

# ULRR

## **An ethico-political analysis of a national teacher competence framework: unravelling a 'preferred' teacher identity**

Item Type	Article
Authors	Carswell, Desmond;Conway, Paul
Citation	BERJ pp. 1-24
Publisher	John Wiley & Sons Ltd
Download date	2026-06-13 08:53:18
Item License	<a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/</a>
Link to Item	<a href="https://doi.org/10.34961/researchrepository-ul.23715792">https://doi.org/10.34961/researchrepository-ul.23715792</a>

# An ethico-political analysis of a national teacher competence framework: Unravelling a 'preferred' teacher identity

Desmond Carswell<sup>1</sup>  | Paul F. Conway<sup>2</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Education, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland

<sup>2</sup>School of Education, Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, University of Limerick, Limerick, Ireland

## Correspondence

Desmond Carswell, Faculty of Education, Mary Immaculate College, South Circular Road, Limerick, Ireland.

Email: [des.carswell@mic.ul.ie](mailto:des.carswell@mic.ul.ie)

## Funding information

Mary Immaculate College

## Abstract

In recent years, as evidenced in the transnational proliferation of codified competence frameworks for teacher education purposes, we have seen the increased politicisation and regulation of the task of teaching and what it means to be a teacher. Making the case for an ethico-political conceptualisation of teacher identity and, using a Foucauldian-based framework of ethico-political identity, we apply a discourse analysis approach to unravel a 'preferred' teacher identity construction using Ireland's national teacher competence framework, the *Initial Teacher Education Criteria and Guidelines for Programme Providers* as an illustrative case. Findings illuminate this identity as: (i) telos vis-à-vis embodying national objectives via critical engagement underpinned by knowledge surfaces and a temporal appreciation of policy; (ii) ethical substance vis-à-vis seven modes of engagement animated in two interdependent phases with unique practice dynamics and policy emphases; (iii) discursive authority sources that utilise three major modes of sense-making; and (iv) self-practices as confessional dialogue and self-writing. Considering codified teacher competence frameworks as politics of truth in teacher education, we make the case for macro ethico-political identity work as a valuable analytical tool for policy analysis in teaching and teacher education.

## KEYWORDS

ethico-political teacher identity, policy identity work, teacher competence frameworks

This is an open access article under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/) License, which permits use and distribution in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, the use is non-commercial and no modifications or adaptations are made.

© 2023 The Authors. *British Educational Research Journal* published by John Wiley & Sons Ltd on behalf of British Educational Research Association.

## Key insights

### What is the main issue that the paper addresses?

While national competence frameworks for beginning teachers have proliferated, we argue there is a significant need for greater critical policy analyses of these consequential documents. Using a Foucauldian- based framework (Clarke, 2009), this paper offers an ethico- political reading of a national teacher competence framework to understand preferred teacher identity.

### What are the main insights that the paper provides?

The paper exemplifies how an ethico-political analysis of a national teacher competence framework unravels the preferred teacher identity constructed therein. Evidencing this identity as telos, substance, authority sources and self-practices, we establish ethico-political identity as an expansive and conceptually robust frame that is generative for policy analysis and teacher education.

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, as evidenced in the transnational proliferation of codified competence frameworks for teacher education purposes, we have seen the increased politicisation and regulation of the task of teaching and what it means to be a teacher. Functioning as codified 'grids of specification' (Foucault, 1972, p. 42) teacher competence frameworks politicise a particular teacher identity (Mulcahy, 2011; Sachs & Mockler, 2012; Sfard & Prusak, 2005; Zembylas, 2018). Described as a 'preferred identity' (Zembylas, 2018), our concern relates to how such codifications, as primarily etic narratives, construct that identity. We believe that understanding the specific detail of that identity construction is essential for teacher education purposes. For example, what does it look like, why is it that way and how is it realised? As such, we believe that unravelling these ultimately state-sanctioned identity frameworks (Sachs & Mockler, 2012) requires an emic reading of competence frameworks. Furthermore, we argue that a Foucauldian-based framework of ethico-political identity (Clarke, 2009; Foucault, 1983a, 1985) provides the necessary breadth and depth for doing so. We consider this identity under headings—telos, ethical substance, sources of discursive authority and self-practices—and conclude by contemplating our findings for policy analysis and teacher education purposes.

## PARSING THE COMPLEXITY OF TEACHING

Articulating the scope or boundaries of 'good' teaching and what it means to be a 'good' teacher, while capturing the cognitive, social, emotional and professional complexities of the task, is, for teacher education purposes, an ongoing pedagogic and political question with sometimes a 'chorus of clashing answers' (Scribner, 1984, p. 6). Scribner's 'chorus' is a helpful metaphor for describing the differing sources of understanding that underpin 'good' teaching: on one hand, research-sourced understandings of teaching (voices here typically include researchers, higher education institutions [HEIs], teacher unions, teacher educators, schools and teachers) and on the other hand, regulatory-sourced understandings of

teaching (voices here typically include ministries of education and regulatory bodies). While the interactive and reactive relationship between the voices may sometimes make them appear in opposition, they nonetheless provide pitch, tone and depth to each other. In this regard, it is important to hear them together, as a chorus.

Expansive research-sourced descriptions typically capture the lived experience of teaching including for example the contextual complexity, the emotional implications or the professional vulnerabilities that accompany the task (Altan & Lane, 2018; Beijaard & Meijer, 2017; Clandinin, 2020; Day & Lee, 2011; Flores & Day, 2006; Kelchtermans, 2009, 2011; Palmer, 1990, 1997; Schutz & Zembylas, 2009; Zembylas, 2003a, 2003b, 2005, 2007). Such accounts resonate in varying degrees with teachers as they catch what could be described as the grit of teaching. For example, teachers will readily identify with Palmer's (1990, p. 11) emic depiction of teaching as an 'act of generosity', that is simultaneously whimsical, maddening, risky and mysterious. Although emic descriptions provide extremely useful, rich holistic understandings of the signature of the task (Shulman, 2005) and the subjective experience of teaching (Biesta, 2009, 2015), they do not easily lend themselves to a common understanding of the specifics of the task. Summary frameworks, as research-sourced etic accounts, typically and inevitably reductionist in terms of categorising the components of the task of teaching, are more helpful in this regard.

Reductionist research-sourced etic accounts of teaching in their pursuit of a common syntax (Shulman, 1986, 1987, 2004, 2005), an underlying grammar of practice (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Zeichner, 2012, 2023) or a common language for specifying practices (McDonald et al., 2013) delimit the complexity of teaching into summary frameworks that parse pedagogic practice into its constituent and interdependent parts. Some of these frameworks subtly parse the pedagogic task in terms of overarching foundational pedagogic principles (Korthagen et al., 2006; Shulman, 2005) while others apply a more acute parsing of the specifics of the task (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; McDonald et al., 2013; Shulman, 1986, 1987). Such bounded summary reductions are operationally appealing for regulatory-generated understandings of teaching.

Regulatory-generated understandings frame teaching in what could be described as political terms, i.e. they use prominent research-sourced understandings, among other sources, to delimit and codify the construction of teaching and the teacher and then apply that codification for governance purposes. Domains and categories of teacher knowledge (Shulman 1986, 1987), the knowledge–practice relationship (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999) and core practices (Grossman et al., 2009; Grossman & McDonald, 2008; McDonald et al., 2013) have been enormously influential in this regard. Reducing the complexity of teaching into the sum of its parts has, however, some recognised pitfalls (Grossman & McDonald, 2008; Palmer, 1997). For example, Grossman and McDonald (2008, p. 186) warn that 'to parse teaching would need to respect the difficulty of breaking apart such a complex system of activity and the dangers of doing irreparable harm to the integrity of the whole by making incisions at the wrong places'. Despite such pitfalls, regulatory-generated understandings of teaching tend to prefer the operational and bureaucratic attractiveness that summary framework accounts afford. As is evidenced in the transnational proliferation of teaching codifications, regulatory-generated understandings of teaching have emerged as the loudest voice in the chorus. As such, they constitute what it means to be a teacher.

## TEACHER COMPETENCE FRAMEWORKS: 'A POLITICS OF TRUTH' FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher competence frameworks function as a 'general politics of truth' (Foucault, 1977, p. 131) regarding what constitutes 'good' teaching and what it means to be a 'good' teacher that

is firstly 'accepted' and secondly made 'function as true' (Foucault, 1977, p. 131) thereafter. They align with Foucault's (1977, p. 131 and 132) 'five traits' of truth in the following ways.

