In the fieldnotes, I also noted down comments on reflection when observing others. The following note shows the practical level of the reflections a trainee made on peers and the resultant outcome of it:

Catrina used gestures in today's lesson and claimed that this was based on Emma's effective use of gestures in conveying meaning to students in the previous lesson (field notes: May 2019).

In the above statements, trainees referred to how observing a peer resulted in moving with their reflections from an abstract level, that is thinking, to a more active level, which is trial and practice. This was clearly stated in both Mohammed's and Anastasia's words and exemplified in Isaak's and Catrina's illustrations. Based on this, there appears to be an indirect scaffolding underlying trainees' reflection of their peers. Rather than directly being helped by another individual who is usually an adult, such scaffolding consisted of

analysing peers' practice and appropriating it to one's own use according to its relevance. This then resulted in developing their reflections which became more focused and practical and also their teaching by applying what has been reflected on in the observations into their own teaching. Therefore, reflection became scaffolded, involving socially constructed meanings that are both personalised to their own teaching needs and similar to their group of peers' practices.

Trainees also referred to the process of reflecting on the teaching sessions of experienced teachers. This aspect, which was not clearly apparent to me as an outsider when first collecting the data (See Section 4.1.2), became a relevant theme once engaged in fieldwork as trainee. The following section gives a detailed account of trainees' views on this aspect.

5.3.1.2. Experienced teachers' observations: a critical stance on reflection

In the same way, trainees described the practice of reflection through experienced teachers' observations as a socially bound activity that is semi-scaffolded but critical.

An example is Isaak's claim on the experience of watching experienced teachers and its impact on raising his awareness of classroom realities:

That [observation of experienced teachers] was an eye opener. What we were being asked really to do on the course is really quite different. I mean I was criticised on TTT and things like that, but then this first lesson, I went to observe, this teacher was just about her. She was always talking [...]. What they [trainers] were telling me to do in my lessons is at times I find it to be quite different from reality and what's done there. But I do understand that. I mean they give these things and once you've trained, then you can be yourself in whatever you're doing and whatever suits you. So I get that, but I was really being criticised on TTT, that was my weakness, and yet, watching these teachers, I mean some of them did a lot of talking [...]. We were observing what reality is. I was happy to see that happening because after all, I can be myself. So, I will do this thing. I will do what they require me to do, but then, I will go back to being who I am really in my own little room somewhere (Isaak, interview: 205-220).

Likewise, Cara pointed to the realisation she experienced at the level of classroom practice and its nature in a course like the CELTA when watching and reflecting on experienced teachers. She concluded that:

It [observation of experienced teachers] made me realise that all we were doing was following a formula to pass the exam. I mean, I just watched two lessons. Well, the lessons I watched didn't contain half of the things I was being made to do to pass my CELTA. You could broadly see the formula running through their lesson, but it wasn't in any way nearer to what we did (Cara, interview: 91-95).

In the above statements, Isaak explained how helpful the observation of an experienced teacher was in terms of his future classroom expectations and how flexible classroom practice is compared to the course. By saying so, Isaak pointed to how the reflections he made on such observations were helpful in giving some kind of direction, especially that he was a novice teacher and how such a direction would clearly be reduced once he embarks into the teaching profession. Similarly, Cara reflected on the type of teaching advocated in the course and the teaching she was exposed to in her observations. In Cara's case, such observations made her critically reflect about the course and question the type of teaching she is involved in in her training and how this differs from the real classroom she watched, hence, raising her awareness and understanding of what teaching could entail.

Furthermore, in both examples, it seems that those trainees did not only develop an awareness of how real teaching should be, but also how different it is the teaching of experienced teachers from trainees' teaching. This is evidenced in the criticality and understanding of different aspects of teaching trainees showed when watching experienced teachers with great reference to how such an understanding would be useful for their future teaching careers.

Lily, another trainee, similarly showed her realisation of the nature of teaching when talking about experienced teachers in her fourth assignment and how this could apply to her future job:

I also realise I need less talking and more action, gestures, and elicitation. Students need more time to process the information, and the tutors gave them space to listen and understand. The tasks were very clearly explained and done in small chunks. My

new job will involve teaching at all levels, so I really need to get better at these skills as soon as possible (Lily: 4th assignment).

And Mohammed who stated that ‘observations of experienced EFL teachers really opened my eyes and showed me that different teaching approaches are needed in various levels’ (4th assignment).

Here, Lily’s and Mohammed’s reflections described the teaching they observed and related it to their future teaching careers in the sense that what they watched will be of benefit to their future career as teachers. This implies that, while reflections on this kind of observations are of a critical level, helpful and meant to benefit trainees in both their training and future careers, their usefulness is not very much explored during the course and is understood to be meaningful only for future practice, hence, developing reflections for action that would be useful in future teaching practices.

Taking the view of reflection as a social activity practised via the scaffolds of observation, it could be said that such practice is helpful in general. However, based on the above statements, it seems that the reflections resulting from peer observations are far more useful and practical. This was exemplified by Barbara who wrote ‘when my peers were putting into practice what we had learnt from the morning sessions, it was more evident to me how to implement the techniques from a more personalised approach’ (4th assignment) and Anastasia who stated that ‘it has been equally, if not more useful to observe my peers in their teaching practice’ (4th assignment) and further explained in her interview that ‘it was a lot more useful to watch the other students’ lessons than the experienced teachers because we could kind of learn from their mistakes and analyse their mistakes and see what’s wrong’ (Anastasia, interview: 79-81).

This means that reflections trainees made on others, both on peers and experienced teachers are useful, but explored and valued differently. Peer reflections are more explored by trainees in terms of their direct benefit to their teaching on the course and valued as important practice because of their shared teaching experience. Reflections on experienced teachers are also explored by trainees but used in a critical way to analyse teaching and its nature in real classroom contexts.

This view of social learning as helping in the construction of knowledge is outlined by Lantolf et al. (2021, p. 328) as ‘knowledge is by and large derived from highly contextualised concrete experiences and observations of reality’ and Mann and Walsh (2017, p. 10) who clearly identify the importance of a social learning perspective to reflection as ‘learners collectively and actively construct their own knowledge and understanding by making connections, building mental schemata and concepts through collaborative meaning-making’

This implies the importance and benefit of observing, making sense of experiences, and framing them within one’s learning experiences which was the case of trainees who highlighted differently the merits of observation of peers and experienced teachers and the social reflections these offered.

Furthermore, in terms of social learning theories, scaffolding which is broadly interpreted as the guidance provided by an experienced to a novice (Bliss et al. 1996; Ohta, 2000), and operates as part of the Vygotsky’s ZPD (See Section 2.2.1.1.1) is apparent in this study in different ways through the scaffolded reflections of trainees. In terms of experienced teachers’ observations, this appears in trainees’ statements about the benefit of experienced teachers’ observation sessions in terms of analysing teaching in general. In other words, it was defined in terms of helping them to transition smoothly from pre-service teaching to their future teaching as English language teachers. Though this was helpful in developing some critical reflections and their awareness of teaching, it did not make a lot of difference in terms of trainees’ teaching practices, making the social practice of reflection of a restricted use during the course. This could be related to the differences at the level of teaching being observed and their actual teaching which made them project their critical reflections to their future teaching careers.

In what concerns peer reflection, it was fully scaffolded in the form of peer help that was practically apparent in trainees’ teaching during the course. This is outlined by Gonulal and Loewen (2018, p. 2) as peer scaffolding ‘that can occur not only in asymmetrical dyads, such as the pair expert-novice, but also in symmetrical (i.e., equal-level) dyads, such as a pair of students working on a joint problem-solving task’. Though this is different in terms of the focus and the goals for which the scaffolded reflection operated here, it explains how help could take place between adults of the same level of proficiency which in this study is

illustrated through trainees' peer observations on each other and how their reflections went from mere thoughts on others' teaching to using them in similar contexts.

This social dimension of reflection in peer observation is also in line with Blumer's (1986) interpretation stage where meaning is created then transformed in parallel with the context and the actions to be done. Therefore, scaffolded reflection is useful in this study, whether it is based on peers or experienced teachers' observations, however, it is mostly efficient and explored among peers.

5.3.2. The Power of talk: reflection as interaction

Most of the trainees defined the oral aspect of reflection in terms of social interaction between trainees themselves and trainers and showed a positive attitude towards its practice.

The oral feedback refers to the post-observation discussions that trainees together with their trainers are involved in on a daily basis after each TP. These usually consist of reflections made by trainees and trainers based on teaching. In the field work observation, I noted the following:

The feedback takes the form of discussion and questions. The questions are raised by trainers about trainees' teaching practice, and everyone then participates with comments about their teaching and others' teaching, generally including what went well and what did not go well (fieldnotes, May 2019).

In the feedback sessions, there is some degree of interaction which involves everyone to discuss aspects of teaching. The trainer initiates the feedback by asking the trainee who taught about their teaching, then involves other trainees in the discussion by asking them to give comments. The conversation then continues by trainers giving their feedback (fieldnotes, November 2019).

The above extracts show the approach used to deliver the feedback during fieldwork which is interactional in essence. The oral aspect of reflection was characterised by discussion and interaction between trainees and trainers. Further, the feedback was initiated, probed, and guided by trainers. As an observer and particularly a trainee, myself, I could see a degree of guidance by trainers in leading the discussion and collaboration from everyone

participating in the feedback. This was particularly shown as the extracts entail, in terms of initiating feedback and asking questions that stimulated trainees' reflections about teaching, and dialogue and participation among everyone.

Such a view to the oral aspect of reflection as a guided interaction was also addressed in the interviews. Catrina for instance stated that:

I think they were [oral feedback sessions] really useful. I think they were really good when they were constructive and when the assessor could give you examples of what you might have done, so wasn't just you did this wrong or things like that, but this was your strong area, or you could've done this or haven't done that right. When they say, well this is actually what you could've done, and they give you an example or suggestion as to how you might have approached it. Then, it's really valuable because you've not only had someone said it, you know that's not the way to do it, but then also modelled the way that you could possibly do it. so, I think it can be really useful and it's really useful to have your peers there because they also give a different view than just having an assessor there saying to you this is where I think you fell down or what you did really well, but our peers as well, I mean you've got another audience there (Catrina, interview: 95-105).

In the above extract, Catrina addressed the interactional dimension that the oral aspect of reflection underlies. In doing so, she referred to both the roles played by trainers and peers in helping her build up an imagine of how her teaching went. In talking about trainer-trainee interaction, Catrina alluded to the interactive role of trainers which was basically undertaken through discussions with them. This resulted in Catrina making reflections on her own practice and generating new understandings. As for such discussions, Catrina also pointed to the participation of her peers and the different level they added to the discussion through their different perspectives.

The help provided during the interactions of the oral feedback along with its impact on trainees' teaching was one point I noted in the following comments:

When doing one of the activities in his teaching, David was advised in the feedback by Emma, Catrina, and trainer C to fold papers when giving them to students so that they won't be distracted with what the papers contain. David said he didn't think of

this and that he finds it a good idea (fieldnotes, May 2019).

In today's lesson, David integrated the idea of folding papers when delivering one of his tasks. This technique was proved to be successful as claimed by his trainer later in the feedback. David said 'I never thought this could be useful for students' focus (fieldnotes, May 2019).

The above notes show the power of talk and the impact reflecting in a group had had on David's teaching. Through the discussion David had with his trainer and peers, he developed an understanding of the particularities of teaching and managed to put into practice such an understanding. This was apparent through the suggestions provided during feedback and David's grasp of the meaningfulness of such suggestions and their impact on students' learning. This then gives evidence of the collaborative endeavour David was part of which formed the basis for both his formation and application of meaning.

The view towards the collective dialogues carried after teaching was also outlined in different ways by trainees in the interviews. Emma for instance highlighted how the direction provided by others enabled her to discern what went well and what did not in her own teaching and how discussion provided her reassurance by saying that:

It's like when you're teaching and sometimes you don't really know what you are doing. You don't realise that you've done something wrong, you've done something not that good. So, I think it's important to have more like an outsider. They are like outsiders, so they know what you are doing, they know what you've done, whether you've done it right, whether you've done it wrong (Emma, interview: 98-102).

And Mohammed who believed that reflecting in interactive circles usually raises aspects which he himself did not pay attention to when teaching by claiming that '...they often notice something you never noticed or observed or realised when you're actually teaching or when you're during the teaching process' (interview: 32-34). Similarly, Barbara emphasised the clarity the discussion adds to her meaning-making process. She stated that 'I could see clearly, ok, that makes a lot of sense, something that I couldn't have seen before because I was in the lesson' (interview: 290-291).

James, however pointed to the value of talk when it comes to raising his teaching awareness and in covering aspects which he could not discover due to his nervousness:

There were some things I obviously needed to work on straight away, but there were other things that picked up that you kind of don't realise you've done or not done during your teaching practice because you were so caught in the moment, you might be nervous (James, interview: 181:182).

The above extracts show the interactional nature of reflection and the participative opportunities it raised through discussion. They also seem to address the value of interactional talk and how such interaction was important, helping trainees in refocusing their reflections. In other words, trainees pointed to the different aspects discussion and the interaction underlying it revealed in terms of their teaching and added that such aspects would not have been possible to be targeted individually or while teaching. Rather, awareness and understanding of the different aspects of teaching was mediated by the interactions taking place during the discussions and the participation and help being provided by both trainers and peers. This was the case of Emma who was able to discover and understand her teaching based on the exchange of ideas in the feedback. Mohammed's and Barbara's statements also provided interesting insights on how discussion with trainers and peers assisted them in attending to details which they overlooked on an individual level. James's view on discussion, however showed the impact of being in a group on his emotional state when teaching. This was explained in terms of sharing ideas with others in the group which facilitated his understanding of some aspects which he was not aware of due to his stress.

Based on this, it could be said that there is a socio-interactional process of reflection undertaken through discussion of different aspects of teaching and interaction between trainees and trainers, illustrated through the help of trainers and the participative roles of the other trainees. Lily for instance emphasised the importance of peer discussion in terms of having a similar level and reciprocity by arguing that '... you're getting objective, people, not you, telling you what was good and bad. You're getting an outside view of what your teaching was like from people who are learning to do it themselves' (Lily, interview: 125-127) and added details in terms of her crucial role in such discussions to the teaching of her peers and the impact her suggestions had on their practice:

They (trainers) said they couldn't 've done the course without the feedback that I gave to the other students because they had their heads down writing and I was seeing things, they weren't seeing. They found it really valuable, and I would pick up on things that others were doing because I know, I would want people to do that for me [...]. Mohammed was always covering his face, but he stopped doing it, and things like that. Or like Anastasia would say, you know, they [students] gave the wrong answer, and she says NO. I said you don't say no, don't tell them no, that's wrong (Lily, Interview: 142-149).

Isaak, sharing a similar view to Lily, referred generally to the broader perspective gained from discussions by saying that 'it's coming from other people, other people thinking about your lesson, and how it went. I think it's good to hear other people's views on your lessons' (Isaak, interview: 137-138).

Trainees' claims on the interactional nature of reflection, as involving discussion and participation, goes in line with Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of communities of practice (See Section 2.2.3). Such an interactional practice of reflection, according to trainees, was useful and valuable. This is also related to the recent literature on the value of practising reflection in groups and through discussion which this study shows. Mann and Walsh (2017, p. 13) for instance outline such a view which is similar to the one advocated in this section as follows:

In a professional teacher training or development context, tutors or colleagues may help an individual acquire new understandings by highlighting a particular teaching practice, by drawing attention to a specific phenomenon or by feeding in a piece of terminology or metalanguage to facilitate discussion.

The same is addressed by Farrell (2019, p. 82) who believes in the importance of discussion and states that 'it is likely that teachers will learn from each other because each individual teacher brings a different perspective to the discussion'. Such view goes hand in hand with some of the trainees' statements above (Emma and Barbara) who explained the potential of discussion in terms of putting focus on aspects of their teaching and raising their awareness of specific incidents that they could not realise individually. Additionally, discussions among peers and trainers proved to be of help in terms of compensating for trainees'

distractions felt during teaching, added a level of detail to their reflections, and promoted more clarity to their thoughts.

Furthermore, interaction as a main defining element of the oral feedback, implying the co-construction of knowledge could be related to Blumer's (1986) view of the concept of interaction as involving the social creation of meanings based on people's interactions and reactions to them. This was evident in Catrina's claim about the opportunity the feedback provided in terms of modelling practice and David's example of internalising a teaching technique based on the dialogue he had with trainers and peers.

Therefore, the findings in this section provide details and insights into the practice of reflection as interaction, which was possible and valuable, and mostly explored according to trainees by means of the regular discussions, they had in the oral feedback sessions and the help, collaboration, and assistance these provided. Reflection, as practised through the interactional episodes of the feedback, involved a communicative process whereby trainers assisted in initiating the feedback and stimulating the reflection, while trainees themselves shared their perspectives with the others and undertook participative endeavours in relation to their peers.

Summary

In this chapter, and throughout three main sections, trainees' perspectives on the different aspects of reflection were presented. Section one of the chapter consisted of highlighting how different aspects of reflections are applied differently and framed these within what trainees considered as idiosyncratic written practice and an interactional oral process. Section two and three however provided a more detailed view into trainees' conceptualisations of such applications. While section two of the chapter addressed different perspectives and explorations of the written aspect of reflection and explained these in terms of a methodical chore, section three was devoted to an explanation of findings on the socio-interactional conceptualisation of reflection. This was explored by trainees in terms of a scaffolded social practice and interactional oral process.