1. They 'are centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it' (Foucault, 1977, p. 131). From a chorus of possibilities, regulatory bodies select particular knowledge sources to frame and to govern teaching and teacher education. In this regard, teacher competence frameworks can be visualised as political amalgams of select research-sourced understandings.
2. They 'are subject to constant and political incitement' (Foucault, 1977, p. 131). Internationally, teacher competence frameworks are undergoing continuous refinement becoming, in many regards, increasingly more domain-oriented and task-specific (for example leadership competences, Schleicher, 2012), digital competences (Caena & Redecker, 2019), lifelong learning competences (Caena, 2019) and learning/well-being competences (OECD, 2018). They are also subject to ongoing national amendment (e.g. Ireland's revised codification of teacher competences 'Céim: Standards for Initial Teacher Education', Teaching Council of Ireland, 2020) which is due to be reified in Irish institutions concerned with Initial Teacher Education commencing September 2022.
3. They 'are objects of immense diffusion and consumption' (Foucault, 1977, p. 131). Firstly, as evidenced in the transnational proliferation of teacher education pathways/continua, teacher competence frameworks provide the discursive foundation for the particular governmentality that shapes the tactical and operational direction of such pathways/continua. Secondly, and with particular relevance to HEIs concerned with teacher education in Ireland, they provide the basis for adjudicating on and accrediting programmes of initial teacher education enabling graduates of accredited programmes to register as teachers with Ireland's national 'professional standards body for the teaching profession', the Teaching Council (established 2006).
4. They 'are produced and transmitted under the control of a few great political and economic apparatuses' (Foucault, 1977, pp. 131 and 132). While noting the significant influence of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on the governance and framing of education (Ball, 2003; Sellar & Lingard, 2013) and the implications of apparatuses such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (Grek, 2009; Lewis, 2017) and Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (Berkovich & Benoliel, 2020a, 2020b), professional standards bodies have emerged as the main discursive authorities in the production and transmission of teacher competence frameworks. This is particularly evident in the Irish context where a combination of international and national forces (Conway, 2013; Conway & Murphy, 2013; Simmie, 2012, 2014) provided the context that influenced the development of a National Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2011b). This, in turn, led to the production of a series of policy texts in relation to initial teacher education (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2011a, 2017a, 2020), induction (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2013, 2017b) and continuing professional development (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2017c) as well as intertextual alignment of existing policy texts such as the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2007, 2012, 2016).
5. They are 'the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation' (Foucault, 1977, p. 131 and 132). This is evidenced in discussions relating to the direction that interpretations of teacher competence frameworks could follow (Caena, 2011, 2014; Conway et al., 2009; European Commission, 2013a, 2013b; Révai, 2018). On one hand, interpretations can take 'a bureaucratic and technical approach for accountability purposes, focused on measuring, monitoring, comparing and regulating individual behaviour' (Caena, 2011, p. 14); on the other hand, interpretations can have 'a developmental use, with loose definitions of

competences as indicative of performance, stressing principles and codes of practice' (Caena, 2011, p. 15). Indeed, the tension between the two interpretations is, in many regards, manifest in widely voiced concerns relating to professionalism, accountability and performativity (Ball, 2003, 2015; Ball et al., 2011; Biesta, 2004; Goodwin, 2021; Holloway, 2021; Mausethagen, 2013a, 2013b; Mockler, 2013, 2022, Mockler & Stacey, 2021; Perryman et al., 2017, 2018; Sachs, 2003, 2016; Simmie et al., 2019; Skerritt, 2020; Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018).

Teacher competence frameworks as 'a general politics of truth' provide justification for undertaking macro identity work. First, a politics of truth establishes codified teacher competence frameworks as 'a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and operation of statements' and connects those frameworks with 'systems of power which produce and sustain it' (Foucault, 1977, p. 133). Second, a politics of truth establishes the preferred teacher identity as an operational statement which constitutes 'good' teaching and the 'good teacher'. Third, as a politicised and true teacher identity, it is the object of an entire 'ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, reflections, the calculations and tactics' (Foucault, 1978, p. 102) that seek to realise it including, according to Dean (2010, p. 43), 'all the more or less explicit, purposive attempts to organise and reorganise institutional spaces, their routines, rituals, and procedures, and the conduct of actors in specific ways'. As a politicised construct, a politics of truth has significant reification and participation implications (Wenger, 1998) for teacher education and the 'institutional identity' and 'discursive identity' (Gee, 2000, p. 103) of all the characters within the ensemble. If this preferred identity is to be realised then the specific detail of its construction needs to be interrogated. Importantly, the same is true if it is to be challenged.

## CASE STUDY: ITE CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR PROGRAMME PROVIDERS

The *Initial Teacher Education Criteria and Guidelines* (*Guidelines* hereafter) for Programme Providers (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2011a, 2017b) is a very particular document. It 'possesses an ordering and constraining character' (Simola, 2000 in Carlgen & Klette, 2008, p. 119) in terms of how it steers the parameters of discussion regarding teaching and teacher education for both primary and post-primary teachers. As a mediating document between the Teaching Council and HEIs, it has a number of important framing functions. It frames

- the parameters of how we understand and value teaching;
- the knowledge, values, skills and competences required of a teacher;
- the parameters of how initial teacher education (ITE) providers design, develop and review programmes of Initial Teacher Education;
- the administrative parameters and mechanisms of ITE programme evaluation and accreditation; and
- the trajectory of the identity (re)formation across the continuum of teacher education through induction and continuing professional development.

In summary, it specifies the components of the teaching task (what is in and what is out), the work of the teacher (what is in and what is out), what is valuable (and what is not), what is to be valued (and what is not), what values to hold (and what values not to hold) and how teachers should evaluate their own teaching values (and how they should not). It is a very significant document in relation to the formation of teacher identity.

## TIME TO TURN TO MACRO-READINGS OF TEACHER IDENTITY?

Using policy narratives to understand teaching standards, constructions of teaching and teacher identity is not new (Carlgrén & Klette, 2008; Clarke & Moore, 2013; Fransson et al., 2018; Goodwin, 2021; Mausethagen & Granlund, 2012; Mausethagen, 2013a, 2013b; Mohamed et al., 2017; Mulcahy, 2011; Perryman et al., 2017; Søreide, 2007). Contributing to this conversation, our teacher identity policy work approach is informed by policy-as-discourse (Bacchi, 2000; Ball, 1993, 2015), governmentality (Dean, 2010; Foucault, 1978) and macro-cultural psychological lenses (Guitart & Ratner, 2011; Ratner, 2008). Here we approach policy in two ways. First, we appreciate policy in temporal terms and use two related concepts to assist with this: prolepsis and analepsis. Prolepsis, as defined by Webb and Gulson (2012, p. 87), refers to 'the representation of a thing as existing before it actually does'. Education policy has distinct proleptic properties, i.e. it is future-oriented and prescribes that which is desired and yet to come. Educational practice, while taking place in the present, is according to Webb and Gulson (2012, p. 90) 'produced through educational actors' senses of policy and their subsequent interpretations of policy, including their calculations of policy outcomes'. In many ways therefore, educational practice is a mirror of educational actors' capacity (capabilities and sensibilities) to reach into the policy future and retrieve it into the practice present. Broadly, Webb and Gulson (2012) refer to such capacities as 'policy prolepsis': for example identifying 'constructions of professional identities' (p. 89), 'styles of practice and styles of care' (p. 89) or 'affective tones or affective sensings' (p. 91) of policy. Analepsis, on the other hand, is essentially backward-looking and as argued by Phelan (2016, p. 240) 'depends on the principle that in order to understand the present one needs to understand the (relevant) past'. Analepsis refers to educational actors' capacity (again capabilities and sensibilities) to reach into the practice past, retrieve the lessons learnt about the policy prolepsis that informed it and draw those lessons forward into the practice present. Prolepsis and analepsis are generative concepts for teacher reflection purposes. Second, we align our argument with Ball's (1993 p. 14) view that policy constructs both teaching and teacher 'positions', 'voices', 'subjectivities', 'systems of practices' and 'sets of values and ethics' and, as argued by Ball (2015, p. 307) that 'teacher subjects and subject positions are formed and reformed by policy ... in particular and specific ways'. In this regard, we subscribe to a conceptualisation of teacher identity that broadly aligns with Foucault's (1983a, p. 263) definition of ethics as 'the kind of relationship you ought to have with yourself and which determines how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions'. Our conceptualisation acknowledges (i) that identity is totalising, i.e. it relates to 'what it is to "be" a teacher' (Mockler, 2011, p. 517); (ii) that identity refers to 'how teachers define themselves [as teachers] to themselves and to others' (Lasky, 2005, p. 901); and (iii) that identity reaches beyond 'commonly held expectations' regarding the professional role of the teacher but refers more to 'the means by which individuals reflexively and emotionally negotiate their own subjectivity' (O' Connor, 2008, p. 118). In summary, we conceptualise ethico-political identity as (i) the embodiment of a particular way of being, (ii) a concern that one embodies that particular way of being and (iii) the actions that one employs to ensure that one does.

## APPLYING CLARKE (2009) ETHICO-POLITICAL IDENTITY AXES TO MACRO IDENTITY WORK

As an interpretation of Foucault's ethico-political conceptualisation (Foucault, 1983a, 1985), Clarke's (2009) ethico-political framework of teacher identity consists of four interdependent

elements: the ethical substance, discursive authority sources, self-practices and telos. Although studies that use Clarke for micro analyses prefer a different ordering (often substance, authority sources, self-practices, telos), the ordering below makes more sense for macro identity work.

1. *The telos of teacher identity*—Clarke (2009, p. 191) sees telos as ‘the endpoint of our teaching selves ... the goal or purpose as a teacher’. In Foucault (1985, p. 28) telos relates to ‘a certain mode of being, a mode of being characteristic of the ethical subject’. In this sense, ethical subjects ‘do the right thing’ for both the profession and themselves. Macro analyses of teacher identity, particularly in the policy-as-discourse tradition, seek to determine, through an analysis of the stated objectives of the policy text, what is ‘the right thing’ and to draw forward from this the ‘preferred’ telos of the subject’s identity in relation to the objectives of the text. Similarly, and applying Dean (2010, p. 26), who notes telos as a concern with ‘why we govern or are governed, what are the ends or goal sought, what we hope to become or the world we hope to create’, we examine telos as the preferred ‘mode of being’ articulated in the *Guidelines* through the lenses of (i) what does teacher education seek to achieve and (ii) what knowledge is required to do it?
2. *The ethical substance of teacher identity*—Clarke (2009, p. 190) argues that the substance of teacher identity ‘addresses issues of what part of “myself” pertains to teaching and what forms of subjectivity constitute my teaching self’. These forms of subjectivity lie underneath telos. In this regard, we align our understanding of the ethical substance of teacher identity with what Foucault (1982a, p. 99) refers to as a ‘true discourse’ [in this case, of teaching] and that the subjectivities constitute ‘the equipment we [in this case, teachers] need in order to confront the future; they are what enable us [as teachers] to face reality’. The ethical substance constitutes the dispositional grit required of the teacher. In macro analysis we see it as an ascribed substance which can be likened to (and extends) Gee’s (2000, p. 102 and 103) institutional-identity and discourse-identity.
3. *The discursive authority sources of teacher identity*—for Clarke (2009, p. 191), the discursive authority sources of teacher identity relate to the reasons ‘why [teachers] should cultivate certain attitudes, beliefs and values’ and ‘what sources of discursive authority [teachers] recognise’. In micro ethico-political analyses of teacher identity, sources of discursive authority have, for example, been identified in concept-oriented and value-oriented terms (Clarke, 2009; Clarke & Hennig, 2013; Niesche & Haase, 2012). Macro ethico-political analyses, however, we believe need to approach sources of discursive authority somewhat differently. Gee (2000, p. 105) argues ‘when an identity is underwritten and sustained by an institution, that institution works, across time and space, to see to it that certain sorts of discourse, dialogue, and interactions happen often enough and in similar enough ways to sustain the I-Identities it underwrites’. As such, we are interested in how the *Guidelines* prescribe how the prospective teacher should come to know the preferred ethical substance. Our analysis of discursive authority sources is therefore concerned with (i) ‘who/what engages the cultivation of the ethical substance?’ and (ii) ‘how do they strategically go about it?’ In short, while Clarke (2009) is concerned with discursive authorities in terms of the ‘why’ and the ‘what’, we are concerned with the ‘who’ and the ‘how’.
4. *The self-practices of teacher identity*—Clarke (2009, p. 191) defines self-practices as ‘the techniques and practices we [teachers] use to fashion and shape our teaching selves’. We consider self-practices in two ways. On one hand, we recognise self-practices as a form of ‘self-examination of consciousness and the confession of one’s thoughts and acts’ (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 175), a ‘verbalisation of thoughts’ (Foucault, 1982b, p. 48) and ‘a truth-telling activity’ (Besley, 2007; Peters, 2003). In this regard, self-practices are deeply

personal and deeply reflective. Two of Foucault's, 1982a (p. 101) self-techniques are notable here: (i) 'the importance of writing' in particular 'personal writing: taking notes on the readings, conversations, and reflections that one hears or has or does' (Foucault, 1982a, p. 101); and (ii) 'habitual self-reflection', i.e. 'to come back inside oneself and examine the "riches" that one has deposited there' (Foucault, 1982a, p. 101). This self-technique has relevance for teacher education purposes particularly given the emphasis placed on reflective portfolio work. On the other hand, we consider self-practices from a more interpersonal perspective, relating to 'the confession of one's thoughts and acts' (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 175) to 'experts of subjectivity who transfigure existential questions about the purpose of life and the meaning of suffering into technical questions of the most effective ways of managing malfunction and improving 'quality of life' (Rose, 1998, p. 151). This self-technique has relevance for mentoring relationships and the professional conversations that sustain them. We are concerned with how the *Guidelines* frame self-practices from both perspectives.

Clarke's ethico-political framework is robust on a number of grounds: (i) it is comprehensive vis-à-vis teacher becoming; (ii) it facilitates multi-level analysis; (iii) it provides a sociocultural framing of teacher Education policy; (iv) it affords micro-analytical study; and (v) it is transferable. First, the framework affords new ways of thinking about and undertaking education policy analysis focussing on becoming a teacher which, in many ways, complement Biesta (2009, 2015), in particular the socialisation and subjectification domains of 'good' teaching. On the one hand, the framework has breadth, i.e. it establishes horizontal interrelationships between the axes: what is the purpose of the policy (telos), what subjectivities are required to realise this purpose (ethical substance), how do we come to know these subjectivities (authority sources) and how do we make sense of the subjectivities (self-practices). On the other hand, and noting the case for blending some of the axes (Drummond, 2003; Gormley, 2020), the integrity of each axis affords opportunity for analytical depth which illuminates vertical patterns within the axes. Such patterns, across and within the axes, deepen the methodological utility of Clarke's (2009) framework. Second, it facilitates a multi-level analysis of teacher identity. For example, it complements and extends Gee's (2000, p. 100) framework for using identity as an analytical lens in terms of the interrelationship between 'institutional-identity', 'discursive-identity' and 'affinity-identity'. Third, it provides a socio-cultural framework for understanding teacher learning affording rich opportunities for framing the reification of policy through the lens of prospective teacher participation in the process which that policy guides (Wenger, 1998). Fourth, it is an established and effective tool for interrogating teacher narratives of identity formation at the micro level (Gormley, 2020; Gu et al., 2022; Gu & Lai, 2019; Guo et al., 2021; Hennig, 2013; Karnovsky et al., 2022; Miller et al., 2017; Niesche & Haase, 2012; Woolhouse, 2023; Wrench & Garrett, 2015). Finally, it has transferability as an analytic frame for macro identity work in education and other professions.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

While we note that the scope of the *Guidelines* extends to both primary and post-primary teacher education, as this paper is part of a larger investigation, we focus our analysis on primary school teacher ethico-political identity. The following research questions guided our study: (i) what is the 'preferred' ethico-political identity of the Irish primary school teacher in terms of telos, ethical substance and self-practices; and (ii) what are the 'preferred' discursive authorities that enable it.

## METHOD

Broadly applying a critical discourse analysis approach (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002), there were two steps to our analysis. First, using Bowe et al.'s (1992) policy cycle, Ball's (1993) policy-as-discourse and Gale's (1999) intertextuality, we considered the *Guidelines* as a discursive practice. Second, we used the questions outlined in Table 1 to conduct a broad deductive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2022).

Programme inputs, processes and outputs were considered against all axes. Once telos was identified in the preferred programme inputs, the processes and outcomes were interrogated to determine the knowledge sources and mode of being required to achieve it. Substance was most evident in the preferred programme outcomes which were subsequently interrogated to determine the teacher attributes required to realise it. Once substance was identified, the *Guidelines* were interrogated to determine the authority sources, experts of subjectivity and modes of engagement/sense-making that facilitated it. These were most evident in preferred programme inputs and to a large extent reinforced within the preferred programme outputs. Once identified, authority sources were interrogated to determine self-practices: these were most evident in inputs and processes. The first author conducted the initial analysis; emerging themes and associated data were discussed with the second author throughout.

## FINDINGS

We would like to make four discrete, yet interconnected claims: (i) the telos of primary school teacher identity is to critically implement national educational policy; (ii) telos is achieved through an ethical substance which is reflexive in its orientation and is supported by seven subjective modes of teacher engagement across two phases; (iii) the ethical substance is appropriated through four major discursive authorities that utilise three ubiquitous modes of interpretation; and (iv) the modes of interpretation are crystallised through two key inter-related self-practices. Figure 1 demonstrates the interrelationship between the axes and the vertical patterns within the axes.

**TABLE 1** Questions that we asked of the document relative to Clarke (2009).

	<b>Micro unit of analysis (Clarke, 2009, pp 190–192)</b>	<b>Macro unit of analysis: the questions we asked of the <i>Guidelines</i></b>
Telos	What is my ultimate endpoint, goal or purpose as a teacher?	What is the purpose of being a primary school teacher?
Ethical substance	What part of myself pertains to teaching and what forms of subjectivity constitute—or what forms of subjectivity do I use to constitute my teaching self?	What are the preferred attributes of the self that pertain to the task of teaching?
Sources of discursive authority	Why should I cultivate certain attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and what sources of authority do I recognise as a teacher?	What are the sources and mechanisms of discursive authority that underpin the cultivation of expected attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of the primary school teacher?
Self-practices	What self-practices do I use to fashion and shape my teaching self?	What are the preferred self-practices of the prospective Irish primary school teacher?