6. Further perspectives: factors affecting the practice and understanding of reflection

The previous chapter covered findings related to trainees' conceptualisations of the different aspects of reflection, particularly in terms of their different applications and the various explorations underlying them. In this chapter, findings on the factors trainees identified to be influencing their practice and understanding of the different aspects of reflection are discussed. Such factors being explained at psychological, contextual, and social levels, provide interesting insights into the practice of reflection in teacher education and lay out an understanding of trainees' perceptions outlined in chapter 5.

Findings in this chapter are organised in terms of three sections, each of which is devoted to a discussion of particular elements and together, provide a holistic view into trainees' practice of reflection and how it is impacted by different elements at different levels. Section one outlines the psychological elements that impacted trainees' reflective practice. The section first describes the interrelatedness of emotions and reflection and how the emotions of teaching interfered within trainees' reflective process. This section then particularly sheds light on the role played by emotions on reflection and showcase an example of the impact of negative emotions on reflective practice.

In the second section, the contextual aspects influencing reflection consist of elements related to the context of this study, which is the CELTA course. In this sense, this section explains views on how the context where reflection is practised is potentially important in its practice and understanding. It then covers aspects on trainees' status as novice teachers and its impact on reflection. Another related aspect is trainees' views on the role experience plays in doing the reflection. The contextual factors in this section also involve perspectives on the lack of guidance in reflection and the perceived need for it.

The final section covers the social factors which are more related to the community dynamics trainees are involved in during the course of their training and how this had an impact on their practice of reflection. The focus in this section is therefore attributed to the relationships trainees had with each other and with their trainers and how this has constituted a crucial aspect for them in influencing the product of their reflections.

6.1. Psychological factors: the inseparability of thoughts and emotions

This section presents emotions as a factor affecting trainees' reflections. It first outlines the interrelatedness of reflection and emotions, then identifies the impact these have on trainees' reflections.

6.1.1. Reflection as emotion

Trainees referred to reflection as an emotional process largely influenced by their teacher emotions. Using their terms, they outlined such process as being vulnerable, critical, and painful. In this sense, Cara said 'it[reflection] was how I feel when I came out' (interview: 140) and Catrina exemplified this by arguing that 'I think we are vulnerable, so I tend to see things a bit more sensitively than if I was feeling my normal kind of self' (interview: 307-308). Jack however described the whole process in terms of a difficult emotional confrontation to oneself by saying that:

With the reflections after the lessons, I think one issue for me is when you just finish, I struggled to think about everything and I'm still in the moment, so it can be emotional when writing it, especially if you think when it didn't go well or if it did go well, it's also emotional (Jack, interview: 66-69).

And emphasised that 'one thing about reflection is you have to be real with yourself, and that sometimes can be quite painful' (Jack, interview: 311-312).

Trainees also acknowledged that the emotions they carried as teachers tended to emerge and impact the different aspects of reflection. They mostly related such emotions to the tiredness, exhaustion and pressure felt throughout teaching. In explaining this, Cara, for instance, believed that the teaching preparation was number one for feeling emotional during her training 'I think part of our stress level throughout the course were simply caused by preparation' (Cara, interview 2: 105). Similarly, Lily, when talking about filling the reflective sheets, referred to the emotions she carried from teaching by saying that 'I also think you are just emotionally and physically exhausted after teaching' (interview: 160).

The above extracts clearly show the emotional dimension of reflection and how teacher emotions constituted part of the whole process. According to trainees, such a process

carried feelings of vulnerability and pain and involved confrontation with oneself about the different aspects of teaching. Such elements made the whole process of reflection different to any other typical way of perceiving oneself and raised difficulties in terms of thinking back about one's practice.

Another trainee, Isaak provided a detailed account of how the reflection looked like, focusing on the emotions the experience of reflecting held:

To me my reflections, I was inadequate to do it and in the second week, I nearly gave it up. I was just going to go because I was feeling the more, we advance, I was feeling more and more inadequate [...]. How I could relate to that is like you're having all these clothes on and somebody's just peeling off those clothes bit by bit, and in the end, you feel oh God, I have to go away, I'm naked, I can't do this anymore. It was daunting, it was stressful (interview, Isaak: 310-315).

Isaak's statement evidences the emotions of reflection which he mainly described in terms of insecurity and unassertiveness. In doing so, he explained that he did not feel confident enough while reflecting and that this latter seemed to be discomforting. The descriptions he gave of the process of reflection, as an intimidating process that is exactly the same as being naked, clearly show the emotionality of reflection and the feelings trainee are likely to endure including the negative perception of oneself and the little belief in one's abilities to do the reflection.

The same trainee explained further this process, particularly when undertaken in relation to others and the feelings that resulted from being exposed. The following is part of the interview addressing this point:

Isaak: The feedback [...] did help improving your teaching or where you could sort of remedy things and stuff like that. But I would rather, me personally, maybe, I would rather have one to one with the tutor.

Soumia: We had the chance to have one to one feedback. Trainer A said in one of the feedback sessions, said you can, if you prefer, have one to one feedback session, but we all preferred that group feedback.

I: Yes, but I mean, it's a bit awkward when everybody else is in a group and you are the only one saying, well I would have mine privately. I mean it's, much as A said

that, but deep down, I'm sure what A wanted is for everybody to be in that group.

S: And what would you prefer?

I: Maybe, in terms of percentage, I would prefer, maybe one to one to 40%.

S: why?

I: Because, I don't know. It's quite embarrassing when everybody is shipping in and then, somebody else there, oh well done you have done really well, and then, they come to you, it's like, no you didn't do this well, you didn't do this well, and you're thinking oh. And by the end of the course, I think, getting all those comments, sometimes, you think, I'm probably the worst in this group, you know, then. Because if I was on my own, I would know none of that, it would just be me and the tutor, alright. So it's because much as you like it or not, whether you like it or not, we compare ourselves, yeah. What they said about your lesson, what they said about my lesson the same day, what they said about Cara there or you or me or whoever. And maybe my lesson was not good, your lesson is brilliant, maybe Cara brilliant, and you're thinking oh sugar, this is not good, you know, so yes, there's benefits to it, but also it can affect you negatively (interview: Isaak: 84-108).

The above extract portrays the interrelation between a teacher's self-image and the group reflections. Isaak believed that reflecting as a group is emotionally bound as it is very revealing. Accordingly, he claimed that such a process unmasked his vulnerabilities in front of his peers who may have had better teaching performance and put his own performance in juxtaposition with others. This according to him swamped him in negativity and embarrassment. For this, Isaak preferred a more private space to protect himself and feel more comfortable and less stressed about his reflections.

Other trainees however, clearly pointed to the interplay of emotions and reflection in terms of the interference of the former within the latter. In this respect, Jack acknowledged that the way he articulated his written reflections was affected by feelings of tiredness. In doing so, he explained how such a feeling was transferred to the task of writing down his reflections, reducing them to a mere thinking task to be completed. He said that 'I'm just tired, and the reflection, maybe the quality of the reflection isn't what it could be because I'm just thinking, okay mention that and that' (Jack, interview: 243-245).

In the same way, Isaak, when writing his reflections argued that the emotions he carried when teaching outweighed the act of reflecting by saying that ‘you feel pressured to write something. You’re given a form [and] you’ve just finished teaching and your emotions really are all over the place’ (interview: 44-45).

The relationship between emotions and reflection was also shown through an understanding of one’s emotions and revealing them in writing. Isaak for instance expressed his feelings in one of his reflective sheets and noted that ‘I got through the lesson despite being extremely nervous, how I did it, I don’t know’ (reflective sheet: lesson 5). The same trainee showed an awareness of his emotions and how he believed it impacted many of his teaching sessions. He wrote down the following in his fourth assignment:

My nerves in the lessons have also let me down. There have been times when I have been too nervous to teach properly. This has been very annoying especially when you know you can teach very well when you are calm’ (Isaak: 4th assignment).

Similarly, Barbara reflected on how emotions impacted one of the tasks she had to implement in the course by writing that ‘I wanted to do a role play for FP but was feeling too nervous to do it’ (reflective sheet: lesson 6). Another trainee, Mohammed also acknowledged this nervousness as one weakness and put it as the main reason for rushing the context built of his lesson by arguing that ‘I was a bit nervous, I was in a hurry’ (reflective sheet: lesson 3).

Addressing their emotions in writing, those trainees showed a realisation of how their different emotions had a certain impact on their teaching. Reflection also provided a space to better understand the affective side. Isaak for instance revealed above that his nervousness was one aspect that usually influenced his teaching. Not only this, but Isaak indicated the importance of positive emotions when teaching. Barbara and Mohammed also seemed to understand through reflecting the impact their emotions had on their teaching. Therefore, being aware of one’s emotions and having a record of them appears important especially in terms of how such emotions shaped teaching and accordingly had an impact on it.

Given trainees’ statements, it is evident that reflection and emotions are interrelated. In this sense, reflection is explained in terms of an emotional process triggered mostly by the

affective side of teaching. This has been detailed throughout this section through trainees' claims of the nature of reflection, which is confrontational, exposing, and stressful. Furthermore, some trainees reported the process of reflection in terms of its post teaching emotionality and its impact on their reflections. In doing so, they pointed to the interference of emotional teaching constructs into the process of reflection in the form of both confusion and inability to think properly (See Section 6.1.2). This was the case of both Jack who was uncertain about his thoughts and showed little understanding of reflection and Isaak who felt concerned about writing his reflections.

Taking such a view into consideration implies that emotions constitute part of the reflective process and emerge when such process is undertaken. This in fact resonates with some experiential learning taxonomies (Steinaker and Bell, 1979; and Boud et al. 1985) which describe reflective practice in terms of learning from experiences and put emotions at the heart of it. However, while such studies and many others (See Section 2.2.4) put focus on the importance of being aware of one's emotions, managing them effectively, and moving from being emotionally positioned in the experience of reflection to being intellectually involved in it, this study sheds light on the emotional features underlying reflection. It also adds a level of detail to the affective side of reflection and what trainees endured emotionally when reflecting. The affective side of reflection was then referred to in terms of self-perception, reaction, and understanding.

Trainees' perception of themselves exemplified by Isaak consisted of showing little self-confidence in one's reflections because of the emotions felt. Isaak in this sense did not trust his own reflections and felt he lacked the adequacy in doing it. The reaction which is the other side of the emotional process of reflection was shaped as a kind of protection of oneself and an avoidance of any further feelings that could emerge. This is exemplified in the case of Isaak who related the process of reflection to feelings of embarrassment and intimidation. Understanding of one's emotions was also identified as part of the link between emotions and reflection. This consisted of a little awareness of one's emotions and acknowledging these mainly through writing.

Another aspect shown here is the impact of the context on individual emotions. As indicated above, Isaak linked his own emotions of reflection to the group feedback he was part of. He mentioned that one reason for such feelings was the interactions conducted and

the comments provided as a group. This then implies the importance of the environment in shaping one's emotions and its impact on the product of one's reflections. This relates to McManus (2011, p. 8) claim on emotions as 'embodied and socio-cultural, arising in interactions and interdependence' and Vince's (2006) belief on the social nature of emotions. This then gives insights into the nature of the emotions and how the context of reflection could influence the way such emotions are shaped. In the case of this study, feelings of uncertainty and lack of confidence were further developed as the reflections were shared in the group. This could be related to the focus of the reflection on one's teaching performance with little room for sharing one's emotions and the little direction on managing them. In the following, this point is further explained in terms of the impact of emotions on reflection.

6.1.2. The impact of emotions on reflection: an affective filter

Trainees reported that their teaching emotions had an impact on their reflections. Lily's words explain such an impact by saying that 'you either feel quite elated because you think it went really well and you write down good stuff, or I think most of us were critical' (interview: 74-75). This means that both positive and negative emotions tended to affect reflection. Nevertheless, the critical side of emotions usually outweighs. The same trainee continued to emphasise such a critical aspect arguing that 'we're more critical over ourselves than we need to be. So, I think the reflections were probably fairly critical. Then, when you go into the feedback, what you hear from your peers is often quite positive' (Lily, interview: 77-79).

Lily, here referred to how her emotions resulted in producing critical reflections most of the time and backed up this claim by the positive reflections that she was not aware of that her peers provided during the feedback. This implies that emotions prevented her from having a clear perception of her teaching.

This point is further addressed by another trainee, Cara, who explained how she went about doing her written reflections:

I think we all were very hard on ourselves [...]. I did the classic of going to what went wrong; the second part of it, before I went to the what went well part of it. so, I think I came out of it always thinking I need to think of what I could have done

better, which is actually quite un motivating' (Cara, interview: 27-31).

As the above extract shows, Cara showed an awareness of the role her emotions played in terms of writing her reflections. She indicated that she first considered her weaknesses and always thought of how her practice could be improved. Though Cara acknowledged that such a process of doing the reflection is not very insightful and encouraging, she did it. This implies that her emotions impacted the reflection process and made it an unpleasant experience due to the focus on the negatives.

Cara's words reminded me of a moment during my reflection where my emotions had an apparent impact on both the process and product of reflection. As Cara, when filling my reflection, I started with what did not go well and had a lot of things to say. When it came to the more positive part of the reflection, I was unable to produce comments that reflect my teaching performance. The following is an illustration of my reflection and the extent to which my emotions interfered within the writing up of it:

Name: Soumia Braumaz

Date: 21/11/19

1. What went well in my lesson (e.g. FMP in language lesson, enough concept checking, variety of tasks, appropriate skills staging...)

- Students understood how to use present perfect for experiences.
- Students were engaged at the beginning (when I asked them to ask each other about the places they've visited) + they showed understanding.

This doesn't adequately reflect all you did well, Soumia. You are too focused on the negatives.

2. What didn't go so well and why.

- I didn't elicit very well. I felt that I've given all the structures together without allowing time for students to understand. Really? You got a sentence with the TL (+)? You taught and needed for CP.
- I should have gone through all the past participles in both the controlled and free practice so that students would use the present perfect correctly. One of the groups struggled to form past participles (Frang as well, knew all the language / I didn't know how to pronounce them) - Little time for them to practice the language / I didn't help a lot with pronunciation. This can be done in task feedback.

3. Were my AIMS for the students achieved? (If not, why not)

- Most of the students understood how to form questions using the present perfect. But, knowledge of how to form past participles was lacking and that created a difficulty for them to form questions. (presentation stage wasn't clear particularly in terms of meaning).

- I didn't achieve my personal aim (clear elicitation). I disagree.
- It wasn't student-centred as expected.

4. What I'll do/try next time.

- Keep working on my elicitation. It's quite good already.
- Allowing students more time to practise the language.
- Check students' understanding before CP and FP (both in terms of vocabulary and structures). They were, although I was not in a situation.
- Make instructions clear and simple for the tasks.

Tutor signature: _____

I'm rather surprised by this feedback as it just doesn't reflect the lesson I saw. You must remember that this is an initial teacher-training course - I think your criteria for a good lesson are set a little too high, Soumia. Moreover, you have not created a context with a great context build, good elicitation, →

(Soumia, Reflective sheet: Lesson 4)

The view I had about this lesson along with the comments I noted down in my reflections clearly show the negative emotions I held and their interference within reflection. This was exemplified through the process and product of my reflection. As far as the process of doing the reflection is concerned, I showed a tendency toward reporting what did not work.

Such a process was followed both during the oral feedback and the written reflection. As for the product of reflection, this was shown mainly in my writing which was negative and narrow. As the reflective sheet above entails, I could not make sense or properly think of my teaching. This is shown above in the section of what went well which was nearly empty and the other section where I listed many negatives. The comments of the trainer on my sheet also reveal the blurred vision I had of my teaching. My negative emotions then prevented me from fully reflecting about my teaching and in overlooking any positive aspects.

While the above views revealed the impact of negative emotions on reflection, there were practical cases where the emotional aspect manifested itself during the reflective stages, acted as a filter, and undermined the whole process.

I can't reflect! cases of negative emotions

The impact of the affective dimension on reflection acted as a barrier that hindered the whole process. In my field notes, I wrote the following about one of the trainees' teaching:

Catrina's teaching practice:

Catrina taught today. She was unhappy about her lesson and described it as horrible. Even if the lesson didn't look as she claimed (this is what the trainer said when hearing her saying this), she insisted that the lesson wasn't of a good standard. Catrina expressed the need to leave the room before the start of the feedback and she was about to cry. The trainer advised her to stay as the discussion would be useful to her. Catrina was very nervous, and her nervousness affected the way she viewed her teaching practice. When Catrina was asked about the positive aspects in her lesson, she said she had to think because she cannot see any. She could not address any positive aspects. The others, however, spotted good aspects in her teaching like maintaining confidence while dealing with a technical issue (fieldnotes, May 2019).

Similarly, in another incident, I wrote:

Claudia and Isaak taught today. In the assisted lesson planning session, Claudia made changes to her lesson on advice from the trainer. She expressed a sense of loss and claimed that those unexpected last-minute changes could easily affect her way of

teaching as she was not prepared. James and I reminded her of how brilliant her lessons are and that she has always been well-adapted to change. After finishing her teaching, Isaak was the next one. He didn't seem very comfortable when teaching and ran out of time. In the feedback, when Claudia started talking, she cried. She said she didn't feel that the lesson went the way it should be, and that the majority of students didn't seem to understand her repetitive grammar explanations, and as a result, felt disappointed. Claudia did not add any other comment and expressed her inability to talk. When it was Isaak's turn to speak, he asked the trainer if he could read from his reflective sheet as he wasn't able to think or remember what happened in his lesson. He was sitting next to me and I could see that the section of what didn't go well was full. A few moments after reading, he stopped and said he was tired, then started to cry. Isaak then left the room (field notes: November 2019).

In both incidents, trainees seem to have false perceptions of their teaching. The lessons taught by Catrina, Claudia and Isaak were of a standard level. In addition, they all passed their lessons and received some positive feedback from both their trainers and peers. However, those trainees had a narrowed vision and the reflections they produced were vaguely scant and too focused on the negatives. This was the case of both Catrina who was not able to have a clear understanding of her teaching and Claudia who spotted only the negatives. Furthermore, trainees showed some uncertainty, confusion, and an inability to think. Catrina, for instance, clearly stated that she cannot think and as a result was blind to the good aspects of her teaching. Claudia also remained silent, and Isaak relied on what was written in his reflective sheet. Not only this, but trainees also did not record any positive reflections, felt vulnerable and expressed a need to leave the feedback session.

Based on this, it could be said that trainees' negative emotions obstructed reflection and made the whole process difficult. As shown in the above incident, there was a focus on the negative emotions' trainees held with no mention to any positive emotions. This attitude blocked trainees' reflective practice and led them feeling less confident and protective. This could relate to the little understanding of one's emotions and the lack of control over them. As shown in the above incidents, trainees could not properly manage how they feel or set those feelings aside. There was also an absence of any positive emotions which reveals little emotional flexibility in using such emotions when engaging in reflection. This then

could provide useful insights into the importance of addressing one's emotions, both positive and negative in such a context and using them in ways that benefit teaching. However, this did not appear to happen as trainees' emotions were ignored when reflecting and the only interest was the feedback on teaching. This means that there was not enough space for emotions when reflecting. Furthermore, the inability of trainees to regulate their emotions could also relate to their focus on achievement and the creation of a good teacher profile. As a consequence, emotions appeared in the form of a filter that hindered trainees' process of self-reflection and also sharing such reflections with others in the group.

The role of emotions and its impact on reflection is of relevance to the current discussion on reflective practice. This study is in line with several works that addressed the importance of the affective side in reflection and the impact this could engender (Demetriou and Wilson, 2008; Zemblyas, 2014; Gkonou and Miller, 2020). However, the findings revealed in this section add details into how emotions affect both the process and product of reflection in the context of teacher education courses. Such an impact is shown here through the persistence of negative emotions and the absence of positive emotions. It is also shown throughout this section through the interference of negative emotions into the process of reflection, taking the form of lack of confidence, uncertainty, difficulty in thinking, and criticality. Negative emotions also affected the product of reflection in its written and oral forms. In terms of the written aspect of reflection, there is a tendency to recall negative incidents and weaknesses, giving the reflections inaccurate representations. As for the feedback, the reflection tends to be critical and of a restricted view.

Furthermore, the findings imply trainees' lack of emotional control and little grasp of their emotions. This is found to be related to the little attention given to the emotions felt during reflection and the fact that they are not processed or spoken about. In the data extracts above, trainees' written, and oral reflections did not involve an account of their emotions, except for the little understanding shown in some of trainees' writings (see Section 6.1.1). The content of written reflection, however, is exclusively devoted to trainees' perceptions of teaching and how it went with no reference to their emotions. The feedback is also solely dedicated to a discussion of trainees' performance. The missing aspect of emotions in reflection could then justify trainees' not wanting to share their reflections as a group and adds to the current discussion on the importance of the group in regulating emotions (See

Section 2.2.4). In other words, for reflection to be carried effectively, there needs to be both a space and a kind of help for trainees to talk about their emotions and their understanding of their feelings, then sharing their reflections about their performance. This could then help in better understanding their emotions, both negative and positive and assist in using the positive ones when reflecting.

6.2. Contextual factors: the in-betweenness of novices

This section presents the elements that are related to the context of this study, and which impacted trainees' practice and understanding of reflection.

The section first outlines the role of the context in defining trainees' practice of reflection. It then outlines the status of trainees being novices in doing the reflection in the course and how this affected their understanding of reflection. This is then followed by a related aspect which is experience and its role in reflection. The section ends with trainees' views on the lack of guidance on the practice of reflection and the consequences this generated in terms of reflection.

6.2.1. The power of the context

The environment where trainees are involved in teaching and other responsibilities is one factor affecting their practice of reflection.

Data was collected in two full-time CELTA courses, each lasting for a month. The course usually involves seminars where trainees learn about teaching methods, language skills, grammar, and classroom management. They also have to undertake a six-hour observed TP with two different levels of students. Other responsibilities consist of trainees attending six hours of experienced teachers' practice, regularly filling some reflective forms, and completing one written assignment per week (See Section 1.3). All those requirements made the course have an intensive structure, which in turn affected trainees' reflections.

A trainee, Barbara pointed to the course nature in general which she described as compressed and the impact such nature and its underlying structure had on both her teaching performance and written reflections:

My performance would be different if it wasn't so compressed, and also, the reflections

will be more, I guess clear, because you got like seminar after seminar, and so much going on in your head by the time you have to make a reflection, you'll be like, what will I write now (Barbara, interview: 244-246).

Here, Barbara indicated that the course nature impacted the product of her reflections. She explained this by pointing to the seminars they had to attend and the stress that resulted from being submerged in thinking about the other tasks. This made the course, which was undertaken on a full-time basis, one reason for her reflections being not very clear.

Additionally, she mentioned the confusion and uncertainty caused and which appeared during the writing up of her reflective sheets as a result of the stress felt during the course.

Having been involved in the course myself, and sharing the same role as any other trainee, I also felt the impact of the responsibilities this course brought on the way I reflected. In this sense, I shared similar feelings and concerns as other trainees including the amount of information to be internalised, lesson preparation and teaching. As such, I had little time to think or even focus on reflection. The following extract is an email I sent to my supervisor during the first week of the course. It entails the concerns I had and the impression I formed about the course as a trainee:

Sorry for being late to send this email. The first week of the course was so intensive. As far as data collection is concerned, I'm taking notes everyday (on my phone/or notebook), but I don't think these are enough. For the moment, I'm noting down any incidents or thoughts I think are important to my research. I've also told the other trainees about my research, and they said they would be happy to help. But I'm worried about time. We are all the time busy preparing for our lessons, and I don't think they will have time to be interviewed or even meet me after the course. I thought of starting the interviewing process in the third week so that to have more time. Other alternatives might be: a recorded phone conversation or just email interviews. I will have clear ideas on that as the course progresses. I'm also taking notes on my own reflections.

So my concerns are:

- Lack of time to interview trainees.
- Sometimes, lack of time to review my notes.

- Struggling to create a balance between my role as a researcher and a participant. I'm now more focused on the course/preparing lessons/and teaching effectively than on collecting data (Email: November 2019).

As shown above, I used expressions like 'sorry for being late/first week of the course was intensive/we are all busy/lack of time to review my notes/I'm more focused on the course'. All these statements allude to both the intensive nature of the course and how the commitments I had as a trainee prevailed and outweighed reflection. In my email, I addressed my focus on teaching and preparation and did not mention anything related to reflection or its practice. This implies the little time I devoted to reflection, which was the case of many other trainees, and also shows prioritising the other aspects of the course over reflection (See Section 5.2.1).

Furthermore, I became more aware of what trainees went through, and made sense of the daily routine of trainees in the first phase of data collection. In this sense, I noted the following on trainees' interest which was distracted by other aspects:

Jack and David taught today. While they were teaching, Emma and Catrina were not following with them all the time. While Emma was using her phone and from time to time writing down some notes, Catrina was reading from a textbook and seems to think of something else other than David's teaching. When it was Jack's turn, David seemed to follow what Jack was doing, but he also had some moments of reading from his papers (fieldnotes: May 2019).

The above note exemplifies how trainees' commitment to peer observation was divided. As a result, each of the trainees appears to be busy and they all seem to be involved in other activities other than reflection. Though there was a certain degree of observation and reflection on peers' teaching, trainees were not fully focused on reflection.

In a similar incident, but which concerns reflecting on experienced teachers, Isaak expressed his lack of focus on the reflection due to thinking of his teaching:

Today, we had an observation of an experienced teacher, and we were assigned to watch different classes. Isaak and I were in the same class. A few minutes after starting the lesson, Isaak told me that he couldn't concentrate on observing the

teacher and that he is thinking of his lesson which is going to take place in the afternoon (fieldnotes: November 2019).

James, however addressed such observations in terms of the impact of their structure on his perception of teaching. He claimed that the timing of those observations preceded his lessons, and this made him juxtapose what he observed with his own performance, thus making him feel more nervous when thinking:

There were useful elements of it [observation of experienced teachers] absolutely, but there were also points where I had a lesson afterwards and I was trying not to think too much about my lesson because I might've been a little bit nervous and there were points during the observing of experienced teachers, I thought I could actually do more and be a bit more productive with regard to planning my lesson (James, interview:131-134).

Cara however addressed the direct link between her reflections and the context of the CELTA course. In this sense, she believed that her reflections went hand in hand with the course structure and as such these were mostly made for the purposes of the course. She claimed that '... a lot of my reflections were around things I couldn't change because that was the formula to pass the course, so I needed to do some of those things which I disagreed with to pass the course' (Cara, interview: 237-241).

Another trainee, Lily outlined the importance of the context where reflection is practised in terms of having a quiet space. In this respect, she stated that the course did not provide a proper environment for doing her written reflections, making it difficult for her to organise her thoughts. She said that 'I come out and there are people talking or it was hard to find a place to really sit and think about it' (interview, Lily: 43-44). This in fact raised my awareness that this was the cases of both the courses investigated in this study and reminded me of an incident I observed, exemplifying the lack of a calm space when a trainee was trying to do the reflection:

When Jack finished his teaching, he started filling his reflective sheet. He kept looking at it without writing anything and seemed to struggle to think. Catrina asked Jack about his lesson plan and said she will be using the same technique. Jack stopped writing and started talking to Catrina. Jack was also watching David's

teaching and from time to time writing down notes in his reflective sheet (field notes: May 2019).

The above statements give evidence on the impact the course had on trainees' reflections. Such a context also provides useful insights into the world of teaching where teachers are concerned with several commitments, making reflection difficult to be managed under such circumstances. This then implies the role of the context in doing reflection and the extent to which it works in teacher education and particularly under intensive courses.

6.2.2. Novices reflecting

There was a general claim in trainees' statements about being novices and its impact on both their understanding of reflection and its practice.

This was shown in Cara's words when she stated that she had little understanding and limited knowledge when she started doing peer reflection '...I certainly think that the first couple I did [reflection on peers], I wasn't sure whether I was meant to be checking what they actually were saying, what they actually were doing, were they following the formula' (Cara, interview: 62-65). Isaak, however, believed that the first comments made during the oral feedback were randomly articulated as there was no clear basis or reference to follow when making them. He said that 'when we started to comment on those teaching, we had no clue' (Isaak, interview: 368).

The understanding trainees felt they lacked was also addressed in terms of writing the reflective sheets. Barbara, for instance, declared that she struggled in knowing exactly what to write in her reflections and ended up following the structure of the reflective sheets and writing her thoughts accordingly. She said that 'at first, we didn't know what to look for. It was like, when I started, I was just following the structure they've given me. So, how do I know what I'm doing is wrong or right' (Barbara, interview: 153-155).

Furthermore, my involvement in the CELTA course allowed a closer look into some incidents which I could only understand by participating in the feedback as a trainee (See Section 4.1). These concerned trainees' little grasp and skill in expressing their thoughts both orally and in a written form and how it impacted the process of their reflective

practice. In what follows is a description of what happened in one of the feedback sessions during my fieldwork:

During today's oral feedback session (week two) each of us was providing comments on Claudia and James' teaching. At a certain point in the feedback, trainer A felt dissatisfied with our comments and asked us to give details of the observations we made on our peers. Though a good level of interaction was maintained, and everyone was participating with some feedback, trainer A wasn't happy with the comments we provided and thought that these didn't cover some important aspects that we should have looked for. She gave an example of how Claudia introduced the vocabulary of the lesson, and the concept check questions she asked to do so and felt surprised why we did not pay attention to this. Cara said that reflection is difficult and that she is still learning how to do it. The feedback session went on with the focus being on the teaching practice (field notes: November 2019).

The above extract indicates that the comments produced during the feedback lacked details and was not of the level required. Such comments were also narrow and did not spot all the necessary aspects of teaching. In showing us how to properly reflect, the trainer provided a comment on Claudia's teaching to exemplify how we should be reflecting. None of us paid attention to this detail and other details. As a result, the reflections made were descriptive and of a restricted vision. This could imply the potential of having both the knowledge and the competence in framing one's thoughts which our comments did not fully involve, particularly at the beginning of the course (See Section 6.2.3). Cara's claim of the difficulty of giving useful comments and the learning process that she referred to in doing so could also indicate the understanding needed to do the reflection which at that time was still in progress (See Section 6.2.4).

In a similar incident, showing the limited understanding of what reflection is, how to do it and why doing it, I noted down the following chat with Isaak based on introducing the writing up of reflective sheets for the first time.

Isaak: what are we meant to do exactly?

Soumia: just write your thoughts on your teaching when you finish. There're prompts in the sheet.

I: okay, but I didn't understand it ...what to write exactly. It's the first time we do it.

S: it's just feedback. I think like the oral feedback.

I: ok

The above discussion with Isaak reveals the impact of our status as novice teachers and its impact on our reflections. As shown above, it was the first time for both Isaak and I to fill a reflection sheet on the course and both of us felt perplexed and did not quite understand it. Isaak claimed that he did not understand the purpose of writing his thoughts and added that he had no idea about the content that should be written despite the sheet's guidelines. I also was not able to provide an explanation or help for Isaak and shared the same confusion as him. Though I have read a lot about reflection and its implementation in teacher preparation courses, in practice, I was not able to make sense of it. This resulted in both of us filling the reflective sheets with whatever thoughts we had and with little awareness of its function.

Another trainee, Mohammed addressed the consequences of being novice on reflection and described these in terms of lack of knowledge, clarity, and focus:

When you're an experienced teacher, when you do a reflection, you'll probably be more systematic and probably have a clear I don't know guidelines to do the reflection. Whereas, like new teachers, they wouldn't know the criteria, they're not very clear about the criteria so they probably wouldn't reflect on something really important (Mohammed, interview: 63-67).

Here Mohammed compared the role expertise plays in doing the reflection. He stated that more experienced teachers tend to have some background in doing the reflection compared to novices who usually do not have the necessary knowledge which he referred to in terms of criteria. He added that this leads novices to produce unclear and superficial reflections.

Based on trainees' statements, it seems that being a novice has an impact on the understanding of reflection, its process and product. As shown above, there were claims that the act of reflecting was unclear and difficult at the start of the course. This was exemplified in trainees' not knowing the function of reflection and how they should proceed about doing it in both oral and written ways. Trainees also believed that they did not have the necessary knowledge or skills to do the reflection and as such, their reflections

were narrow, descriptive, and lacked details. In terms of the literature on reflection, Akbari (2007) identifies the need for expertise in written reflection and claims that ‘many teachers use their reflection for justifying what they do since they are incapable of finding what is wrong with their performance’ (p. 199). This is similar to trainees’ claims above who used reflection to record their practice with little details. This could also relate to trainees’ perceptions of written reflection as a routinised, methodical chore and their attitudes towards its value as an unnecessary requirement (See Section 5.2.1).

Within the same view, trainees coupled their statements with claims about the importance of their experience with reflection in the course in learning how to articulate their thoughts. The next section discusses the role of experience in reflection.

6.2.3. Experience in reflection: a way to development

Some trainees claimed that the experience of reflection itself in the course was useful in developing the reflections they produced at both personal and collective levels.

As articulated in the above section, trainees felt that being novices and lacking experience affected their reflections, however, as time went by, they claimed that their reflections developed. This was evident in Isaak’s words who revealed that ‘over time, as the time went by, I think there was an improvement because the first one, I was like nice visuals, nice concept, but why, you had to look into the why’ (interview: 164-165). This suggests that the reflections went from being descriptive to being more analytical as Isaak developed a focus over time on the ‘why’ of reflection, adding to it some details.

Another trainee, James also expressed the development of his written reflections by saying that ‘... in the third week and particularly in the fourth week, I felt I’ve become far more accurate and helpful’ (interview: 123-124) and confirmed that the same happened with the comments he provided to his peers. In saying so, he highlighted the continuous experiential learning process of his reflections:

At first, I think it was a bit too formulaic when making comments until I realised that some lessons can be a bit, although you’re following a plan, a bit more free flowing, so, you don’t need to be as an observer, you need to be saying oh maybe my peer could have said this instead of this. You realise that you’re still learning (James,

interview: 114-117).

What James claimed reveals insights into the understanding he gained of reflection during the course of his training and the flexibility developed when reflecting. This is shown above in the transition from being systematic when first starting to comment to being more flexible and accurate and the whole learning process that framed this transition. This then could imply the role of experience in managing to reflect properly.