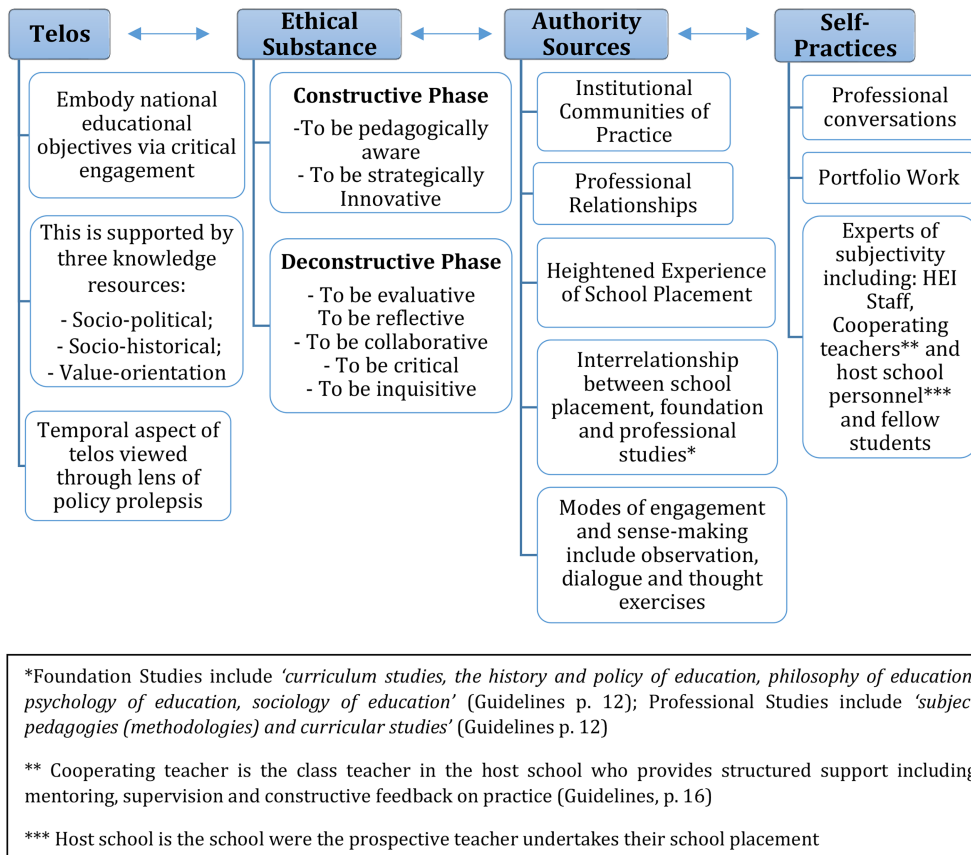


FIGURE 1 Overview of findings—horizontal interrelationship and vertical patterns.

## The telos of teacher identity: Navigating policy as prolepsis

Our analysis reveals that the preferred telos of teacher identity are: (i) primary school teachers should embody national policy objectives via critical engagement; (ii) embodying national policy objectives is enabled by three policy knowledge resources, i.e. socio-historical, socio-political and value-oriented understandings of policy; and (iii) the temporal dimension of policy vis-à-vis telos can be viewed through the lens of policy prolepsis. Telos is the logical starting point (an anchor axis of sorts) when conducting ethico-political identity policy work.

Telos as the embodiment of national policy objectives is clearly and succinctly stated as one of the aims of ITE programmes: 'programmes should equip newly qualified teachers with a set of competences to facilitate quality learning and cater for national priorities such as literacy, numeracy and inclusion' (*Guidelines*, p. 9). The expectation that programmes, teacher educators and prospective teachers critically engage with national policy objectives is evident across the *Guidelines* vis-à-vis sections on inputs, processes and most especially in the outputs. For example, indicative evidence in the case of inputs includes the stipulation that the conceptual framework guiding the ITE programme be 'developed and informed by research and by the Council's Policy on the Continuum of Teacher Education and its Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers' (*Guidelines*, p. 9). Similarly, in the case of processes, indicative examples include the stipulation that 'programme components should draw upon the Teaching Council's Code of Professional

Conduct' (*Guidelines*, p. 12). Embodying national objectives is also particularly evident in the rationale for foundation studies, 'to enhance students' understanding of the Irish education system, locate it in context and enable students to think critically about it' (*Guidelines*, p. 13), and the content of foundations studies which 'include curriculum studies, the history and policy of education, philosophy of education, psychology of education, sociology of education'. In the case of outputs, indicative text includes knowledge of 'the sector in which he/she will be teaching and his/her professional responsibilities within it' (*Guidelines*, p. 25), to 'know and uphold the core values and professional commitments which are set out in the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers' (*Guidelines*, p. 29) and to 'practise within the statutory framework pertaining to education, including child protection guidelines' (*Guidelines*, p. 29).

Telos as the embodiment of national policy objectives is enabled by three knowledge resources (i.e. socio-historical, socio-political and value-oriented understandings of policy). Together these prescribe a policy-oriented mode of being. This is particularly evident in programme outputs ([Table 2](#)).

Firstly, enabling a socio-historical understanding of policy priorities embraces four notable knowledge-resource signposts: (i) the teleology of primary or post-primary school education; (ii) policy cycles and associated spheres of influence (Bowe et al., 1992); (iii) the policy development and implementation process; and (iv) the roles and responsibilities of policy stakeholders. Secondly, enabling a socio-political understanding of policy priorities is represented by two knowledge-resource signposts (i) a pedagogic relationship with children which resonates strongly with constructivist educational theory acknowledging 'the importance of teacher-pupil relationships in the teaching/learning process' (*Guidelines*, p. 26) and the centrality of children's agency/voice; and (ii) echoing Hargreaves's (2000, p. 162) third age of teacher professionalism and learning ('the age of the collegial professional'), the teacher's active participation and contribution to schools as 'professional learning communities of practice' (*Guidelines*, p. 28) Finally, enabling a value-oriented understanding of policy priorities privileges constructivist pedagogies and collegial professionalism as central dispositional pillars of teacher agency required for sustaining practice within those traditions. This is evident in terms of programme inputs (the relationship between the HEI,

**TABLE 2** The telos of teacher identity: a policy-oriented mode of being.

Socio-historical understanding of policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The origins and development of the statutory and policy-making framework pertaining to education, his/her specific role and responsibilities emanating from that framework, together with the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders, including parents. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 25)</li> <li>The nature and purposes of education and the social and policy contexts in which the aims of education are defined and implemented. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 25)</li> </ul>
Socio-political understanding of policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sector in which he/she will be teaching and his/her professional responsibilities within it. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 25)</li> <li>The subject matter, pedagogical content and related methodology of the relevant curricula/syllabi and guidelines. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 26)</li> <li>Practice within the statutory framework pertaining to education, including child protection guidelines. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 29)</li> </ul>
Value-oriented understanding of policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The unique role of the teacher as professional in providing for the holistic development of students, and the complex and intricate nature of teaching, as explicated in the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 25)</li> <li>Children's rights, including their right to a voice in various matters that relate to their lives. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 25)</li> </ul>

**TABLE 3** Policy prolepsis: the temporal dimension of telos.

- Critically evaluate the attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning which inform and guide his/her professional practice. (*Guidelines*, p. 27)
- Reflect critically on his/her practice on an ongoing basis so as to inform that practice. (*Guidelines*, p. 27)
- Review plans on the basis of evaluation data and in consultation with others, as appropriate. (*Guidelines*, p. 28)
- Conduct and apply relevant research as appropriate to his/her teaching context, identifying, critically analysing and integrating new knowledge regarding curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into his/her practice. (*Guidelines*, p. 28)
- Contribute to the development of educational standards and guidelines. (*Guidelines*, p. 29)

the cooperating school and school placements) processes (the relationship between the HEI tutor, the HEI lecturer, the cooperating teacher and the prospective teacher) and the outputs (the learning outcomes associated with communication and building relationships). The importance of enabling a value-oriented understanding of policy is reinforced by the explicit intertextual emphasis placed on the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (Teaching Council of Ireland, 2007, 2012, 2016), evident in multiple references throughout the *Guidelines*.

There is a temporal dimension of policy vis-à-vis telos that can be theorised through the lens of policy prolepsis. Evident in the socio-historical, socio-political and value-oriented policy knowledge resources, the *Guidelines* seek to enable a particular type of policy prolepsis which situates the teacher as an agent of policy not only in reifying policy into practice but also in terms of contributing to policy through the knowledge that teachers generate through their participation in such practices. This is evident in the indicative examples in [Table 3](#).

This particular policy prolepsis has an implied duality. First, it relates to how teachers, as subjects of policy, interpret policy to construct their teaching and themselves as teachers. Second, and for informing future policy, it relates to how teachers understand the implications of that interpretation. Central, therefore, to the form of policy prolepsis inherent in the *Guidelines* is to enable prospective teachers to understand this duality and, applying Rose (1993, p. 297), to appreciate that they are 'subjects of authority in one [policy] field' but that they also 'play a part in its exercise in another'.

## The ethical substance of teacher identity: Seven modes of reflexive engagement

Our analysis of the ethical substance, notably in the programme outcomes, revealed the following vertical structure: (i) there are seven subjective modes of reflexive teacher engagement; (ii) these modes are animated in two interdependent phases; (iii) each phase has its unique practice dynamic (firstly, constructive and secondly, deconstructive); and (iv) each practice dynamic emphasises policy in a distinctly different way (policy prolepsis in the constructive phase and policy analepsis in the deconstructive). We believe that the ethical substance of teacher identity constitutes the dispositional grit required of the teacher to fulfil the telos.

The constructive phase, as evidenced in [Table 4](#), comprises two modes of reflexive engagement, being (i) pedagogically aware and (ii) strategically innovative. Both are forward-looking in orientation and, in many respects, contingent on the extent and scope of the prospective teacher's policy prolepsis. In other words, pedagogic strategy is the teacher's policy prolepsis made practicable.