Similarly, Cara indicated the usefulness of the reflections produced in the feedback session by the end of the course based on the understanding she and her peers developed as a result of regularly reflecting. She said that ‘I think probably towards the end, it was useful, when we understood what we meant to be doing’ (interview: 53-54) and continued later that group observations helped in developing reflection:

Trainer A would look sometimes a bit surprised that we’ve noticed it and that was actually, made you think oh I’m beginning, you know, I’m observing it so I can see what’s good and can see what’s not so good and everything. So that was quite nice because it meant you were looking, you did know you were looking for the right sort of things (Cara, interview 2: 63-66).

Cara’s words reminded me of one our trainer’s comment in one of the feedback sessions on the noticeable development of our way of reflecting. I noted the following:

Trainer: I’m surprised guys! Your feedback is really developing and there is detail and you noticed very interesting aspects. You said everything. I have nothing to say. Well done!

Cara: I noticed that. We all started making sense and knew what to look for (field notes: November 2019).

What Cara said above gives evidence of the development of trainees’ reflections and how such reflections became purposeful and useful. This became possible according to Cara when everyone developed a sense of understanding when being engaged in the experience of reflection during the course. The comment of the trainer also suggests a developmental process underlying trainees’ reflection, showing that their thoughts became more detailed and accurate.

The development of reflection in terms of its focus, detail, and accuracy could be attributed to the experience of reflecting itself. As trainees reflected regularly on their teaching, their peers' teaching, and experienced teachers, they gained some experience in terms of how to communicate their thoughts and this was in turn reflected in their reflections. The importance of experiences in stimulating reflection is then apparent in this study and goes hand in hand with Dewey's description of experiences as a potential catalyst in building up suggestions and ideas when reflecting. This, which is articulated in terms of 'if a person has had some acquaintance with similar situations, if he has dealt with material of the same sort before, suggestions more or less apt and helpful are likely to arise' (Dewey, 1910, p. 12) relates to the role played by trainees' experiences when reflecting and the development they felt it occurred at the level of their reflections. This also gives insights into the functioning of reflection in teacher education which is mostly based on learning from experiences (See Section 2.1.1.1).

The experience of reflection in this finding could also be interpreted in light of some social learning aspects. Both Chaiklin's (2003) description of the ZPD as involving three characterising elements of development (See Section 2.2.1) and Wenger's (1998) participation (See Section 2.2.3) could be attributed with the findings in this section to explain the route of development of reflection as part of the experience of reflection itself during the course.

6.2.4. Trainees in-between the lack of guidance and the need for guidance

There seems to be an apparent lack of guidance on how to do the written reflection and an interest noted by several trainees on the importance of direction and orientation when writing down their thoughts.

The Lack of guidance in reflection

Lily highlighted the lack of guidance in terms of doing a reflection sheet and related this to the way it was introduced to them with no clear guidelines on how to do it or an explanation of its purpose:

The first two lessons, we didn't have to do it [written reflection]. When it was introduced, it was just like from now on, you have to do a reflection, but never

explained really, why, why are you doing it, why is it important for teachers to reflect, what's the point of it (Lily, interview: 104-106).

Lily's words reminded me of how I overlooked this element when I first collected my data. As I did not observe the seminars, I was not able to pay attention to how reflection was dealt with and whether this was of an importance to trainees or not. However, having an insider perspective along with the above statement and many others made me think of the way reflection was introduced to us as a requirement to be done with little reference to the process and purpose of doing it (See Section 5.2.1). This also helped in better understanding trainees' views in this regard.

Another trainee, Cara also addressed this issue, believing that the practice of reflection entailed expectations from trainers for trainees to do their reflections effectively without prior explanations or help, which she thought are necessary:

I just think there was a degree of expectation that we knew what we were meant to be doing, and I sometimes feel that if you want someone to do a good job of something, it helps if you tell them what might be useful (Cara, interview: 56-58).

Along similar lines, Jack pointed to the missing direction in writing his reflective sheets, and as such preferred to have the oral feedback first, then writing down his thoughts. He stated that:

In the first two weeks, I think it's important, maybe more important to have the feedback sessions first, then the reflection, so you kind of know what you're supposed, not what you're supposed to be writing, but an idea of how to do it (Jack, interview: 89-91).

Jack here did not seem to have a clear idea about the process of putting his thoughts into paper and this led him to think of having the feedback session before writing to guide him in reflecting. This could relate to the practice of written reflection in an individualised way, resulting in a difficulty to process one's thoughts (See Section of 5.1). This also alludes to the benefit of sharing comments with others as shown in Section 5.3.2 which is according to Jack here is helpful in terms of articulating his reflections.

The Need for guidance in reflection

Furthermore, trainees expressed a need to have some knowledge in relation to doing the written reflection. Lily, for instance shared her confusion of not devoting a seminar to reflection and outlined the importance of having a clear orientation. She also pointed to the descriptive nature of introducing the reflective sheets which was not very helpful. She said that:

We had a lot of seminars and some of them were probably more important than others. So how to do a reflection as it was a requirement in the course, it might've been a good idea to at least give us some guidance because they didn't really tell us anything except there is a sheet and write a reflection, what went well, what didn't, what would you do differently next time' (Lily, interview: 98-101).

Writing a reflection according to Lily should be given importance since its completion is a required task. Such an importance could be exemplified in terms of a seminar where the practice of reflection in a written form could be explained deeply rather than superficially to trainees. This then could provide basis for understanding some of trainees' views on the written aspect of reflection and its nature which was underexplored in some respects (See Section 5.2).

Similarly, Cara acknowledged the importance of having an introductory briefing on how to do the reflection and what content should go in it. She said the following:

A briefing, not very long, maybe fifteen minutes, just to run through the sheet, and you know, not to tell you what you should be saying, because the whole thing is a reflection, but just tell you what sort of things might help you to reflect on because it was a bit broad really (Cara, interview: 47-49).

Isaak, however believed that there should be some instruction on both the process of writing one's reflections and also on the way peer feedback is done, particularly at the beginning of the course:

I think probably in the first week, they should have showed us things bit by bit, to say look, you're required to do this. Maybe, you have thirty minutes on that, twenty to thirty minutes on how to write on the yellow sheets. I think we should have been

introduced to that, on how to go about writing, the sheets and even the comments we make on other people. I think they should have told that well in advance (Isaak, interview: 182-187).

While most of the trainees acknowledged the importance of guidance, a trainee, Cara believed that there should be a developmental process underlying any help given so that to reflect the progress or change in terms of trainees' thinking. She illustrated this through the reflective sheets which according to her need to go in parallel with both the development of her thinking and the change in focus each time she teaches. The following is what she proposed:

What would've made far more sense would've been for the guidance to change as the course went on. So, the first one would've been for me very general, but as we started honing on things we particularly needed to work on or focus, it would've made a lot more sense to have some targeted questions [...] that would've directed me probably to reflect in far more detail on the bits I needed to focus on' (Cara, interview 2: 168-173).

And added that a level of detail in terms the content of the written reflection would redefine the product of her reflections, making them more inclusive:

There were particular things we were struggling with. So, if they knew we were struggling with CCQs, there would be specific questions about it. Did Cara remember to CCQ or ICQ or whatever. But that wasn't, although I would maybe have commented on that in my yellow sheet [...] so that would've made more sense (Cara, interview 2: 13-19).

Anastasia, in the same way highlighted the importance of providing details in promoting clarity in the written reflection. She explained this by stressing the role of having clear examples that would help her position her reflections in the right way:

We could've had a bit more detail and for example, what went well in your lesson, that question, they maybe could've set some examples, because, for example, you could've put something like good context build, you could put they're engaged, but for example, something like they were engaged in the lesson, is that a good point or

is it not that essential. So, maybe, they could've just given us maybe an outline of the different types of things that we could put in each category (Anastasia, interview: 121-126).

It is evident that there was a lack of guidance in terms of doing the written reflection. In this sense, trainees explained their little understanding of what reflection is, its purposefulness, and the process of doing it as mentioned earlier. This is according to them due to the lack of necessary explanations in relation to doing the reflection. On this view, Farrell (2018, p. 12) believes that though reflective practice is popular in teacher education programmes, the latter do not provide definitions of it and 'teacher candidates and/or in-service teachers may or may not be given guidelines about how to reflect and what to reflect on but they are rarely given definitions or full explanations of what reflection or reflective practice is'. Such view is indeed articulated above in statements where trainees revealed the absence of an account on reflection and its practice.

It is also apparent that a certain kind of guidance is needed, particularly at the start of doing the reflection and that such guidance needs to be of a developmental nature. Such a view suggests that trainees as novice teachers require some direction when reflecting. This is in line with Dewey's (1933) notion of training thoughts as a useful way for the integration of reflection as a tool in education. In this respect, Dewey claimed that 'while we cannot learn or be taught to think, we do have to learn how to think well, especially how to acquire the general habit of reflecting' (1933, p. 35).

Given the importance of learning how to reflect in the context of this study, all trainees highlighted their preference for a kind of mediation, involving both human and symbolic mediators (Kozulin, 2003). In other words, trainees referred to the interactions needed between human help which is trainers, and symbolic help, which is writing. As explained by trainees, this means that for them to understand reflection at its written level and go about doing it properly, they first needed some kind of help which matches their level from their trainers. This, however, did not happen as there was no guidance in terms of writing reflections. This is in parallel with Kozulin's (2003, p. 24) statement that 'symbols may remain useless unless their meaning as cognitive tools is properly mediated'. As such, mediation is important as shown above, however, writing ones' reflections was not clear as it was not fully mediated by trainers.

In the next section, the factors influencing the practice of reflection from a broader social perspective are discussed.

6.3. Social factors: group dynamics

This section outlines the elements that are rooted in the social practice of reflection, and which played a role in influencing trainees' reflections. Such elements consist of the group dynamics trainees were part of in the CELTA course, involving the relationships they had with both their peers and their trainers.

Therefore, this section first presents an account of the relationship trainees formed as part of their course and its impact on their reflections. The section then covers aspects of trainee-trainer relationship and the influence it played on trainees' process and product of reflection.

6.3.1. Symmetrical peer bond: between camaraderie and emotional empathy

There seems to be a community of peers involving active engagement and emotional understanding in reflection, all of which affect the practice of reflection.

A Network of peers: the power of camaraderie in reflection

Many of trainees' claims underlined the presence of a network of peers where there were interactions among themselves, impacting their reflections.

As explained in Section 5.3.2, trainees showed their interest in the interactions of the oral feedback in general. Here, however, trainees highlighted the particular significance of peers' help and how it influenced their reflections.

David and Catrina for instance referred to the community that their group of trainees built and revealed that such a community extended to moments outside of their classroom context. The former stated that '...we also talk quite a bit afterwards amongst ourselves, the students. It's a nice group and we've been occasionally for a drink' (David, interview: 161-162) and continued 'we talk about the course, what we liked what we didn't like, what we did wrong, what's coming up. We've actually talked quite a lot between ourselves' (David, interview: 164-166). Similarly, the latter claimed that 'once the session is finished, we went

to the canteen and we would talk to each other, you did that really well and we would say certain things we might not have said inside the classroom' (Catrina, interview: 129-131).

What David and Catrina said about the community of peers underlies the shared interest they had as trainees and the space they needed to create apart from their trainers to discuss and reflect on different aspects of importance to them. Such a community then provided an opportunity to widen the scope of their reflections.

Furthermore, the community of trainees which was originally developed as part of the course had an impact on trainees' reflections. This was explained by Lily who showed her enthusiasm of being part of a group of peers and defined its impact on creating focus in terms of her reflections by saying that 'they [peers] were very encouraging and yet stirring me towards the rights things, the things I needed to do, and they were picking up things that I had really missed. So that was really useful' (Lily, interview: 153-154).

Mohammed, however highlighted the support of his peers and its impact on promoting a sense of understanding. He said that:

I think [the group of peers] is a kind of support. In a way, you know they are helping you to improve. Definitely a way to show you they care. They care about you and they care about your lesson. I think in that sense, it is nice to have groups. And also, they would point out details and mistakes you probably never noticed (interview, Mohammed: 146-149).

In talking about their relationship to each other, other trainees pointed to the general characteristics of the practice they were involved in and its impact on both reflection and teaching. In this sense, Barbara referred to the safe community where collaboration was a defining aspect. She wrote in her reflections 'the reciprocal team effort to try and better ourselves could have created an animalistic and competitive environment. But the team ended up being incredibly supportive, honest and realistic' (4th assignment). In the same way, Isaak wrote in his reflections about the importance of peer help in moving forward by saying that 'the atmosphere of friendly competition meant that we all helped each other deliver better lessons' (4th assignment).

The above statements imply the support, help, and collaboration characterising trainees' relationship with each other. The nature of their groups involving only peers of the same level, practice, and expectations was important to the way their thoughts and feedback were shared and processed. In this sense, most of the trainees appreciated their peers' help and felt more capable of sharing their views with their peers.

In addition to the mutual engagement of trainees and the power of the bond they created, there was also a mention of the conceptualisation trainees formed of the theoretical aspects of teaching through reflections on peers' teaching. In explaining this, James believed that having peers helped him concretise the experience of teaching by saying that 'they might have done something really good that you can learn from them or something you might learn not to do' (interview: 79-80).

Similarly, I noted down incidents where trainees created concrete understandings of some teaching concepts when reflecting on their peers:

Emma, commenting on David in the oral feedback, said that she liked the context build and that she realised through David's teaching the importance of engaging the students since the start of the lesson to maintain some degree of interaction throughout the lesson. She also said that having an example of leading a context build would help her contextualise her own, building on David's teaching (field note, May 2019).

And

Cara expressed the usefulness of having a practical example of the test teach test approach when she watched James. She said she will apply it tomorrow and that having James doing it before her helped her in having a concrete understanding of how the method is implemented in practice and how its different stages are related to each other (field notes, November 2019).

In the above notes, a clear understanding of teaching concepts and methods is evidenced. Trainees expressed a kind of meaning construction where they made sense of their peers' teaching and actively contextualised such an experience. This then implies that the presence of peers in a group helped the others in developing their reflections from being theoretically

driven to substantiating them. This is similar to what happened when observing peers and reflecting on them (See Section 5.3.1.1). However, instead of being just mediators of reflection, peers in this case constituted an important network that impacted trainees' reflections positively. This network of peers is referred to in Lave and Wenger's (1991) terms as a community of practice and is in line with their descriptions of the concept (See Section 2.2.3).

As shown throughout this section, the community of trainees provided a space to interact, exchange ideas, collaborate, and construct meanings. This was possible as trainees shared common concerns and interests. The impact this had on reflection was exemplified in sharing one's thoughts to help the others and in developing further understandings of one's perceptions of teaching. This could be related to Lave and Wenger's (1991) communities of practice and Wenger's (1998) identifying components of communities of practice (See Section 2.2.3). Juxtaposing the concept of communities of practice to peers' network reveals insights into the process of reflection as being more empowered among peers as these shared the same knowledge and understanding of teaching in the course and they all worked to achieve the same end.

Furthermore, the impact of this network on reflection was apparent through the sense making process which involved trainees in sharing thoughts with their peers and using the thoughts developed on their peers' practice to help concretise teaching. This is in fact closely related to Wenger's (1998) concept of the negotiation of meaning as process of developing meaning based on participation and reification (See Section 2.2.3). In this sense, reflection in a group of peers became a negotiated process, resulting in an engagement among peers and actual and future projections of teaching concepts.

A Network of peers: emotional empathy in reflection

The network of trainees was marked by an understanding of their peers' emotions, and this was translated into their reflections.

Based on trainees' statements, such an understanding particularly stems from the shared feelings they had (See Section 6.1.1) and was clearly apparent in the oral feedback they provided to each other. When asked about this emotional empathy in reflection, some trainees claimed that they could exactly feel how their peers were feeling and as such

preferred to give guarded reflections. Some examples of trainees' statements in this regard included 'I prefer to give positive comments' (David, interview: 139); 'I was being very sensitive to the feelings of our peers, so I withhold some of what I've written down actually' (James, interview: 176-177); 'sometimes, giving comments in the group, you don't want to embarrass others' (Mohammed, interview: 256-257); 'I could really feel the people going through the hard parts and I think it was in between the second and third week [...] I think we were all pushing each other through slightly' (Barbara, interview: 303-305). Another trainee, Cara also explained this emotional understanding and how it impacted the reflections she and her peers made:

We could all see on particular days when people were at a breaking point, and therefore, I think a lot of us probably couched our feedback in nice terms when we actually, we maybe saw something that we thought was not so positive, but we were feeling for that person because we knew how we were feeling, and it's very hard when you're sitting there, listening to what your colleagues are saying (Cara, interview: 77-81).

Such statements clearly reveal the impact of trainees' relationship on the reflections they produced on their peers. Such a relationship which is according to the above claims was defined in terms of shared experiences and feelings generated a general grasp towards peers' emotional state. This understanding was transferred into the reflections trainees made and took the form of positive feedback. The reflections were also partial and did not fully account for all the aspects including any critical elements or things that did not go as planned during teaching.

In addressing their network with their peers, trainees also contrasted it with the relationship they had with their trainers. In this respect, they explained that one of the reasons for giving less objective and honest comments than expected to their peers was the role trainers played in giving feedback which was more objective and less emotional. Cara for instance believed that:

It's quite hard to really be truthful to your colleagues when you know how your colleagues are feeling. Whereas, I think the assessors, for [trainers] A and B, that's their job, and it's their job to be brutal, if necessary' (interview: 83-85).

Cara added that her reflections accounted for the emotions of her peers and were produced accordingly, unlike trainers' comments which showed little consideration to the emotional side of reflection and its impact on them:

The tutors were not completely invested in it [feedback]. I'm not saying they weren't invested in it, but they weren't emotionally invested, they were detached from it. Whereas as a group, when the time went on and we got more stressed and more tired, we were invested in each other and in each other's wellbeing, and therefore, it's a human nature when somebody's already on the floor not to kick them anymore (Cara, interview 2: 37-41).

Emotional comprehensiveness was one aspect of trainees' network and consisted of a careful attention to peers' emotions as a result of sharing the same feelings and going through the same teaching experience. Such an understanding was evident in the comments trainees provided to each other and had an impact on the way those comments were formulated. Therefore, the feedback was mostly positive and encouraging, but also narrow, not fully honest and lacking enough scrutiny. In addition, such an empathetic view in approaching peers' feedback and which is rooted in trainees' relationships with each other revealed some insights into the feedback trainers gave. According to trainees, trainers' feedback was critical and detached from any emotional understanding, thus, trainees' emotions were not accounted for as part of the oral feedback. This trainee-trainer relationship is further explained in the next section.

6.3.2. Asymmetrical trainee-trainer correspondence: between hierarchies of power and expertise

The relationship trainee-trainer was marked according to trainees by aspects of power and expertise. The aspect of power consisted of the view of trainers being in control of the different aspects of reflection, while expertise involved trainers being the experts charged of giving more valid and accurate reflections. Such views affected both trainees' process and product of reflection.

In the two CELTA course investigated in this study, there were two trainers in each course responsible for delivering the seminars, helping trainees in planning lessons, assessing the TP, and delivering the feedback.

Hierarchies of power: mentoring in disguise

Based on trainees' statements, it was claimed that their trainers exerted a certain influence in relation to the way they reflected, both orally and in a written form. Isaak for instance pointed to this influence in terms of the feedback he received from his trainers and how it made him reconsider the aspects they targeted in previous lessons though he was not fully convinced. Isaak exemplified this by recalling a moment in the feedback where he thought he made progress, but he could not say this in front of the trainer. He stated that 'I thought I had made so many straights in cutting down my TTT. But in the end, I just thought I'll just try [and] no I didn't say that to trainer A' (interview: 309-310). He continued later that this was because:

...You're thinking about what trainer A said in the first lesson and automatically, when you're reflecting, you're thinking probably consciously or unconsciously oh my TTT was high because probably in the previous briefing, A really said something not bad but stressed on the fact that was your weak point. So, when you go into the second reflection in the second lesson, really what the tutor said about in the previous briefing, there's a lot of bearing on how you reflect on that [...]. What they [trainers] say about your previous lesson, you think this is what A thinks about me and in a way, you could say, I don't call it indoctrination, but they make you believe that's what you are (Isaak, interview 2: 2-15).

He continued:

The way A says about things, that, you go back, and you probably think, yeah, probably, you know, I am. And in the next lesson, they observe you and you're very conscious of that and you probably think, oh, I'm not really doing much about that. So, in your reflections, you go back and say, yeah, my TTT still needs working. You see what I mean, my TTT still need working and blab la blab and things like that (Isaak, interview 2: 19-24).

In the above statements, Isaak referred to how he reflected based on his trainers' feedback of previous lessons. He mentioned that he believed he worked on some areas that need improvement including his teacher talk time and reduced it. However, his trainers had another different view and addressed the need for Isaak to reduce his talk time. This made

Isaak believe that the reality is what trainers see and reflected accordingly. As a trainee participating in the feedback, I remember trainees in my group including me, sharing our views on Isaak's talk time, agreed that he worked well on it and we can all see how much talk he reduced. The trainer, however insisted that there is still much talking and advised Isaak to seriously consider this aspect. The reflections in this sense, mirrored trainer's thoughts and did not really account for Isaak's personal stance on his teaching and also undermined our thoughts as opposing to their view. This then implies the dominance of trainers as assessors in the feedback and the discomfort felt to voice one's thoughts.

Along similar lines, Catrina explained the impact tutors had on her reflections in terms of their role as assessors continuously observing and assessing her practice, which in a way led her to being silenced when it comes to reflecting. The following is what she said:

The person who's marking you and assessing you and you watch them watching you and how you're doing it and the looks they give you or the way they say things to you [...] you feel like you don't have to say something, and it does definitely silence you (Catrina, interview: 138-141).

Anastasia also acknowledged that trainers' status as assessors influenced the way she perceived her teaching. However, she found this influence useful in reflection as it helped her refocus her thoughts on particular aspects by saying that 'when they (trainers) said oh you're not for example doing enough CCQs, then every single lesson after that, I'll be focusing on those specific points, they made me focus on specific things' (interview: 178-180).

The view of trainers' power extended to the written reflections trainees had to complete as part of the course. In explaining this, one trainee, Barbara said that 'I think being aware of what they really think about me really affects the way I write the reflections' (interview: 257-258).

Similarly, Jack revealed that he once wrote his reflections after the oral feedback and as such, copied some of the points addressed by his trainers when writing his reflective sheet:

I think [trainers' feedback] does affect reflection because you're almost writing the ideas of the trainer. [...]. So, I had the feedback, I did change some points and my

reflections did address some of the points that were made (Jack, interview: 221-225).

The fact that Jack copied some of his trainer's comments evidences the conceptualisation of the existence of some power hierarchies and its impact on his reflection. The trainer's comments, as an assessor being in control of marking, outweighed Jack's comments and this led him to change some of his thoughts.

Furthermore, the hierarchies of power were manifested in the lack of challenge trainees felt when reflecting. Cara illustrated this by saying that 'there was generally an atmosphere of not being able to challenge on that whole course' (interview 2: 241) and explained this by pointing to situations where a disagreement of views between trainers and trainees happens. She stated that:

I think we all had a situation where we took our lesson plans in, and we were told to change something, told quite strongly to change something and if we disagreed, then you, you were basically in between a rock and a hard place because if you disagreed, and you didn't do it, you got criticised in the lesson because you haven't changed it. But if you did change it and then you didn't do very well because you've got muddled, you still got criticised (Cara, interview 2: 243-248)

Cara then provided an example of where she made changes based on her trainer's comments and how she felt a kind of authority imposed on her when she projected this in her written reflections:

I did write it down on my yellow reflection and that was one of the few times my yellow reflection got marked and it said you did not have to take any notice of this cause they didn't like the fact that I raised that in my feedback sheet. So that was my reflection, and my reflection was I felt that the lesson didn't go well as it could've been because I made last minute changes on advice. I didn't name the person, I just said on advice, I made last minute changes, I feel that this then affected my ability because I didn't have time to get everything ready properly. I spent an hour the night before preparing a particular exercise which I was told was too complicated. I was told to do something else. As a result, I had no time to prepare for anything. And when I put that in, you know, this bit of the lesson, I put it under what didn't go well, this bit didn't go well, I was advised to change to a different exercise. It was not

taken well at all that I had put that in my reflection. I was basically told that I shouldn't put in my reflection sheet and I was basically warned not to I suppose to put that in any more reflection sheets. So therefore, again, the reflection didn't become a true representation of how I was feeling (Cara, interview: 256-269).

Cara's example of not being able to reflect properly and articulate some challenging reflections clearly reveal an imbalance in terms of the power held by trainees and trainers. As shown above, when reflecting on lesson preparation, trainees are expected to work with trainers' instructions, and in some cases, trainees' are asked to make some changes to their lesson plans. In Cara's example, she made changes based on her trainer's feedback, and when including this as part of her reflection, she was told not to do it again. Cara felt that this was important to be written, however, some boundaries were put on the thoughts being included in the reflection. This again implies the authority trainers hold as assessors and their position as mentors. Unlike trainers, trainees lack the authority that trainers possess as their status of a novice teachers requires following instructions and decisions made by trainers. This was the case of Cara who followed her trainers' suggestions in planning her lesson instead of her own. This in turn had an impact on the reflections she made. As Cara acknowledged that the suggestions of her trainer had an impact on her lesson, she was silenced and restrained from sharing any similar thoughts which she believed were important reflections and as such, making both the process and product of reflection not very critical.

The lack of challenge to voice their thoughts was also expressed in the introduction of the fourth assignment which is a reflection on the whole course. I noted down the following:

Paragraph 1: experience on the CELTA course.

Paragraph 2: strengths and weaknesses.

Paragraph 3: how you intend to develop your skills (use the paper trainer gave- you don't have to explain why).

Paragraph 4: what you have learned from observations (reference to observation of peers and experienced teachers).

Note: don't mention names of teachers and peers and don't criticise them (fieldnotes: November 2019).

The above note shows the boundaries trainers put on the writing up of the fourth assignment. While this assignment is supposed to be a reflection on the course and include personal differences at the level of the learning experiences of each trainee, trainers created restrictions in terms of writing about others' practice including peers and experienced teachers. This made the writing of this assignment seem superficial and not very critical.

Later in their interview responses, many trainees emphasised the discomfort they felt in writing their fourth assignment and claimed that this had an impact on the representation of their thoughts which were mostly not real and very narrow. Barbara said that 'it's not a real reflection for me. A real reflection is being able to criticise someone [...] a real reflection is very personal. They are both [trainers] going to read it also closed the door for me' (interview: 225-227). Another trainee argued that 'we should be able to criticise them more, like, I felt I couldn't really say this teacher didn't ask any questions at all, and she's an experienced teacher' (Anastasia, interview: 89-91).

The hierarchies of power consisted of trainees' view of their trainers as holding more power and authority over the different aspects of reflection. This was mainly due to the roles each of them had. On the one hand, trainers as assessors had an impact on trainees' process of reflection which was restricted, framed in certain ways, and lacked enough challenge and criticality. As for the reflections made, they were not fully representative of the reality trainees perceived and as such became inauthentic. From the other hand, trainees' perception of themselves as less empowered individuals also had an impact on their reflections being not overtly shared and easily agreeing to trainers' thoughts and suggestions. This is in line with notions like mentoring and supervision (See Section 2.2.1.1.2). The role of trainers as mentors, helping in developing trainees' skills, among which is reflection, through discussion and participation, is mostly apparent as discussed in Section (See Section 5.3.2). Nevertheless, this role can be diminished in supervision terms, involving a focus on assessing and developing trainees' teaching with some consideration to trainees' development of reflective skills. This, as explained above, impacted trainees' oral and written reflections, making them less critical.

This view towards the relationship trainee-trainer as implying power imbalance is then related mostly to the roles of trainers and trainees and how these are perceived and performed. In this sense, while trainers are held responsible for assessing trainees'

performance, they exert this power accordingly including reflection. This is similar to what Copland (2010) refers to as tensions in feedback which are raised as a result of assessment roles and participative structures each one should perform. Such tensions also include trainers' focus on effective teaching, leading trainees to work with trainers' views without necessarily being convinced (Copland, 2011). This again relates to some findings in this section including the lack of challenge felt during the feedback. However, the findings here add insights into not only hierarchies or tensions experienced during the oral feedback, but also the imbalances experienced during the writing up of reflection including being silenced and restrained from truthfully expressing one's thoughts. Additionally, the findings provide details on trainees' views on this, how they felt when reflecting, and the impact such imbalances and hierarchies of trainee-trainer roles and the power held on the reflections they produced.

The next section discusses another related aspect of trainee-trainer relationship.

The Novice vs. expert divide

The impact of the relationship of trainees with their trainers on reflection was also revealed in terms of the novice vs. expert divide.

Some of trainees' statements expressed the view that their trainers were more experienced and that such an expertise affected their reflections. In addressing trainers' expertise, one trainee believed that one of her trainers was a real expert, always dominating the feedback and that this made her feel uncomfortable sharing her reflections. In this regard, she said 'I think trainer C is more dominant. C is obviously an expert [...] and it feels like, if you want to say something in front of an expert, this really makes you feel stressed' (Emma, interview: 141-143).

James however indicated that the experience his trainers possess, and their long training in preparing teachers provided him with certainty and confidence in the reflections they provided and, as such agreed to most of it:

They [trainers] are the most experienced person and they have been doing this kind of thing for a quite long time. I'm having to trust this person and what they are saying, and I can see the sense in what they're saying pretty much all of the time

(James, interview:162-164).

Similarly, Isaak highlighted trainers' expertise in reflection and how it essentially led him to prioritise trainers' feedback over his own or peers' reflections by saying that 'I'm bound to listen more to what they're saying than probably from trainees or from myself because they are the ones who are specialists. They are the tutors' (interview: 348-349) and continued 'people like trainer A and B, they had massive experience training people. The number of people who have gone through that place, I can only think that their training improves every year [...], they got a lot of experience' (interview: 361-363).

Therefore, it is clear that the view of trainers being more experienced impacted trainees' reflections. The idea of having more expertise, particularly in delivering feedback resulted in trainees trusting their trainers' views instead of their own, working closely with them and framing their reflections accordingly. This could also relate to findings in Section 6.2.2 about trainees as novices in doing reflection and the confusions they faced in understanding both the process and aims of reflection. Trainees' status as novices compared to their trainers led trainees to both trust and rely on trainers' feedback given their expertise in reflecting and delivering feedback. This then reinforces the idea of the need for expertise in reflection, which was lacking in the trainees' case in this study, and which impacted on their reflections (See Section 6.2.2).

Summary

In this chapter, findings related to the factors influencing the practice and understanding of reflection have been highlighted in terms of three sections. The first section outlined the psychological aspects and the role they played in impacting trainees' understanding and practice of reflection. In this sense, emotions have been identified as a main psychological factor and accordingly, the relationship between emotions and reflection was described. Then, the negative emotions and the way they acted as a filter preventing trainees from fully reflecting was explained. The second section of the chapter dealt with contextual factors. In the descriptions throughout this part, trainees referred to elements related to the environment where they practised reflection as having an impact on it. In their accounts, trainees mentioned the context in general as an important element interfering within their practice of reflection. Another contextual aspect was the state of being novices and the need

for expertise in reflection. This was closely related to the role of experience which trainees identified as impacting their reflections. The lack of guidance in the CELTA course and the need for it was also perceived to be among the contextual factors influencing reflection. In the final section, a broader perspective rooted in the social practice of reflection was defined to be influencing reflection. This included social factors that targeted more specifically the group dynamics trainees were involved in and the relationships they had with each other and with their trainers. In this respect, trainees' relationship with each other was symmetrical and its impact manifested itself in terms of a collaborative community with an emotional empathy. The impact such a community with its emotional understanding had on reflection was presented through the negotiated process of reflection and its guarded nature respectively. As for trainee-trainer relationship, it was asymmetrical and underlined power and expertise which in turn were manifested through trainees' practice of reflection.

The next chapter summarises the main findings in terms of a social perspective into reflection and outlines some useful implications.

7. General discussion, implications, and conclusion

The present study investigated pre-service teacher trainees' views and experiences of reflection in two pre-service teacher training courses, the CELTA, with a focus on exploring the practice and understanding of reflection in pre-service teacher education from a trainee perspective. The findings discussed in Chapters 4,5, and 6 demonstrated a level of detail into the implementation of reflection in teacher education and extended the current discussion on it, revealed that trainees conceptualise the application of the different aspects of reflection in different ways, attaching a different value to each aspect. The written aspect of reflection was perceived as an idiosyncratic process that is practised methodically as a chore and is not fully explored. The oral aspect, however, was valued and viewed in terms of interaction, taking place within a community of trainers and trainees, while reflection through the observational episodes of the course was considered as a social practice that is mediated through the assistance of others.

The findings also showed that there are a number of psychological, contextual, and social factors that trainees identified as impacting both their understanding and practice of reflection.

Such findings, framed through my insider experience during data collection, also provided a social perspective within which the understanding and practice of reflection, as viewed by trainees, is understood. This perspective consists of the co-construction of an understanding of trainees' views of reflection, articulated in Chapters 5 and 6, in terms of a socially bound activity, based on my insider experience within the setting, as explained in Chapter 4.

In light of the findings of this study, this chapter first presents a discussion summary of the findings articulated in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 and provides answers to the research questions in Section 7.1. It then suggests some implications for future practice in Section 7.2. These are organised in terms of methodological implications relevant to the community of researchers, pedagogical implications useful to the context of teacher education, training programmes and the wider community of teachers, and theoretical implications, adding fresh insights to the existing body of literature on reflection. The chapter ends with Section 7.3, which outlines the conclusions drawn from the study, limitations of the study and further research.

7.1 General discussion: summarising the findings and answering the research questions

In this section, a general summary of the main points of the findings in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 is presented, and answers to the research questions are provided.

7.1.1. The co-construction of knowledge: towards developing a social perspective into reflection

This study of trainees' views and experiences of reflection in the CELTA course revealed that the application of the different aspects of reflection is conceptualised differently and assigned different values by trainees. The findings also pointed to some factors influencing the practice and understanding of reflection. These findings, framed through the lens of my insider experience, could be understood in terms of a social perspective, explaining the interplay between my engagement in the field and trainees' views of reflection. In other words, the social perspective on reflection developed in this study is apparent in the way I was positioned as an insider within the setting and in relation to trainees' experiences in the field, as detailed in Chapter 4 and consists of an understanding of trainees' views of reflection explained in Chapters 5 and 6 as an activity rooted in its social environment. This social dimension to reflection is explained in this section based on a summary discussion of the findings' chapters.