'Being pedagogically aware' is a mode of engagement that enables teachers to align policy demands (in this case constructivist principles and values, pedagogic content

**TABLE 4** Prolepsis: constructive modes of teacher engagement.

To be pedagogically aware in relation to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The subject matter, pedagogical content and related methodology of the relevant curricula/syllabi and guidelines. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 26)</li> <li>• Knowledge of the individual potential of pupils, dispositions towards learning, varying backgrounds, identities, experiences and learning styles to planning for teaching, learning and assessment. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 27)</li> </ul>
To be strategically innovative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a range of strategies to support, monitor and assess pupils' approach to learning and their progress. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 27)</li> <li>• Engage with pupils in order to develop effective, creative and imaginative strategies that promote individual and shared learning and access, develop and use a variety of curriculum resources. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 27)</li> </ul>

knowledge and associated methodologies) with the emergent, evolving knowledge (derived through the observational opportunities afforded by a relational pedagogic approach) about children's holistic and learning needs. Pedagogic awareness is the basis for innovative strategic planning. 'Being innovative' as a mode of engagement relates to the individuation, differentiation and integration of educational objectives relative to the emergent needs of the child in a manner that simultaneously 'challenges, acknowledges, celebrates, motivates and inspires' (*Guidelines*, p. 27) children's learning. Constructive modes of engagement are intended to equip the prospective teacher with the necessary resolve to strategically reify education policy documents in what Shulman (2007, pp. 7–8) termed the 'buzzing, blooming confusion of everyday life in classrooms'. A key feature of the constructive phase is the acknowledgement that pedagogic strategy is an informed 'best-fit', or as argued by Webb and Gulson (2012, p. 96), 'a best guess about the meaning of policy'. In this regard, the ascribed stance towards constructing pedagogic strategy within the *Guidelines* should assume that the achievement of pedagogic objectives, albeit likely, is not certain. Acknowledging this uncertainty is a fundamental component of policy prolepsis, albeit that it may be somewhat counter-intuitive and uncomfortable to do so. It is dilemmatic in essence. In this regard, we believe that Webb and Gulson's (2012, p. 96) argument that 'policy is an always already failed attempt to manage chaos' is equally applicable to education practice and, as evidenced in the deconstructive phase, recognising this anomaly is a central component of the preferred ethical substance of teacher identity.

The deconstructive phase can be understood in policy analepsis terms, i.e. it is essentially backward-looking and is concerned with 'bringing the past into the present' (Brescó de Luna, 2017, p. 282), importantly, in this instance, with a view to enhancing future practice. There are five modes of reflexive teacher engagement within the deconstructive phase. As is evidenced in Table 5, the modes of engagement increase in reflexive complexity.

Located primarily within evidence-based practice discourse, 'being evaluative' relates to addressing the effectiveness of pedagogic strategy in terms of the 'achievement of curriculum objectives' (*Guidelines*, p. 27) and 'learner progress towards those outcomes' (*Guidelines*, p. 28). Essentially, 'being evaluative' enables the prospective teacher to isolate what they consider the practice issue, which in turn informs further reflection. Broadly speaking, 'being reflective', as it is framed in the *Guidelines*, has three orientations: (i) an introspective value-orientation that addresses and challenges 'the attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning which inform and guide professional practice' (*Guidelines*, p. 27); (ii) a prospective effectiveness orientation in terms of 'reflect[ing] critically on his/her practice on an ongoing basis so as to inform that practice' (*Guidelines*, p. 27); and (iii) an extrospective collaborative

TABLE 5 Analepsis: deconstructive modes of teacher engagement.

To be evaluative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess the achievement of curriculum objectives and adapt his/her teaching accordingly. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 27)</li> <li>Review plans on the basis of evaluation data and in consultation with others, as appropriate. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p.28)</li> </ul>
To be reflective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Models of planning coherent, differentiated and integrated teaching programmes which are informed by ongoing reflection on professional practice. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 25)</li> <li>Demonstrate an understanding and consciousness of professional practice issues through the process of reflection on experience. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 29)</li> </ul>
To be collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrate a professional commitment to seeking, accepting and acting upon constructive advice. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 28)</li> <li>Share specialist knowledge in a collegial manner to support and enhance teaching and learning. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 29)</li> </ul>
To be critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Critically evaluate the attitudes and beliefs about teaching and learning which inform and guide his/her professional practice. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 27)</li> <li>Engage in data gathering and critically analyse and evaluate relevant knowledge and research. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 27)</li> </ul>
To be inquisitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct and apply relevant research as appropriate to his/her teaching context, identifying, critically analysing and integrating new knowledge regarding curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into his/her practice. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 28)</li> <li>To contribute to the development of educational standards and guidelines. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 29)</li> </ul>

orientation that privileges the active participation in professional learning communities (*Guidelines*, p. 28). Indeed 'being collaborative', as it is framed, privileges the reflective, collegial value of 'seeking, accepting and acting on and constructive advice' (*Guidelines*, p. 28) and 'sharing specialist knowledge' (*Guidelines*, p. 29). 'Being critical' intensifies the momentum afforded by 'being reflective', leading to more complex policy analepsis and introspective self-critical analysis. 'Being critical' is closely connected with 'being inquisitive' about practice and the emergence and subsequent integration of 'new knowledge regarding curriculum, pedagogy and assessment into practice' (*Guidelines*, p. 28) and teacher contribution 'to the development of educational standards and guidelines' (*Guidelines*, p. 29).

Although we have compartmentalised the ethical substance into phases and modes, it is important to note the iterative interrelationship between the phases and the ubiquitous character of the modes. While we acknowledge that each phase has a distinct temporal emphasis (prolepsis in the constructive phase and analepsis in the deconstructive phase), we note that they are mutually inclusive. Bresc  de Luna (2017, p. 282) provides important considerations regarding this mutuality, in particular 'how prolepsis is at play in certain social representations of the past', especially when those representations, as in this case, are goal-oriented. In this regard, we note that prolepsis begets analepsis and vice versa.

## Discursive authority sources of teacher identity: Engagement and sense-making

Our analysis highlights four major sources of discursive authority: (i) experiences in communities of professional practice; (ii) engaging in professional relationships; (iii) the heightened experience of school placement; and (iv) the interrelationship between foundation studies, professional studies and school placement. As is evident in Table 6, and applying Foucault (1982a), the *Guidelines* prefer three modes of engaging with and making sense of experience within these sources: (i) observation; (ii) dialogue; and (iii) thought exercises. Each mode complements and is influenced by the other; combined they enable the telos

TABLE 6 Discursive authority sources of teacher identity and modes of subjectation.

Source	Modes of engagement and sense-making		
	Observation	Dialogue	Thought exercises
Institutional communities of practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appropriate structures should be in place to facilitate the participation of staff and students in relevant deliberation and decision-making processes. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 21)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The culture of the HEI should promote and facilitate a process of engagement between student teachers and staff. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 22)</li> </ul>
Professional relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modelling of effective teaching methodologies and for teaching the skills necessary for meaningful reflective practice. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 20)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote reflection, discussion, simulation and analyses of cases and situations. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 22)</li> <li>Mentoring, supervision and constructive feedback on practice. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 16)</li> <li>Seek and receive advice and guidance in a supportive environment. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 13)</li> </ul>
Heightened experience of school placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Systematic observation in the school, for collaborative work with school staff and for structured participation in school life. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 16)</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for critical analysis of the experience, as well as observation of, and conversations with, experienced teachers. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 16)</li> </ul>
Interrelationship between school placement, foundation and professional studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop students' understanding of, and capacity to critically engage with, curriculum aims, design, policy, reform, pedagogy and assessment. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 13)</li> <li>Provide research-informed insights into student teachers' understanding of the practices of teaching, learning and assessment. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 13)</li> <li>Illuminate key dimensions of the professional context in which the thinking and actions of teachers are carried out. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 13)</li> </ul>		

Abbreviation: HEI, higher education institution.

and ethical substance through what could be described as 'a training in thought by means of thought' (Foucault, 1982a, p. 101).

For illustrative purposes, we will focus our discussion on the interrelationship between school placement, foundation and professional studies and the modes of engagement/sense-making therein.

The practice-informed thought exercises arising from this interrelationship as framed in the *Guidelines* resonate with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999, p. 255) 'knowledge-for-practice'. Indicative text in this regard relates to the stated objectives of professional studies including (i) 'subject pedagogies', (ii) 'pedagogical content knowledge', (iii) 'communicative skills' and (iv) 'self-critical learning with ample opportunities for teamwork and enquiry-based initiatives with colleagues' (*Guidelines*, p. 13). The *Guidelines* specify a number of modes of engagement and sense-making utilised within professional studies, namely observation, dialogue and listening. Observation particularly relates to 'modelling effective teaching methodologies and for teaching the skills necessary for meaningful reflective practice' (*Guidelines*, p. 20) and 'the active teaching methodologies they wish student teachers to emulate' (*Guidelines*, p. 22) but also emphasising, in many regards, Lortie's (1975) 'apprenticeship of observation'. This is evidenced in the stated professional competence required of HEI lecturers in terms of possessing 'significant

experience of teaching in the relevant sector' (*Guidelines*, p. 19) and taking 'lead roles with regard to assimilating, conducting, publishing and supervising research' (*Guidelines*, p. 19). Dialogue particularly relates to making 'connections between methods courses and the social context of practice in classrooms and schools' (*Guidelines*, p. 10) and 'reflection, discussion, simulation and analyses of cases and situations' (*Guidelines*, p. 22). Listening is an important subset of dialogue, in particular through structured support such as 'mentoring, supervision and constructive feedback on practice' (*Guidelines*, p. 16) or re-listening in the case of 'revisiting key concepts and themes' (*Guidelines*, p. 22) over the course of the programme.

School placement, as framed in the *Guidelines*, objectifies the 'development of the teacher as a reflective practitioner' (*Guidelines*, p. 16) through 'a reflective, enquiry-oriented approach' (*Guidelines*, p. 16). This resonates with Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999, p. 262) 'knowledge-in-practice' and the 'knowledge [that] is acquired through experience through considered and deliberative reflection about or inquiry into experience'. School placement is subsequently framed as a distinctly relational endeavour. This is evidenced in some of the stated purposes of school placement: (i) 'observe experienced teachers teaching and be involved in a wide range of school activities'; (ii) 'reflect critically on their practice'; (iii) 'receive and respond to feedback on their practice'; and (iv) 'seek and receive advice and guidance in a supportive environment' (*Guidelines*, p. 13). Dialogue is the central mode of engagement and sense-making within school placement. The scope and content of such dialogue are temporally framed. Pre-placement dialogue is central to 'structured preparation' (*Guidelines*, p. 16) and involving 'student teachers, through experiential learning, in activities similar to those they will use with their students' (*Guidelines*, p. 22). During school placement, dialogue is central to 'mentoring, supervision and constructive feedback on practice' (*Guidelines*, p. 16) where the prospective teacher can 'seek and receive advice and guidance' (*Guidelines*, p. 13) with 'opportunities for critical analysis of the experience, as well as observation of, and conversations with, experienced teachers' (*Guidelines*, p. 16) in the reflexive safety of 'a supportive environment' (*Guidelines*, p. 13) within a host school 'community of good professional practice' (*Guidelines*, p. 16). Post-placement privileges dialogue as 'collective de-briefing and reflection immediately after the placement' (*Guidelines*, p. 16). Acknowledging the critical importance of school placement and its high stakes nature, dialogue also incorporates 'the personal and social development and pastoral care of student teachers' (*Guidelines*, p. 20). In summary, the *Guidelines* emphasise school placement as a critical, dialogic and collaborative experience. In ethico-political terms, the enquiry-based learning at the root of that experience relates to how, and the extent to which, the prospective teacher implements and makes sense of the preferred telos and ethical substance.

Finally, foundation studies focus on Cochran-Smith and Lytle's (1999, p. 272) 'knowledge-of-practice' which is necessary for the 'considered and deliberative reflection about or inquiry into experience' (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999, p. 262). This is evidenced in the stated objectives of foundation studies which include content such as 'curriculum studies, the history and policy of education, philosophy of education, psychology of education, sociology of education, macro curriculum studies' (*Guidelines*, p. 13) all of which objectify critical engagement, critical thought and research-informed insights for the stated purpose of 'illuminating key dimensions of the professional context' and providing 'the basis of a strong professional ethic in teaching' (*Guidelines*, p. 13). In this regard, foundation studies ultimately emphasise the thinking tools that crystallise the sense-making dialogue that is central to professional studies and school placement.

## The self-practices of teacher identity: Writing the self

Our analysis of the *Guidelines* highlights two interwoven confessional self-practices: (i) professional conversations; and (ii) portfolio work. On the surface, these may seem relatively

straightforward but when the confessional content relates to ethico-political experiences (e.g. navigating telos, troubling the ethical substance through the sense-making experiences of participating in and interacting with the various discursive authority sources), the potential scope of the professional conversations and portfolio increases dramatically. While the previous discussion on dialogic discursive authorities has captured in many respects the nature of professional conversations, it is worth considering the 'preferred' experts of subjectivity and the 'preferred' purpose of professional conversations as articulated in the *Guidelines*.

As is evident in [Table 7](#), professional conversations are largely framed 'to achieve coherence between the HEI-based programme and school placements' (*Guidelines*, p. 22). While predominantly interpersonal and dialogic in orientation, professional conversations are central to more personal self-techniques and, as such, are interwoven with the major self-practice articulated in the *Guidelines*, the professional portfolio.

The professional portfolio, prescribed as a mandatory element of ITE programmes, has five stated purposes: (i) 'to document' practice; (ii) 'to support the process of reflection'; (iii)

**TABLE 7** Professional conversations as self-practice.

Expert of subjectivity	Purpose of professional conversation
HEI staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate student teachers' personal development and their growth into their professional role, enabling them to become responsible, trustworthy, effective, reflective practitioners. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 10)</li> <li>Appropriate structures should be in place to facilitate the participation of staff and students in relevant deliberation and decision-making processes. The skill of decision-making is central to the role of a teacher. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 21)</li> <li>There should be a focus on students' engagement and understanding with provision made for revisiting key concepts and themes over the course of the programme. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 22)</li> <li>Involve student teachers, through experiential learning, in activities similar to those they will use with their students. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 22)</li> <li>Promote reflection, discussion, simulation and analyses of cases and situations. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 22)</li> </ul>
HEI placement tutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support and mentor student teachers and evaluate their practice, while they are engaged in the placement element of the programme. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 6)</li> <li>The personal and social development and pastoral care of student teachers. The role of the HEI placement tutor is central to this. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 22)</li> </ul>
Cooperating teacher and conversations in the host school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured support should include mentoring, supervision and constructive feedback on practice. In that context, students should be afforded opportunities for critical analysis of the experience, as well as observation of, and conversations with, experienced teachers. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 16)</li> <li>Opportunities for the student teacher to undertake a variety of nonteaching activities, to engage with parents and co-professionals and to observe a wide range of teaching approaches. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 17)</li> <li>Communicate effectively with pupils, parents, colleagues, the school principal, school management, co-professionals and the wider community by using appropriate skills, styles and systems to suit the given situation and setting. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 27)</li> <li>Actively participate in professional learning communities which engage in group reflection, learning and practice. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 28)</li> </ul>
Fellow students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities should be provided for students to network with fellow students and with students of other programmes. In particular, provision should be made to facilitate and support club and student union activities. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 20)</li> <li>Cross-sectoral engagement between student teachers at primary and post-primary level should be encouraged. (<i>Guidelines</i>, p. 22)</li> </ul>

Abbreviation: HEI, higher education institution.

'to identify areas that require support or guidance'; (iv) to facilitate students to become 'more conscious of the theories and assumptions that guide their practice'; and (v) to provide 'a basis for collaborative dialogue about teaching' (*Guidelines*, p. 6). It is also a mechanism for evidencing programme learning outcomes (*Guidelines*, p. 24). The portfolio, as it is framed, fits convincingly with Foucault's (1983b, pp. 207–222) appreciation of 'self-writing' as a practice of the self that enables 'the fashioning of accepted discourses, recognised as true, into rational principles of action' (Foucault, 1983b, p. 209). The portfolio functions, in this regard, as a truth-telling instrument that facilitates an awareness of the relationship that one has with oneself vis-à-vis the telos, ethical substance and discursive authority sources. Indicative text highlights that the portfolio has a number of truth-telling foci including 'class teaching and other school experiences; planning for teaching, learning and assessment; personal and professional reflections; recording of pupils'/students' work; recording of professional conversations with the Co-operating Teacher, HEI Placement Tutor, fellow students' (*Guidelines*, p. 17).

In many regards, the portfolio has a complex temporal focus. First, the portfolio is framed to evidence the extent of the prospective teacher's policy prolepsis in terms of planning for practice. Second, and in analepsis terms, the portfolio is framed to capture reflections on areas of practice in which the prospective teacher may require 'support or guidance' but also reflections on the professional conversations that the prospective teacher has with experts of subjectivity in terms of both practice problem and remedy. Third, in both prolepsis and analepsis terms, the portfolio is framed as 'a basis for collaborative dialogue about teaching' (*Guidelines*, p. 6). In this regard, the portfolio is not only envisaged as a way of accounting for oneself but it is also envisaged as a tool to be used to guide increasingly more complex dialogue surrounding such accounts. In many ways, the portfolio as a self-practice is framed to capture the iterative relationship between prolepsis and analepsis. Fourth, the portfolio is framed as a mechanism 'to facilitate students to become more conscious of the theories and assumptions that guide their practice' (*Guidelines*, p. 6). Foucault's (1983b, pp. 207–222) outline of the relationship between reading and self-writing is helpful in this regard. Finally, the portfolio is framed to support 'a process of reflection' beyond initial teacher education and 'provide the focus for personal and professional development during the newly qualified teacher's induction period' (*Guidelines*, p. 23). In many ways, therefore, the portfolio is framed as a self-practice that has reflective longevity. As noted by Dysthe and Engelsen (2004, p. 245), using Wenger (1998), portfolio 'gives form' to experience. Ultimately, the portfolio, when viewed as a self-practice, enables an expansive emic understanding of the experiences that underpin ethico-political identity (re)formation.

## CONCLUSION: POLICY ANALYSIS AND TEACHER EDUCATION

In the context of a chorus of voices that seek to understand the complexity of teaching, our ethico-political analysis of a national teacher competence framework is valuable for teacher education on the following grounds: it is (i) expansive; (ii) conceptually robust; (iii) generative; and (iv) comparative within and across professions.

First, it is expansive. While we recognise the utility of codified etic competence frameworks, we also recognise the need to capture the richness of teaching and what it is to be a teacher in a more emic way. Our application of Clarke's ethico-political framework, which focuses attention on purpose (telos), teacher subjectivities (substance), ITE experiences (authority sources) and reflective tools (self-practices) goes some way towards doing both. In short, our use of Clarke's framework enables an emic reading of an etic text.

Second, it is conceptually robust. We have demonstrated that the horizontal interrelationship between the axes, already well established in ethico-political identity micro-analyses, is equally evidenced when the framework is used for macro-analyses. Furthermore, the vertical patterns that we have evidenced within each axis deepen our understanding of this interrelationship.