7.1.1.1. A holistic view to the study: from insider knowledge to a redirection of the research

The insider experience I lived during data collection enabled me to gain both insider knowledge and frame the understandings obtained during fieldwork in terms of findings chapters (Chapters 5 and 6). As explained throughout my autoethnographic account, this was mainly possible through my insider experience and its crucial role in revealing hidden aspects of the setting where trainees' practice and understanding of reflection are rooted. I was also positioned through my insider perspective to look broadly into trainees' lived experiences of reflection, and make sense of both my emerging thinking of reflection as a social phenomenon and explore different aspects of trainees' perspectives accordingly. In this respect, I developed a grasp of trainees' views and experiences of the practice and

understanding of reflection and was able to co-construct an understanding of the social dimension uncovering such views.

Concretising the researcher experience: from theoretical understandings to practical considerations

As detailed in Section 4.1, my engagement as a trainee in the CELTA course while collecting data impacted the direction of my research. This was clearly apparent in the way I both collected the data and dealt with the emerging understandings my insider experience brought. In phase two, I was able to collect data based on my social positioning in the field as a trainee and a trusted colleague. This data, consisting of trainees' reflective sheets, fourth assignments, and discussions with trainees was useful in providing a nuanced sense of the views trainees articulated in their interviews and the actions and interactions taking place in the course (See Section 4.1.1). Through my insider positioning in relation to trainees and the setting, I was also able to build up a sense of the social setting where reflection is practised and gained meaningful insights into trainees' views (See Section 4.1.2).

Therefore, my insider perspective in phase two of data collection was useful in different ways. It enabled me to reflect upon my engagement in the field by reflexively thinking about my positionality as a researcher and how it was changing and impacting my data collection process and the direction of my research. Accordingly, I realised that my role as an outsider moved but naturally to be that of an insider. I was able to consider the change in my positionality and connect this change with the community of trainees I was part of and so, build understandings of both my insider experience and of trainees' lived experiences with reflective practice. As articulated in the epiphanic moments in Section 4.1.1, through being part of the trainees' group of peers and sharing the same trainee status as them, I was able to interact with them, and based on our interactions, I came to terms with my positionality and its impact on the data collected. Adams et al. (2015, p. 46) describe this as looking 'inward-into our identities, thoughts, feelings, and experiences-and outward-into our relationships, communities, and cultures'. In this study, it involved some moments I shared as a trainee with the other trainees which were critical moments of realisation to me as a researcher. My insider positioning thus helped in making sense of such moments, relate

them to the other data and gain insights into trainees' practice and understanding of reflection in the setting (See Section 4.1.1).

At a broader level, being positioned as a member-researcher in the setting in relation to the trainees who were also members allowed further explorations of the setting and detailed understandings of it. The epiphanic moments during data collection were crucial in revealing aspects in the data that were hidden to me when I first started data collection. They were also important in understanding trainees' perspectives concerning the social setting where reflection was investigated and the factors influencing their practice and understanding of reflection. Details can be found in Section 4.1.2.

A sense-making process: exploring the reflexive side of the study

In my autoethnographic account, I also pointed to the role of my insider experience in the field in terms of developing my thinking about the data (See Section 4.2). This could be described as a reflexive process that involved the gradual movement of sense-making of different aspects of the data. In other words, my insider experience was strongly reflexive, consisting of a reconsideration of my partialities of thinking and developing them in accordance with my engagement in the field in relation to the trainees. This is what Anderson and Glass-Coffin (2013) refer to as strong reflexivity in autoethnographic research, entailing an understanding of oneself and others based on reflections made on one's actions in relation to and dialogue with the others. Therefore, I merged myself within the culture of the trainees which I was already part of and made sense of their conceptualisations concerning the different applications, values and factors influencing the different aspects of reflection. Through the different epiphanic moments I recounted in Section 4.2, I came to terms with some misconceptions related to trainees' practice of reflection and reinterpreted them based on my insider positioning and my continuous engagement in the field and broadened my thinking accordingly.

Given the above summary on my insider experience during data collection, it is clear that such an experience is important to my research. When considering my insider experience and the effect it had on my research, I realised the extent to which the experience was relevant to my data collection process and accordingly the study findings. As articulated above and throughout Chapter 4, the relevance of the experience could be defined in terms

of co-constructing an understanding of reflection in its social setting as practised and viewed by trainees. Such co-construction involved revealing different aspects of the data, reconsidering them in relation to trainees, and broadening my vision accordingly.

7.1.1.2. Towards a social perspective on the practice and understanding of reflection

This section outlines a summary discussion of findings from Chapters 5 and 6 in terms of a social perspective framing trainees' perceptions of the application, value and factors influencing reflection.

A preference for a more social level of reflection

The findings in this study showed that trainees perceived the application of reflection in the CELTA course in different ways. These, as outlined in Chapter 5, can be summarised in terms of a preference for interaction where reflection was more of a social level.

Trainees viewed the written aspect of reflection as an idiosyncratic process involving an individual practice that is of a restrictive nature when processing thoughts and putting them onto paper. According to trainees, the idiosyncratic application of reflection lacks the required level of communication between them and their trainers, making their written reflections either purposefully tailored to their lesson aims or of an immediate use in their teaching. Such a view also involves a daily routine writing practice that is perceived as an additional systematic requirement (See Section 5.2), leading trainees not to fully explore this individual process of doing reflection and assigning little value to it.

The way written reflection is applied implies an apparent focus on the product of reflection, the completed reflective sheet, and shows little understanding to the process of writing reflections (See Section 5.1), thus, resulting in trainees seeing the task of writing as an additional required chore of a systematic nature (See Section 5.2). This could be related, as outlined in Sections 6.2.2 and 6.2.4 respectively, to trainees being novice teachers, lacking enough skills and expertise in understanding reflection, its process, product, and functionality, and the lack of guidance to trainees in terms of introducing both the process and purposes of doing reflection.

Trainees also identified the practice of reflection in their course in terms of an interactional process, implying both discussion and co-construction of knowledge. This, as explained in

Section 5.3.2, consists of the interactional episodes of the oral feedback which trainees enjoyed and showed exploration of. This interactional application of reflection is characterised by three defining elements. These are: discussion with its potential in creating collective reflective spaces, participation among trainees and trainers, and the co-construction of meanings based on the discussions and the participative roles of trainees and trainers.

It is evident that there is preference for this interactional level of reflection.

The social environment of reflection: the other and the self

There also seems to be a social process governing reflections where the other defined as peers or experienced teachers, played a crucial role in developing trainees' reflections.

Peer reflections

As detailed in Section 5.3.1.1, the view of reflection by means of peer observations of teaching was articulated in terms of a social process that was fully scaffolded and mostly explored by trainees as they were involved in a similar practice. Peer reflection also contributed to the development of trainees' teaching through modelling based on their peers' teaching.

Reflections on others (case of experience teachers' observations)

This social view of reflection was also extended to experienced teachers' observations (See Section 5.3.1.2) and consisted of a process, primarily taking the form of an orientation towards trainees' transitional English language teaching paths in the future. The reflections trainees made based on observing experienced teachers were critical and helped in gaining knowledge useful to trainees' future teaching careers.

Given trainees' views of reflection above, two of the research questions can be answered. These are:

1. *How do trainees perceive the application of the different aspects of reflection?*

Trainees conceptualised the application of the different aspects of reflection in different ways. These, as detailed throughout Chapter 5 and above, consisted of an idiosyncratic

application underlying mostly the written aspect, and viewed as a methodical chore practised as an additional requirement of the course. As far as the oral aspect of reflection is concerned, trainees perceived its application as an interactional process rooted in the daily discussions of the post-observation feedback. Additionally, trainees referred to the practice of reflection as a social process with varying degrees of scaffolding.

2. *To what extent is the practice of reflection valued?*

Trainees seemed to value the practice of the different aspects of reflection differently. As discussed in Section 5.1, trainees contrasted the individual nature of written reflection with the interactional nature of the oral feedback and showed positive attitudes towards the practice of the latter. Section 5.2 gave more insights and details into how trainees underexplored written reflection, while Section 5.3 shed light on the different ways trainees explored the practice of reflection through observational sessions of peers and experienced teachers, and how they valued the interactional circles of the feedback.

Reflection as a socially situated phenomenon: context and relationships

Findings from Chapter 6 revealed that trainees' practice and understanding of reflection are rooted in and impacted by the context where the reflection is used and the relationships existing within such context.

Reflection is a social activity: the context, the individual, and the reflection

The context of reflection in this study consisted of a pre-service teacher education course with a pre-defined structure and certain requirements. Such a context, according to trainees, defined both their understanding and practice of reflection. The following elements, as part of the context of reflection, played a crucial role in influencing the way trainees perceived and produced reflections in the CELTA course:

- *A busy social environment:* there was a lot going on in the daily life of trainees (seminars/ALP sessions/lesson preparation/weekly assignments/TP). As such, reflection became a social task to be managed in light of the daily conditions of teacher trainees.
- *Teaching as a trigger to trainees' emotions in reflection:* teaching, as a social task, impacted trainees' psychological states, triggered their emotions, and made

reflection an emotional experience involving mostly negative emotions that acted as a filter to properly processing their reflections. Therefore, the emotions of trainees emerging during the reflective process were contextual and, as such, needed space and help from people to be managed. Negative emotions outweighed the positive ones as the context of the reflection did not allow enough space for sharing emotions.

- *Social mediation between trainers and trainees' reflections*: this consisted of a perceived help and direct guidance from trainers to trainees at the level of the how, what, and why of reflection, particularly the written aspect of it, which impacted on trainees' understanding and product of reflection as this help and guidance was not considered enough.

Reflection in communal spaces

The community of trainees and trainers also impacted the way trainees voiced their thoughts. As far as trainees' relationship with each other is concerned, it was more of a collaborative endeavour that resulted in reflections formulated based on sharing thoughts with peers and on peers' teaching, and using such thoughts in concretising their teaching experiences. Trainees' reflections were also guarded as their bond involved an emotional understanding that made their reflections mostly positive as opposed to critical.

As for their relationship with their trainers, trainees' reflections carried the imbalances of power and expertise. As such, trainees' reflections were framed in relation to trainers' feedback with little reference to their own thoughts.

Such aspects, as described above in social terms, provide insights into answering the following research question:

What are the factors that influence the practice and understanding of trainees' reflections?

The factors impacting trainees' reflections at psychological, contextual, and social levels (See Chapter 6), have different levels of influence on trainees' understanding and practice of the different aspects of reflection. However, as outlined above, these factors add insights into the social perspective of reflection with different aspects relating to the social nature of reflection. These include trainees' emotions and the need to manage them within a

community, the importance of the context of reflection, the need for social guidance, and the crucial role of community dynamics in doing the reflection.

Therefore, the trainee perspective revealed that the different aspects of reflection promoted in the CELTA course are conceptualised differently in terms of their application and value, and that there are also different factors: psychological, contextual, and social, impacting trainees' understanding and practice of reflection. Such a view of reflection is framed within a social perspective, allowing an understanding of reflection as an activity of a social nature, both understood in its social setting and impacted by it.

7.2. Implications and recommendations of the study

The implications are outlined in terms of three levels: methodological, pedagogical, and theoretical.

7.2.1. Methodological implications

The methodology used in this research, a focused ethnographic approach with an autoethnographic aspect, allowed a holistic view into trainees' conceptualisations of reflection. However, the use of an autoethnographic aspect had some methodological implications, which I believe could be useful to any research of a qualitative orientation. These are as follows:

The co-construction of knowledge within the culture of research: the intersection of researcher-researched

While focused ethnography guided the research in terms of its methodological orientation, autoethnography shed light on my insider experience by further exploring the practice of reflection within teacher education. Combining both approaches was useful in keeping the main focus on trainees' experiences of reflection while considering my insider experience and its relevance in terms of data collection and framing the research direction.

Using autoethnography to account for my insider encounter allowed a space where trainees' lived experiences of reflection and my engagement in the field intersected, leading to the co-construction of the findings. In other words, by means of autoethnographic writing, I was able to look back into myself in relation to the trainees and the setting and managed to

describe my experience of research as it has been lived and felt in terms of a sense-making process. Such a process involved an intersection where the researched and their experiences were explored and the researcher's identity and its impact on the development of the research was better understood.

Therefore, it is important to portray researchers' experiences during their research journey and highlight any useful incidents. Though this is part of any qualitatively- driven research, putting particular attention on understanding one's experience in relation to the setting, participants, and relationships, and how this could contribute to the development of research is insightful at many levels. At a broader level, it concretises the experience of research and provides a representational outlook into the co-construction of meaning by the researcher and the researched, as the researcher, taking the role of auto-ethnographer, becomes 'self-consciously involved in the construction of meaning and values in the social worlds they investigate, and the data they collect or create in the course of inquiry should reflect this personal connection' (Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2013, p. 72). This could apply to any research that demonstrates its reflexive nature as research would then become 'co-constructed, a joint product of the participants, researcher and their relationship' (Finlay, 2002, p. 212). Related to this is the importance of a continuous reflexive process.

The importance of reflexive accounts in research

Though reflexivity is part of any qualitative research and researchers acknowledge their subjectivities differently, this research demonstrates how reflexivity could act as a powerful tool in terms of highlighting the common aspects of the research process, generally experienced by researchers, and hidden to readers.

In this study, I thought about my positioning and reconsidered my data accordingly as any researcher would do, but included another level of detail, through my insider account, and revealed aspects and incidents I experienced as a researcher. As described in Chapter 4 and reflected in Chapters 5 and 6, these incidents accounted for my naivety during fieldwork, the misconceptions I held, the partialities of my thinking, the process of going back and forth in terms of collecting and interpreting data, and the gradual development of understanding and redirecting the research. Juxtaposing these to any research, with varying degrees of engagement along the outsider-insider continuum, researchers could use their

research experiences to reveal insightful aspects of their research process, particularly with respect to data collection and analysis, allowing readers a closer look into the peculiarities of their research and also the common processes any researcher goes through in framing the findings.

Research and participation

The experience of doing research while being part of it was advantageous at several levels.

At a practical level, unlike research that only involves researchers investigating a field of interest, conducting research while simultaneously being part of the culture of research provides fresh first-hand insights into the phenomenon being studied as it is experienced by participants at that time. It also allows the portrayal of such an experience through the lens of the researcher who is part of it, thus, enabling a different way to recount the story of one's research. In my case, the added perspective was that of an insider, involving full immersion in the field as a trainee. I told the story of groups of trainees on pre-service teacher training courses from the perspective of a trainee, sharing the same encounter as them. This helped me, particularly as a novice researcher, to develop more understandings of both the field and trainees' experiences, and accordingly build up a holistic view of many aspects that were not fully clear to me when first collecting data during phase one.

In terms of data collection, the opportunity to undertake an active role in research makes the process smoother, allowing easy movements between the familiar and unfamiliar aspects of the field. In addition, different forms of data become accessible, and more aspects of the setting and participants' views emerge continuously. In my case, I managed to access more data and capture hidden aspects that would have been hard to uncover otherwise. Therefore, participation in research, where possible, provides a different level of engagement in data collection, making it at times opportunistic, unsystematic, flexible, and of an emergent nature. It also provides an open space for novice researchers to consider the different aspects of relevance to their data and avoid early selection of it.

Participation in research also allows the researcher to quickly gain both participants' trust and help. Instead of going through a long process of recruiting participants, having the same participative role as participants strengthens the researcher-researched bond and allows continuity at the level of both participant consent and researcher reassurance.

At a professional level, being an insider is also useful, particularly for novice researchers. It allows a degree of flexibility in dealing with researcher positionality and when gathering data. This flexibility also contributes to accepting one's subjectivities in research and acknowledging them where possible.

In addition, novice researchers could develop more awareness of the research process through being embedded in it. In my case, this enabled me to see the research process as a non-linear path with forward and backward movements, continuously providing room for reflexive thoughts.

7.2.2. Pedagogical implications

The study also generated pedagogical implications relevant to teacher education and training programmes, policy makers, trainers, and trainees, useful in any educational context and workplaces involving the practice of reflection. Such implications could be summarised in terms of a multi-dimensional framework with an underlying social nature. All three dimensions involve a focus on the practice of reflection as a socially situated activity. This is as follows:

1. The reflection itself

This dimension, based primarily on findings in Section 5.1, Section 6.2.3, and Section 6.3.4, draws attention to the understanding of reflection in all its forms, but with a particular focus on the written aspect. Such an understanding accounts for the how, why, and what of reflection, thus, a focus on its process, purpose, and product.

The process of reflection

Trainees preferred a more social level of reflection involving interaction rather than what they considered an idiosyncratic application of written reflection. Based on this view, the process of reflection, particularly the written one, could involve more communication and exchange between trainers and trainees to make it clearer and less idiosyncratic. This would then allow a room for trainees to better understand the process of writing reflections and also share their thoughts. One way of doing this could involve a direct trainer-trainee communication of what has been written after teaching and using this as a basis for the

post-feedback discussions. In this way, trainees would have a direct link between the written and oral aspects of reflection.