Third, it is generative in posing valuable questions vis-à-vis teaching and teacher education policies and practices. The axes, telos, substance, sources and self-practices produce relatively straightforward questions that have significant depth: what is the task of teaching, what do teachers need to know undertake the task, who do teachers need to be when they are undertaking it, what attributes will help teachers undertake the task, what experiences will facilitate the development of these attributes and how can teachers assess their own development? Furthermore, framing teacher identity formation as an ethico-political project is generative for teacher reflection purposes, for example, vis-à-vis self-writing/portfolio work and professional mentoring conversations. Furthermore, concepts such as identity substance, discursive authority sources, self-practices and telos are potentially generative reflective pillars on which to professionally engage vis-à-vis the (re)formation of one's ever-evolving teacher identity.

Fourth, it has comparative value within and across professions. Given the proliferation of frameworks across almost all domains of teaching, ethico-political identity policy work is useful for unravelling preferred identities across teacher education continua and in so doing plotting ethico-political identity demands as teachers traverse their career. For example, the preferred ethico-political identity of the newly qualified teacher, the cooperating teacher, the middle leader, school leader or teacher educator invites further macro- and micro-focused ethico-political policy research. Furthermore, it is transferable across various professions. As such, this paper advocates for and exemplifies an ethico-political analysis of a key national document in teacher education as one profession among many with such consequential documents.

### FUNDING INFORMATION

The first author would like to acknowledge conference funding received from Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland for presentation of preliminary findings at TEPE Conference 'Enhancing the value of teacher education research: Implications for policy and practice' in Graz, Austria during April 2022.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Open access funding provided by IReL.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors report no conflict of interests in undertaking this research.

### DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available in Teaching Council of Ireland at <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/website/en/publications/ite-professional-accreditation/>. These data were derived from the following resources available in the public domain: <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/publications/ite-professional-accreditation/criteria-and-guide-lines-for-programme-providers-march-2017-.pdf>

### ETHICS STATEMENT

As the research did not require human participants, institutional ethical approval was not required.

### ORCID

Desmond Carswell  <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-4926-9180>

Paul F. Conway  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6513-7310>

## REFERENCES

- Altan, S., & Lane, J. F. (2018). Teachers' narratives: A source for exploring the influences of teachers' significant life experiences on their dispositions and teaching practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 74, 238–248. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.05.012>
- Bacchi, C. (2000). Policy as discourse: What does it mean? Where does it get us? *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 21(1), 45–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596300050005493>
- Ball, S. J. (1993). What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 13(2), 10–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630930130203>
- Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), 215–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093022000043065>
- Ball, S. J. (2015). What is policy? 21 years later: Reflections on the possibilities of policy research. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 36(3), 306–313. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2015.1015279>
- Ball, S. J., Maguire, M., Braun, A., & Hoskins, K. (2011). Policy actors: Doing policy work in schools. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 32(4), 625–639. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2011.601565>
- Beijaard, D., & Meijer, P. (2017). Developing the personal and professional in making a teacher identity. In D. J. Clandinin & J. Hsu (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of research on teacher education* (1st ed., pp. 177–192). SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Berkovich, I., & Benoliel, P. (2020a). Marketing teacher quality: Critical discourse analysis of OECD documents on effective teaching and TALIS. *Critical Studies in Education*, 61(4), 496–511. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2018.1521338>
- Berkovich, I., & Benoliel, P. (2020b). The educational aims of the OECD in its TALIS insight and lesson reports: Exploring societal orientations. *Critical Studies in Education*, 61(2), 166–179. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2017.1370428>
- Besley, T. (2007). Chapter 5: Foucault, truth-telling and technologies of the self: Confessional practices of the self and schools. *Counterpoints*, 292, 55–69. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42979092>
- Biesta, G. J. (2004). Education, accountability, and the ethical demand: Can the democratic potential of accountability be regained? *Educational Theory*, 54(3), 233–250. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0013-2004.2004.00017.x>
- Biesta, G. J. (2009). Good education in an age of measurement: On the need to reconnect with the question of purpose in education. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 21(1), 33–46. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11092-008-9064-9>
- Biesta, G. J. (2015). What is education for?: On good education, teacher judgement, and educational professionalism. *European Journal of Education*, 50(1), 75–87. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12109>
- Bowe, R., Ball, S. J., & Gold, A. (1992). *Reforming education and changing schools: Case studies in policy sociology*. Routledge.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: A practical guide*. SAGE.
- Brescò de Luna, I. (2017). The end into the beginning: Prolepsis and the reconstruction of the collective past. *Culture & Psychology*, 23(2), 280–294. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X17695761>
- Caena, F. (2011). *Literature review teachers' core competences: Requirements and development*. European Commission.
- Caena, F. (2014). Teacher competence frameworks in Europe: Policy-as-discourse and policy-as-practice. *European Journal of Education*, 49(3), 311–331. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26609223>
- Caena, F. (2019). *Developing a european framework for the personal, social and learning to learn key competence (LifEComp)* (Y. Punie, Ed.). Publications Office of the European Union. <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC117987>
- Caena, F., & Redecker, C. (2019). Aligning teacher competence frameworks to 21st century challenges: The case for the european digital competence framework for educators (*Digcompedu*). *European Journal of Education*, 54(3), 356–369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12345>
- Carlgrén, I., & Klette, K. (2008). Reconstructions of nordic teachers: Reform policies and teachers' work during the 1990s. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 52(2), 117–133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313830801915754>
- Clandinin, D. J. (2020). *Journeys in narrative inquiry: The selected works of D. Jean Clandinin*. Routledge.
- Clarke, M. (2009). The ethico-politics of teacher identity. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 41(2), 185–200. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2008.00420.x>
- Clarke, M., & Hennig, B. (2013). Motivation as ethical self-formation. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 45(1), 77–90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2012.715386>
- Clarke, M., & Moore, A. (2013). Professional standards, teacher identities and an ethics of singularity. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 43(4), 487–500. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764X.2013.819070>

- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. (1999). Relationships of knowledge and practice: Teacher learning in communities. *Review of Research in Education*, 24, 249–305. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X024001249>
- Conway, P. (2013). Cultural flashpoint: The politics of teacher education reform in Ireland. *The Educational Forum*, 77(1), 51–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131725.2013.739021>
- Conway, P., & Murphy, R. (2013). A rising tide meets a perfect storm: New accountabilities in teaching and teacher education in Ireland. *Irish Educational Studies*, 32(1), 11–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03323315.2013.773227>
- Conway, P., Murphy, R., Rath, A., & Hall, K. (2009). *Learning to teach and its implications for the continuum of teacher education: A nine-country cross-national study, report commissioned by the teaching council*. University College Cork and Teaching Council of Ireland. [www.teachingcouncil.ie](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie)
- Day, C., & Lee, J. C.-K. (2011). *New understandings of teacher's work emotions and educational change* (J. Day & C.-K. Lee, Eds., 1st ed.). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0545-6>
- Dean, M. (2010). *Governmentality: Power and rule in modern society* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dreyfus, H. L., & Rabinow, P. (1982). *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics*. University of Chicago Press.
- Drummond, J. (2003). Care of the self in a knowledge economy: Higher education, vocation and the ethics of Michel Foucault. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 35(1), 57–69. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1469-5812.00005>
- Dysthe, O., & Engelsen, K. (2004). Portfolios and assessment in teacher education in Norway: A theory-based discussion of different models in two sites. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 29(2), 239–258. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0260293042000188500>
- European Commission. (2013a). *Supporting teacher competence development for better learning outcomes*. European Commission.
- European Commission. (2013b). *Supporting teacher educators for better learning outcomes*. European Commission.
- Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006). Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(2), 219–232. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.09.002>
- Foucault, M. (1972). *The archaeology of knowledge and the discourse of language*. Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1977). Truth and power. In M. Foucault & C. Gordon (Eds.), *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings 1972–1977* (pp. 109–134). Harvester Press.
- Foucault, M. (1978). Governmentality. In G. Burchell, C. Gordon, & P. Miller (Eds.), *The Foucault effect: Studies in governmentality with two lectures by and an interview with Michael Foucault* (pp. 87–104). Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Foucault, M. (1982a). The hermeneutic of the subject. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The essential works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984. Vol. 1: Ethics* (pp. 93–109). Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (1982b). Technologies of the self. In L. H. Martin, H. Gutman, & P. H. Hutton (Eds.), *Technologies of the self: A seminar with Michel Foucault* (pp. 16–50). Tavistock.
- Foucault, M. (1983a). On the genealogy of ethics: An overview of a work in progress. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The essential works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984. Vol. 1: Ethics* (pp. 253–281). Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (1983b). Self-writing. In P. Rabinow (Ed.), *The essential works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984. Vol. 1: Ethics* (pp. 207–223). Penguin Books.
- Foucault, M. (1985). *The use of pleasure: Vol. 2 of the history of sexuality* (Translated from the French by Robert Hurley). Random House.
- Fransson, G., Gallant, A., & Shanks, R. (2018). Human elements and the pragmatic approach in the Australian, Scottish and Swedish standards for newly qualified teachers. *Journal of Educational Change*, 19(2), 243–267. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-018-9321-8>
- Gale, T. (1999). Policy trajectories: Treading the discursive path of policy analysis. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 20(3), 393–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0159630990200304>
- Gee, J. P. (2000). Chapter 3: Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. *Review of Research in Education*, 25(1), 99–125. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X025001099>
- Goodwin, A. L. (2021). Teaching standards, globalisation, and conceptions of teacher professionalism. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(1), 5–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02619768.2020.1833855>
- Gormley, K. (2020). Foucault's ethical self-formation and David's articulation of a creative self. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 52(14), 1493–1502. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2020.1733530>
- Grek, S. (2009). Governing by numbers: The PISA “effect” in Europe. *Journal of Education Policy*, 24(1), 23–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930802412669>
- Grossman, P., Hammerness, K., & McDonald, M. (2009). Redefining teaching, re-imagining teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice*, 15(2), 273–289. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600902875340>
- Grossman, P., & McDonald, M. (2008). Back to the future: Directions for research in teaching and teacher education. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(1), 184–205. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831207312906>
- Gu, M. M., Jiang, L., & Ou, W. A. (2022). Exploring the professional teacher identity as ethical self-formation of two multilingual native English teachers. *Language Teaching Research*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13621688221117061>

- Gu, M. M., & Lai, C. (2019). An ethical analysis of how ESL teachers construct their professional identities through the use of information technology in teaching. *British Educational Research Journal*, 45(5), 918–937. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3531>
- Guitart, M. E., & Ratner, C. (2011). A macro cultural psychological theory of identity. *Journal of Social Distress and Homeless*, 20(1–2), 1–22. <https://doi.org/10.1179/105307811805365016>
- Guo, X., Chen, G., & Sun, Y. (2021). An ethical analysis of native-speaking English teachers' identity construction in a mainland China university. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 42(3), 247–261. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2019.1684502>
- Hargreaves, A. (2000). Four ages of professionalism and professional learning. *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice*, 6(2), 151–182. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713698714>
- Hennig, B. (2013). Self-practices and ethical values in learning German. *System*, 41(4), 923–934. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2013.09.006>
- Holloway, J. (2021). Teachers and teaching: (re)thinking professionalism, subjectivity and critical inquiry. *Critical Studies in Education*, 62(4), 411–421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2021.1966065>
- Jørgensen, M., & Phillips, L. (2002). *Discourse analysis As theory and method*. SAGE Publications, Limited. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208871>
- Karnovsky, S., Gobby, B., & O'Brien, P. (2022). A Foucauldian ethics of positivity in initial teacher education. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 54(14), 2504–2519. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021.2016390>
- Kelchtermans, G. (2009). Who I am in how I teach is the message: Self-understanding, vulnerability and reflection. *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice*, 15(2), 257–272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600902875332>
- Kelchtermans, G. (2011). Vulnerabilities in teaching: The moral and political roots of a structural condition. In C. Day & J. C. K. Lee (Eds.), *New understandings of Teacher's work emotions and educational change* (1st ed.). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0545-6>
- Korthagen, F., Loughran, J., & Russell, T. (2006). Developing fundamental principles for teacher education programs and practices. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(8), 1020–1041. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.04.022>
- Lasky, S. (2005). A sociocultural approach to understanding teacher identity, agency and professional vulnerability in a context of secondary school reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(8), 899–916. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2005.06.003>
- Lewis, S. (2017). Governing schooling through “what works”: The OECD's PISA for schools. *Journal of Education Policy*, 32(3), 281–302. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2016.1252855>
- Lortie, D. C. (1975). *Schoolteacher: A sociological study*. University of Chicago Press.
- Mausethagen, S., & Granlund, L. (2012). Contested discourses of teacher professionalism: Current tensions between education policy and teachers' union. *Journal of Education Policy*, 27(6), 815–833. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2012.672656>
- Mausethagen, S. (2013a). Governance through concepts: The OECD and the construction of “competence” in Norwegian education policy. *Berkeley Review of Education*, 4(1), 161–181. <https://doi.org/10.5070/B84110058>
- Mausethagen, S. (2013b). A research review of the impact of accountability policies on teachers' workplace relations. *Educational Research Review*, 9(1), 16–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2012.12.001>
- McDonald, M., Kazemi, E., & Kavanagh, S. S. (2013). Core practices and pedagogies of teacher education: A call for a common language and collective activity. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 64(5), 378–386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487113493807>
- Miller, E. R., Morgan, B., & Medina, A. L. (2017). Exploring language teacher identity work as ethical self-formation. *The Modern Language Journal*, 101(S1), 91–105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12371>
- Mockler, N. (2011). Beyond “what works”: Understanding teacher identity as a practical and political tool. *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice*, 17(5), 517–528. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2011.602059>
- Mockler, N. (2013). Teacher professional learning in a neoliberal age: Audit, professionalism and identity. *The Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 38(10), 35–47. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2013v38n10>
- Mockler, N. (2022). Teacher professional learning under audit: Reconfiguring practice in an age of standards. *Professional Development in Education*, 48(1), 166–180. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2020.1720779>
- Mockler, N., & Stacey, M. (2021). Evidence of teaching practice in an age of accountability: When what can be counted isn't all that counts. *Oxford Review of Education*, 47(2), 170–188. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03054985.2020.1822794>
- Mohamed, A., Valcke, M., & De Wever, B. (2017). Are they ready to teach? Student teachers' readiness for the job with reference to teacher competence frameworks. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 43(2), 151–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607476.2016.1257509>
- Mulcahy, D. (2011). Assembling the “accomplished” teacher: The performativity and politics of professional teaching standards. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 43, 94–113. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2009.00617.x>

- Niesche, R., & Haase, M. (2012). Emotions and ethics: A Foucauldian framework for becoming an ethical educator. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 44(3), 276–288. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-5812.2010.00655.x>
- O'Connor, K. (2008). "You choose to care": Teachers, emotions and professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 24(1), 117–126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.11.008>
- OECD. (2018). *Future of education and skills education 2030: The future we want*. OECD Publishing.
- Palmer, P. J. (1990). Good teaching: A matter of living the mystery. *Change*, 22(1), 11–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00091383.1990.9937613>
- Palmer, P. J. (1997). The heart of a teacher identity and integrity in teaching. *Change*, 29(6), 14–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00091389709602343>
- Perryman, J., Ball, S. J., Braun, A., & Maguire, M. (2017). Translating policy: Governmentality and the reflective teacher. *Journal of Education Policy*, 32(6), 745–756. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2017.1309072>
- Perryman, J., Maguire, M., Braun, A., & Ball, S. (2018). Surveillance, governmentality and moving the goalposts: The influence of OFSTED on the work of schools in a post-panoptic era. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 66(2), 145–163. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2017.1372560>
- Peters, M. (2003). Truth-telling as an educational practice of the self: Foucault, parrhesia and the ethics of subjectivity. *Oxford Review of Education*, 29(2), 207–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305498032000080684>
- Phelan, J. (2016). 14. Analepsis/prolepsis. In J. Burges & A. Elias (Eds.), *Time: A vocabulary of the present* (pp. 240–254). New York University Press.
- Ratner, C. (2008). Cultural psychology and qualitative methodology: Scientific and political considerations. *Culture & Psychology*, 14(3), 259–288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X08088557>
- Révai, N. (2018). *What difference do standards make to educating teachers: A review with case studies on Australia, Estonia and Singapore*. OECD Education working paper no. 174, OECD.
- Rose, N. (1993). Government, authority and expertise in advanced liberalism. *Economy and Society*, 2(3), 283–299. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085149300000019>
- Rose, N. (1998). *Inventing ourselves: Psychology, power and personhood*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sachs, J. (2003). Teacher professional standards: Controlling or developing teaching? *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice*, 9(2), 175–186. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600309373>
- Sachs, J. (2016). Teacher professionalism: Why are we still talking about it? *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice*, 22(4), 413–425. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540602.2015.1082732>
- Sachs, J., & Mockler, N. (2012). Performance cultures of teaching: Threat or opportunity. In C. Day (Ed.), *The Routledge international handbook of teacher and school development*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203815564>
- Schleicher, A. (Ed.). (2012). *Preparing teachers and developing school leaders for the 21st century: Lessons from around the world*. International Summit on the Teaching Profession, OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264174559-en>
- Schutz, P. A., & Zembylas, M. (2009). *Advances in teacher emotion research the impact on teachers' lives* (S. M. Zembylas, Ed., 1st ed.). Springer US. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4419-0564-2>
- Scribner, S. (1984). Literacy in three metaphors. *American Journal of Education*, 93(1), 6–21. <https://doi.org/10.1086/443783>
- Sellar, S., & Lingard, B. (2013). The OECD and global governance in education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 28(5), 710–725. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680939.2013.779791>
- Sfard, A., & Prusak, A. (2005). Telling identities: In search of an analytic tool for investigating learning as a culturally shaped activity. *Educational Researcher*, 34(4), 14–22. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X034004014>
- Shulman, L. (1987). Knowledge and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1–23.
- Shulman, L. (2004). *Wisdom of practice: Essays on teaching, learning and learning to teach*. Jossey-Bass.
- Shulman, L. (2005). Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, 134(3), 52–59. <https://doi.org/10.1162/0011526054622015>
- Shulman, L. (2007). The impossible fullness of the empty classroom: A letter of appreciation. In D. T. Hansen, M. E. Driscoll, & R. V. Arcilla (Eds.), *A life in classrooms: Philip W. Jackson and the practice of education* (pp. 7–8). Teachers College Press.
- Shulman, L. S. (1986). Those who understand: Knowledge growth in teaching. *Educational Researcher*, 15(2), 4–14.
- Simmie, G. M. (2012). The pied piper of neo-liberalism calls the tune in the Republic of Ireland: An analysis of education policy text from 2000–2012. *Journal for Critical Education and Policy Studies*, 10(2), 485–514.
- Simmie, G. M. (2014). The neo-liberal turn in understanding teachers' and school leaders' work practices in curriculum innovation and change: A critical discourse analysis of a newly proposed reform policy in lower secondary education in the Republic of Ireland. *