The purposes of doing reflection

As for the process, the purpose for which reflection is done is also important in any context promoting reflective practice. In this study, trainees perceived written reflection as a task of a retrospective nature that is of a short-term immediate use, leading them to being submerged in routine methodical practices.

Nevertheless, nurturing trainees' understandings of why reflection is done in a written form would be useful to any teacher training programme. Explanations could consist of presenting writing reflections as more than a required task to report certain ideas, and rather, as a means of helping to provide continuous awareness of one's development in relation to teaching in a social environment. This could then give a social element to dealing with written reflection.

The product of reflection

Related to both the process and purpose of reflection is the product trainees produce at the level of the different aspects of reflection and its importance in defining both their practice (routinised and lacking details most of the time) and understanding (not knowing exactly what to write). As such, accounting for the content of the reflection, be it in speaking or writing, is of a great relevance to how reflection is perceived and practised by novices, and teacher education programmes (in particular, policy makers and trainers) should consider this.

As the process, purpose and product of reflection seem important for trainees' practice and understanding of reflection, it is important that policy makers consider making changes at the level of the implementation of reflection in teacher education programmes and beyond. This would consist of guidance provided by trainers to trainees. As a socially rooted activity, reflection needs to be socially mediated. This could involve a briefing where guidelines are given concerning writing reflective sheets, fourth assignments, giving feedback on one's teaching and noting comments on peers' teaching. Whatever these

guidelines are, they would need to be explained in relation to the process, product, and purpose of each aspect.

2. The context of the reflection

As discussed in Section 7.1.1. and particularly Section 7.1.1.2, reflection is perceived as an activity both rooted in and impacted by its social context. Based on this, in implementing different aspects of reflection, considering the context should be integral within the practice of reflection. This could involve two levels: context and implementation.

Context: teacher reflections in between place, time, and commitments

Teacher trainees had different commitments, and as such, their reflective practices were impacted. The responsibilities of trainees (attending seminars, lesson preparation, writing assignments, TP sessions, writing reflections and being part of feedback sessions) influenced the way reflection was done. The little time devoted to reflection and the lack of a quiet space to reflect also influenced trainees' reflective practices. Thus, it is important for policy makers, educators, and trainers to position the practice of reflection in accordance with the nature of the context (in terms of its intensity, commitments, available time, and space). This could be done through a reconsideration of the implementation of the different aspects of reflection as suggested below.

Implementation of reflection: between application and value

Based on trainees' views of the different applications of reflection and the value they attach to each aspect, it seems relevant to take a trainee perspective in reassessing each aspect as follows:

- *Writing reflections* could be more developmental and graded in accordance with the development of both the course and trainees' reflections. In other words, as trainees felt some development in terms of ability to reflect (See Section 6.2.3) as the course progressed, the reflections required should take this into account. To do so, the reflective sheets could gradually increase what they ask from trainees as they develop through the course and provide a space for trainees to voice their reflections in different ways each time, therefore, avoiding the routinised approach to written reflection that trainees highlighted.

In addition, the guidelines used in both the reflective sheets and the writing of the fourth assignment could involve more practical guidance from trainers and less control over what is written, allowing room for critical thoughts to emerge.

- *Sharing reflections through the discussions during feedback* as a preferred practice for trainees should be further explored by maintaining balance in the trainer-trainee relationship in sharing feedback (a balance between guided, initiated trainer feedback and trainees' own voices).

Providing a stress-free environment where trainees can openly share their thoughts on their teaching and peers' teaching would also contribute to minimising guarded comments.

- *As reflection is better scaffolded among peers*, it would be useful to focus on developing trainees' observational skills for peer teaching sessions. This could include encouraging trainees to watch their peers' teaching or by integrating reflective practices to keep trainees' focus on their peers. The idea of allowing trainees watch another group of trainees is also relevant as it creates not only opportunities for reflection, but also an interest in peer reflection. This was applied during the first course I observed and was suggested by a trainee in her interview from the second course.
- *Observations of experienced teachers*, given that they are relevant to trainees' reflections, could be repositioned towards the end of the course as these are mainly beneficial in terms of understanding the transition from pre-service teaching to teaching in a real classroom context.

3. *The individual reflecting*

Particular attention should also be paid to the individual who reflects alongside the reflection and the context. Based on the findings, three elements can be directly linked to the individual and their reflections:

- *The emotions of reflection*, acting as a filter to trainees' reflections, need to be addressed. The emotional experience of reflection should be contextualised by

means of sharing the emotions about teaching felt before, during, and after the teaching practice. In other words, instead of devoting feedback time or the reflection sheet to a description of how the teaching went, it would be useful to integrate thoughts on emotions, as peers and trainers could help regulate such emotions and use them in positive ways. In fact, peers sharing similar emotions could learn from each other, and trainers could advise on useful strategies to control negative emotions.

- *Expertise in doing the reflection* is needed as the status of trainees as novice teachers impacted on both their understanding of reflection and its practice. As such, trainees' practice of reflection should be accounted for in accordance with the context and its requirements and consideration given to the course and the experience trainees have, if any.

- *The individual's agency*, referring to trainees' ability to develop their reflections based on aspects of their social environment, is found to be of importance in moving forward with reflection. In this study, trainees were able to develop their own understandings of reflection and its practice by means of their own experience in reflection during the course. Therefore, it is useful for trainers and educators to help trigger trainees' abilities to reflect, not only through the experience of reflection itself, but also through direct or indirect assistance in writing reflections or delivering feedback.

7.2.3. Theoretical implications

At a theoretical level, the study is useful in two ways: adding a level of detail to the current discussions on reflection and providing evidence of the relevance of a social approach to the study of reflection.

1. *Trainees' perspectives: further explorations of the application, value, and factors underlying reflection*

Presenting trainees' perspectives of reflection, through the lens of a student trainee, provided a direct connection to the setting and its aspects, and allowed the portrayal of

trainees' lived experiences. This added details to the study of reflection and generated descriptions and understandings relevant to research of a similar nature. The study contributes to the fields of teacher education and reflective practice by demonstrating an in-depth, detailed exploration of the different applications of the different aspects of reflection and how they are perceived and valued differently by trainees as well as the factors influencing the practice and understanding of reflection. Accordingly, such a view in general terms allows researchers, educators, and practitioners in the field to explore those different aspects further in other research.

2. A social perspective to reflection confirmed

This study also pointed to the social perspective within which the practice and understanding of reflection is framed, with the view that reflection is both rooted in and impacted on by its social setting. While this has already been referred to in theoretical terms in some works, for instance, Thompson and Pascal 2012, encourage a sociological approach to reflection, and Mann and Walsh 2017, suggest a link between sociocultural theories of learning and reflection, this study provides practical evidence and explorations of the relevance of this social aspect. Throughout the findings, reflection was described in terms of the social dimension underlying its different aspects with the varying degrees of its social practice and the importance of both the other and the context to reflection, being revealed. Such aspects contributed to the understanding of reflection in its social setting as practised and influenced by it. Providing such insights into research in teacher education helps in generating more knowledge about seeing reflection as a social activity.

7.3. Limitations of the study, further research, and conclusions

This section presents the limitations of the study, sets out some recommendations for further research, and reviews the whole study in terms of conclusions.

7.3.1. Limitations of the study

Although this study has strengths at the level of the methodology used (combining focused ethnography and autoethnography), the variety of tools employed (triangulation), and data collection and analysis (conducted reflexively and thematically respectively), it also has some limitations:

1. Interviewing trainers: as trainees referred to their trainers and their role in influencing their reflections in Section 6.3.2., it would have been useful to explore trainers' views concerning the implementation of reflection in teacher education in general and the trainer-trainee relationship in terms of reflection. This was not possible in this study due to the busy schedule of trainers and the intensive nature of the course.
2. Analysis of reflective sheets could have been made at a different level. Although trainees' reflections (both reflective sheets and fourth assignments) have constituted an important set of data, adding a practical level to the data gathered via interviews and observations, the analysis of these, using a different focus may have resulted in more data about other areas.
3. As the oral feedback is one aspect accounted for in terms of trainees' views, audio recordings of feedback sessions may have added a further level of detail to the context of reflection, the roles carried out by trainers and trainees, the level of interaction, and the type of the reflections produced, along with more description of the role of expertise and experience in reflection. However, being part of those discussions, particularly in phase two, generated enough data for the purposes of this study.
4. Access to the field, mentioned as a main challenge to my data collection (See Section 3.4.2) is also among the limitations of this study. The partial access I had during phase one resulted in having only four trainees participating in this study. I also could not attend other CELTA courses as these were carried in specific times. However, my participation as a trainee during phase two allowed full access and accordingly recruitment of more participants.

7.3.2. Further research

Suggestions for further research are:

1. The application, value and factors influencing reflection could be further explored in other research studies.

2. Investigating reflective practice in other contexts such as other pre-service teacher programmes, in-service teacher courses, teaching and learning contexts including higher education, and workplaces.
3. Research that seeks to account for the views of educators, trainers, and policy makers about reflection, so that to have a more holistic view of the practice and understanding of reflection.
4. The social perspective into the practice and understanding of reflection could be further explored in other studies of a similar nature.
5. Studying reflection in Algerian contexts would be very useful. The understandings developed in this study could be used to explore the practice of reflection in different contexts including pre-service and in-service teacher education courses in Algeria. The implications, particularly the pedagogical ones, are also of relevance to developing an understanding of reflection and its practice in the Algerian context.
6. Autoethnographies of teachers' or educators' experiences of reflection, or researchers' researching reflection could be used to investigate reflection. Autoethnographic writing provides opportunities for better exploring experiences and their different distinguishing aspects at both personal and communal levels, thus adding a lot of insights into the body of knowledge.

7.3.3. Conclusion

Throughout the different chapters of this thesis, I have told the story of my research within a setting that was at first a field of investigation but turned into a context where the aim and focus of this study were explored with my experience as an insider being at the heart of those explorations.

I began this research with an interest in knowing more about novice teachers' views of reflection as this pertained to me personally as a novice undergraduate trainee using some reflective practices. I found the CELTA course as an initial training course meant primarily for novices to be of relevance, and accordingly conducted my study within this context.

The methodology I employed, framed within a social constructionist paradigm, followed a qualitative approach, and allowed a focus both on the social setting where reflection was being studied, and a co-construction of meanings, based on researcher-researched relationships. Such a focus was further explored via focused ethnography and autoethnography. The former guided the research in terms of the approach used to collect data by means of interviews, observations of the field, and analysis of trainees' reflective sheets and fourth assignments. The latter, however, provided a particular focus on my insider engagement within fieldwork and revealed how this engagement was important to both data collection and the research in general.

The data collected, analysed thematically, generated findings related to the aim of this study, to explore trainees' practice and understanding of reflection. The findings reflected an autoethnographic aspect as well as revealing trainees' perspectives on reflection.

The autoethnographic aspect in this study recounted my insider experience and its impact on understanding the data collection process and trainees' experiences of reflection. The other findings chapters shed light on trainees' conceptualisations of the application of the different aspects of reflection and the different value attached to each aspect. They also revealed psychological, contextual, and social factors, impacting both the practice, and understanding of reflection. Such findings, weaved together and read as a story, were shown to demonstrate a social perspective to reflection within which trainees' views of the application, value, and factors influencing reflection are better understood in light of my insider engagement.

Given that trainees' experiences revealed important aspects in terms of the practice and understanding of reflection, based on the different conceptualisations they had of the application, value, and factors influencing reflection, this research could also extend to other fields. As explained throughout this final chapter, the study had implications at methodological, pedagogical, and theoretical levels, highlighting different ways to approach fieldwork, proposing changes in terms of promoting and implementing reflection, and adding a level of detail to existing research respectively.

My research journey, as it was of an educational contribution to the field of teacher education, reflective practice, and other related fields, was also relevant to me personally.

As I was researching reflection with the aim of knowing more about it from the perspective of novice teacher trainees, I became embedded within the experiences of others while also having my own experience as a student researcher, learning from others and from myself. At a personal level, I enjoyed this duality where at one end lies the other as trainees and their experiences, and at the other end lies me as the student trainee researcher, with all of us bound together through the reflections made as a result of my positioning as insider. In this sense, I realised that the process I was involved in was more than just the systematic process of collecting and analysing data, with a certain degree of thinking while doing these. Rather, it involved a personal dimension, at times pleasant and at other times, stressful, involving reflections on reflection.

Though this experience was difficult to manage, it was important to me as a novice researcher and person. It made me more aware of how researchers' personal experiences can be brought to one's research and be of a significant relevance. One of the most significant personal experiences was an educational one, the CELTA course, which though undertaken as part of my research, I described during the course and would describe even now as the best learning experience I have ever had as an individual, student, and researcher. I am therefore indebted to my PhD research for offering me such an unforgettable, remarkable learning experience, one that I can never live again in the same way.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Phases of data collection

Data was collected in two CELTA courses taking place in two different institutions in the Southeast of the UK. The table below presents details of the data collected in each course. Data gathered in the first course is referred to as phase one of data collection, while any data collected in the second course is referred to as phase two of data collection.

<i>Phases of data collection</i>	<i>Date of collecting data</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Data collected</i>
Phase one of data collection	May/June 2019	One month	Observations/ interviews
Phase two of data collection	November/December 2019	One month	Observations/ interviews/ reflective sheets

Appendix 2- Details of interviewees

Interviewee pseudonym	Date of the interview	Interview setting	Type of the interview	Length of the interview
1. Catrina	June 2019	UK institution	Face to face audio recorded interview	38 minutes
2. Jack	June 2019	UK institution	Face to face audio recorded interview	42 minutes
3. Emma	June 2019	UK institution	Face to face audio recorded interview	40 minutes
4. David	June 2019	UK institution	Face to face audio recorded interview	36 minutes
5. Isaak	December 2019	University library	Face to face audio recorded interview	49 minutes
6. Anastasia	December 2019	University library	Face to face audio recorded interview	25 minutes

7. Lily	December 2019	UK institution	Face to face audio recorded interview	40 minutes
8. Cara	December 2019	University library	Face to face audio recorded interview	25 minutes
9. Barbara	December 2019	University library	Face to face audio recorded interview	25 minutes
10. Mohammed	December 2019	UK institution	Face to face audio recorded interview	42 minutes
11. James	December 2019	A local café	Face to face audio recorded interview	30 minutes

Appendix 3- Interview guide

Initial interview guide

General information

- Any teaching/learning/workplace experiences
- Any experiences with reflection

Types and forms of reflection in the course

- How do you feel about the self-reflection sheets that you fill after each teaching practice?
- Do you think that the feedback sessions taking place after teaching is relevant to your teaching and its progress? In what ways?
- What do you think of reflecting as a group?

Reflection in the course

- Can you tell me about how the trainer goes about delivering the feedback sessions?
- How would you describe the relationship trainer/trainee?
- Given the intensive nature of the course, do you think that it is still necessary to reflect?
- What do you think of observing others (peers and experienced teachers)?

Attitudes and future directions

- How important do you think reflection in teaching is?
- How would you describe reflection and its role in terms of your overall progress in teaching?

Updated interview guide

Perceptions on reflection in the course

- How do you find the self-reflection sheets/writing reflections?
- What do you think of the feedback sessions?
- How do you find reflecting in a group?

- How do you feel about observing your peers/ peer reflection?
- What do you think of experienced teachers' observation? And the reflections resulting?

The practice of reflection in the course

- How do you position reflection in the course?
- What do you think of the way reflection is introduced in the course?
- Does time make any difference in producing your reflections?
- Does the course in any way affect the way you reflect?
- How do you see the relationship trainer- trainee in terms of reflection/ trainee-trainee as well. And any possible influences on your reflections.
- Are there any other factors that impact your practice of reflection?
- Do you think that reflection is emotional? How?
- How would you describe any impact that reflection had on you or your teaching?

Appendix 4: Interview transcript

Extract from an interview with Cara

Researcher: Soumia (S)

Trainee: Cara (C)

Date: 13/12/2019

Time: 25 minutes

S: In the CELTA course, we had to fill those yellow reflective sheets after each teaching practice, so how do you find those reflective sheets?

C: uh, um, it got easier as it went on. The first time I had to do it, I found it really difficult actually because I think it's quite hard. I think we all were very hard on ourselves. Early on in the course, I was highlighted as being a perfectionist which I know I am, um, so therefore, I did the classic of going to what went wrong, the second part of it before I went to the what went well part of it.

So, I think I came out of it always thinking I need to think of what I could've done better, which is actually quite un motivating because what you should be thinking about is what you've done, what you've done well really. So, as they went on, I got better at doing it, because I forced myself to do the what went well before I did the what could've gone better section.

S: And what about the layout, do you think that those questions that we had on that sheet were useful?

C: I think what would've been helpful would've been, before we even had to fill in one of those sheets, would've been actually to run through it, and told us what sort of, what sort of things that will be looking for under each section because it was very broad, and we didn't get any introduction to that sheet. We just got told to go and fill in the yellow from what I recollect unless I miss something. But I seem to remember we were just told, um these are the yellow sheets, you will be having to fill them in after you've taught your lesson after lesson two or whatever lesson when we had to start doing them. So, the first time I looked at one, maybe that's my own fault, I didn't, uh, that's when I saw the questions, so, I think it would've been helpful if someone let's say sort of said these are the sort of things that might be useful for you to think about under each of the sections.

S: So, do you think it's useful if they included maybe a seminar or a briefing?

C: yes, definitely a briefing, yeah, not very long maybe fifteen minutes, just to run through the sheet and, and, you know, not to tell you what you should be saying, because the whole thing is a reflection, but just tell you what sort of things might help you to reflect on, because it was a bit broad really.

S: What about the feedback. I mean the oral feedback that we had after the teaching practice when the trainer initiates the feedback, and the other trainees give comments. Do you think this was good?

C: um, I think, probably towards the end it was useful, when we understood what we were meant to be doing as trainees, but again, I think the ones we did where A sort of said to us oh, you're really useless, and you're not doing very well with the feedback and everything, um. Again, I just think there was a degree of expectation that we knew what we were meant to be doing, and I sometimes feel that if you want someone to do a good job of something, it helps if you tell them what, what might be useful really.

I mean, I think as it progressed again, I think we got better because as we got to understand what she was looking for us to look for. But I certainly think that the first couple I did, I wasn't sure whether I was meant to be checking, you know what they actually were saying, what they actually were doing, were they following the formula, was I meant to be writing the check questions, or was I just meant to be saying if they did ask check questions, and it seemed to be the first couple I did, whatever I'd written down, didn't seem to be uh, yeah, but they again got easier, again, you know, a short briefing would've made them much more productive.

S: And writing down reflections Vs. spoken reflection, which one do you prefer?

C: um, I think going and writing straight afterwards was useful, but say if I had taught the lesson first, and then maybe in some cases when we were doing 40 minutes, they were two lessons after mine, if I'd then have to carry all of that in my head and be reflecting on those two lessons, and then do my own reflection, it would've been a lot to remember, and I'd probably got muddled up. So, I think going and jotting down things was useful, and obviously, then to have the conversation about it was also helpful I think.

S: We were observing the trainees and experienced teachers. How do you feel about these observations?

C: I think in terms of observing your colleagues, it's quite difficult because we all knew how much we were stressed, we could all see on particular days when people were at a breaking point, and therefore, I think a lot of us probably couched our feedback in nice terms when actually we maybe saw something that we thought was not so positive, but we were feeling for that person because we knew how we were feeling, and it's very hard when you're sitting there listening to what your colleagues are saying, but because you know the but and what they really want to say, but they're giving you the nice bit, then, the bad bit and everything. So, I think it's quite hard to really be truthful to your colleagues when you know how your colleagues are feeling. Whereas I think for the assessors, for A and B, that's their job, and it's their job to be brutal, (laugh), if necessary.

S: So, do you think that there is an element of emotions there?

C: Yes, definitely, yeah, I definitely think there's an element of emotions and awareness of how other people are feeling.

S: And what about observing experienced teachers, the ones we went to their lessons. Do you think that they were useful?

C: Oh, absolutely, because it made me realise that all we were doing was following a formula to pass the exam. I mean, I just watched two lessons. Well, the lessons I watched didn't contain half of the things I was being made to do to pass my CELTA, you know. You could broadly see the formula running through their lesson, but it wasn't in any way nearer to what we did it.

And I think one of the problems that happened during our CELTA course, was where students started not to come in, where we saw our class size shrink, was because they were sick to death of the formula probably, because it was just so obvious, we were so obvious with our context set, and our check questions were patronising. So, if I was a student, particularly, if I was a student who is reasonably well versed in it, I think I would've had enough by the end of four weeks to be honest. But I also think with the lower group, what happened, from what I can make out from talking to some of them is that it went from

being a level that they can manage and then it got ramped up to a level that most of them couldn't manage, and it was too much for them, and therefore, people that we've built a good relationship with over the two weeks didn't carry on coming unfortunately. So, it wasn't particularly useful for them.

S: and concerning the fourth assignment, it was a reflection. what are your thoughts about it?

C: yeah, I know. That was, well, I wouldn't've criticised any of my colleagues, So, that wasn't a true reflection for me. And I've had an email from um, CELTA generally. I think we all had that asking me, well it was sent by school x, but it says, says it's for CELTA, but it also says, and I hadn't followed it up, but it also says that your comments could be published, but it asks, it makes it mandatory to supply your name, but what it doesn't make clear is that if you supply your name, whether your comments are going to be published with name attached to them. So, that will make it difficult for me to be honest. So, I think when you do ask people to do something, and you truly want their feedback, if you don't, if you then force them to put their name against it, you're not going to get true feedback. That's my view anyway.

Appendix 5- Examples of fieldnote observations

~~_____~~ → wanted to leave / she didn't like her lesson (she thought it was terrible) / trainer said she should stay (there are some things to discuss) (she was about to cry).

she invited $\frac{1}{2}$ to repeat sentences together (when looking to the trainer, she said she thought she should've done it individually → his book).

→ good lesson

→ positive feedback (from the trainees → ~~_____~~)
chore repetition).

Catalina
→ ~~_____~~ negative about her lesson.
⇒ after failing in the 40 min lesson, she had the idea that she's going to fail her ELTA.

→ Not sure about how she was,
(personality / who you are).

→ trainer asked about the positives (she said she has to think / she can't see them).

→ feeling nervous while teaching.

→ IT problems (didn't find her folders).

→ suggestion ~~_____~~ concerning the IT.
Jack

23/11/2019

(Assignment 4)

- 15 => experience on the CELTA course.
- 25 => strengths/weaknesses.
- how you intend to develop your skills (use paper ~~with timetable + phonology~~) => you don't have to explain why. **Trainer**
- What have you learned from observations (=> make reference to the level).
- Reference to observations of peers' teaching (Don't mention names of teachers or peers) & point criticism.

Assignment (3) False/True => give evidence.

Grainee
~~Don't~~ = Don't criticize your peers & vice versa you observed.

Anna
~~Don't~~ = why shouldn't we say the truth. This is a reflection as well.

Lily
~~Don't~~ = I don't get it. We're not going to criticize them. I think we should mention their mistakes & what we got from them.

12/06/2019

13.45---16.30-----teaching practice (Emma/Catrina)

Feedback after TP

Notes	Comments/reflections
<p>The same procedure is used to give feedback (discussion).</p> <p>The trainer asked Emma about her way of explaining ‘wishes’. She said she provided a definition. Trainer said you used other ways, and she immediately said that she doesn’t remember. The trainer reminded her of the ways she used (acting/concept questioning).</p> <p>Emma pointed to how her trainer and their look influenced her teaching and its direction. When she incited students to repeat sentences together, she said in the feedback that she looked at her trainer and thought she should’ve done it individually for each student and also thought about the trainer’s suggestions to her and said they are more accurate and useful. She agreed to the aspects the trainer mentioned she should have done.</p> <p>The trainer claimed that overall, Emma’s lesson is good, and the other trainees agreed with no further comments.</p> <p>The other trainees in the group were all positive about Emma’s teaching and their comments were encouraging. They also provided only positive</p>	<p>Feedback involves interaction and discussion, and everyone participates with some thoughts (trainees).</p> <p>Trainer helps and probes on trainees’ thoughts/starts the discussion with trainees.</p> <p>But it feels somehow low (from trainees’ part with dominance of trainer’s feedback)/ trainees are less interactive.</p> <p>Trainees agree with trainer’s feedback.</p> <p>Only positive feedback is provided (from trainees’ part)/ lack of critical reflections.</p>

feedback.(good CCQs, ICQs, good time management) with little critical comments (generally meant for more work on aspects already mentioned).

Catrina taught today. She was unhappy about her lesson and described it as horrible. Even if the lesson didn't look as she claimed (this is what the trainer said when hearing her saying this).

She insisted that the lesson wasn't of a good standard.

Catrina expressed the need to leave the room before the start of the feedback and she was about to cry. The trainer advised her to stay as the discussion would be useful to her.

Catrina was very nervous, and her nervousness affected the way she viewed her teaching practice (not as she expected it to be and of a low standard according to her).

When Katrina was asked about the positive aspects in her lesson, she said she had to think because she cannot see any. She could not address any positive aspects. The others, however, spotted good aspects in her teaching like maintaining confidence while dealing with a technical issue.

(David mentioned her self-confidence when she had the IT issue and said he would have reacted differently if it was him while Jack provided her with some suggestions concerning the use of IT to avoid issues next time.

An emotional moment (Catrina's reflections on teaching), which means that sharing thoughts and reflecting could be emotional (presence of emotions).

Appendix 6- An example of trainees' reflective sheets (from phase two of data collection)

Reflections on own TP

Name: _____ Date: 29/11/17

1. What went well in my lesson (e.g. FMP in language lesson, enough concept checking, variety of tasks, appropriate skills staging...)

- All stages successfully completed with the aid of clear instructions
- All target ^(vocab) language successfully elicited
- All target ^(vocab) language effectively communicated
- ~~Contexts have exploited~~

2. What didn't go so well and why.

- I felt I could have exploited - the second listening ~~feedback~~ by asking more generative questions in response to students' ~~answers~~ feedback
- Felt as if some STs may not have been as engaged as they could have been ~~because of~~ the pairing
 - Could have exploited context a little more

3. Were my AIMS achieved? (If not, why not)

STs ^{successfully} identified target language

STs Gist & detailed reading skills demonstrated through correct ^{minimal} feedback from most STs. it was a listening lesson!

4. What I'll do/try next time.

- All more thorough ~~check~~ concept check questions
- Int think of other listening tasks that could introduce more variety to the lesson - it was fine
- Encourage weaker STs or STs less willing to take part in paired discussion, mix pairs appropriately.

Tutor signature: _____

Appendix 7- Coding

Extract from an interview

Soumia: And concerning those sheets, did you review them, I mean...

Isaak: Not really, not even my lesson, even the tutors remarks, yeah, what I looked at the tutors is just their summary, those three things they had at the end, what I needed to improve on, that's it. To be honest, I really didn't look at those things. And also, to be honest with you, I did the yellow sheets because we had to.

S: Why? Did you feel required to do them?

I: It was a requirement. But a good requirement.

S: And if it wasn't a requirement, would you still do it?

I: probably not.

S: why?

I: Because, I don't know, it's just another chore, I suppose. I would probably do it, but probably not as well as, not as good as you know, when you're required to do it, as a requirement. Um, because to be honest, I really didn't look at the yellow sheets. I looked at the tutors comments, but only you know, at the back where they write the grade, and things you need to improve on one two three, that's all I looked at, yeah, and probably, [...]. I really, to be honest, I didn't look at the yellow sheets.

As much as I've done the oral feedback, I think, I think, because I didn't really read the yellow sheets, I think I got more out of the oral group feedback than those things

I: Because, I don't know, it's just another chore, I suppose. I would probably do it, but probably not as well as, not as good as you know, when you're required to do it, as a requirement. Um, because to be honest, I really didn't look at the yellow sheets. I looked at the tutors comments, but only you know, at the back where they write the grade, and things you need to improve on one two three, that's all I looked at, yeah, and probably, [...]. I really, to be honest, I didn't look at the yellow sheets.

As much as I've done the oral feedback, I think, I think, because I didn't really read the yellow sheets, I think I got more out of the oral group feedback than those things there, yeah. Maybe, maybe one advantage of the yellow sheets be probably, it kind of um, meld you out in a way, sort of, I don't know how to put it, it's of um, you thought about probably, it made you think about probably how you could improve your lesson in that way at that moment because it's fresh soon after you've just taught, whatever soon after you finish teaching. But, other than that, I really didn't look at them, you

SB Soumia Boumaza
Little value given to writing down reflections

@mention or reply

SB Soumia Boumaza
The uses of written reflection

@mention or reply

SB Soumia Boumaza
Written reflection as a requirement

@mention or reply

SB Soumia Boumaza
The practice of writing reflections as a requirement

@mention or reply

SB Soumia Boumaza
Reflection as a chore

@mention or reply

SB Soumia Boumaza
The nature of written reflection in the course: a compulsory task

@mention or reply

SB Soumia Boumaza
Neglect

@mention or reply

SB Soumia Boumaza
Usefulness of oral feedback/group discussions

@mention or reply

SB Soumia Boumaza
Immediacy of written reflection
Short-term use

@mention or reply

know, um, ur, so I think between the two, **would've found the oral aspect of it probably better.**

S: Why would you prefer the oral feedback?

I: **One it's because it's coming from other people** yeah, other people thinking about your um, your lesson, and how it went. **I think it's good to hear other people's views on your lessons,** um, much as I probably prefer a one to one with the tutor. It's, it's yeah, I'll be hearing views from the tutor, but, it's good hearing things from other students as well.



The screenshot shows a vertical list of three chat messages. Each message is contained within a white rounded rectangle with a grey border. The first message has a blue circular profile picture with 'SB' and the text 'Preference/more value to oral feedback'. Below it is a grey input field with the placeholder text '@mention or reply' and a right-pointing arrow. The second message has the same profile picture and the text 'The other in reflection'. It also has a grey input field with the placeholder text '@mention or reply' and a right-pointing arrow. The third message has the same profile picture and the text 'Group reflection/interaction'. It also has a grey input field with the placeholder text '@mention or reply' and a right-pointing arrow. To the left of the messages, there are three small speech bubble icons, each corresponding to one of the messages.

Appendix 8- Ethics

Trainees' consent form



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Towards an understanding of reflection in the CELTA course:
Exploring CELTA trainees' perceptions of reflective practice.

Name of Researcher: **Soumia BOUMAZA**

Contact details:

Address:

School of Language Studies and Applied Linguistics
CT1 1QU

Tel:

07988831684

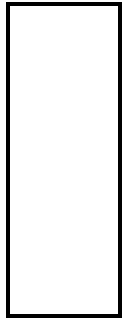
Email:

s.boumaza1288@canterbury.ac.uk

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 researcher will be kept strictly confidential
4. I agree to take part in the above study.

5. I understand that and interviews will be audio-recorded and any information I provide and is related to the aims of the study will be used by the researcher.

I understand that observations will take place in the course and any information related to the research will be used.



Name of Participant:	Date:	Signature:
Name of person taking consent (<i>if different from researcher</i>)	Date:	Signature:
Researcher:	Date:	

Gatekeeper's consent form



CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: Towards an understanding of reflection in the CELTA course:
Exploring CELTA trainees' perceptions of reflective practice.

Name of Researcher: Soumia BOUMAZA

Contact details:

Address:

Tel:

Email:

- 1- I confirm that I understand what the study is about, that my agreement to let the researcher in the course is voluntary, and that at any time, I can withdraw without giving any reason.
- 2- I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researcher will be kept strictly confidential.
- 3- I agree to take part in this study.
- 4- I understand that the interviews will be audio recorded and that any information I provide and is related to the aims of this study will be used by the researcher.

5- I understand that the researcher will be observing what is happening during the course and use any information that is related to the research aims

Name of Participant:	Date:	Signature:
Name of person taking consent (<i>if different from researcher</i>)	Date:	Signature:
Researcher:	Date:	Signature:

Participant information sheet



Towards an understanding of reflection in the CELTA course: exploring CELTA trainees' perceptions of reflective practice

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by *Soumia Boumaza*

Background

This study aims at investigating CELTA trainees' perceptions of reflection. It also tries to shed light on how reflection is used by trainees and the extent to which they consider it as an important element in their teaching practice. To be able to achieve such aims, some observations will be held while the course is taking place. Interviews will also be conducted, and trainees' reflective sheets will be analysed.

What will you be required to do?

Participants in this study will be required to

- Understand that they are going to be observed by the researcher during the whole period of their course.
- To know that what will be observed is how reflection works in the CELTA along with the feedback and interactions between trainees and their trainer.
- To understand that the purpose of the observation is not assessment, but rather, any observation that will take place will be concerned with reflection only.
- To know that they are going to be interviewed by the end of the course. The interviews are meant only to get additional information about reflection.
- To know that they are going to be interviewed individually and that anything the participants say will be kept confidential.
- To know that a copy of their fourth assignment will be analysed. The analysis will be used for research purposes only. No assessment will take place and what will be analysed is the way reflection is used by the participants. The copies will be used as a supplementary tool along with the interviews and observations.

- To be assured that anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed. This involves protecting the recordings of both the observations and interviews, as well as participants' reflective sheets. Pseudonyms will also be used so that to protect participants from being identified.

To participate in this research, you must:

- Be enrolled in the CELTA course
- Have already been enrolled in a CELTA course

Procedures

You will be asked to

- Give your consent to the researcher to attend the course and observe.
- Give your consent to the researcher to make copies of your fourth assignment.
- Take part in the interview

Feedback

No feedback will be given to the participants

Confidentiality and Data Protection

On the legal basis of *your consent*, all data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's own data protection policies. No unrelated or unnecessary personal data will be collected or stored. Only data from the interviews, observations, and the participants' reflective sheets will be used for research purposes and in accordance with what the analysis will bring out. No Personal data will be used. Data can only be accessed by the researcher, the supervisor, and the examiners in case it is needed.

After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed) and held for a period of *five years after the completion of this study*

Dissemination of results

This work and any results will be published in the CCCU library

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 (i) withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason, (ii) request to see all your personal data held in association with this project, (iii) request that the processing of your personal data is restricted, (iv) request that your personal data is erased and no longer used for processing.

Process for withdrawing consent

You are free to withdraw consent at any time without having to give a reason. To do this, you can send an email to the researcher saying that you want to withdraw.

Any questions?

Please contact

Soumia Boumaza

s.boumaza1288@canterbury.ac.uk

07988831684

Supervisor's contact details: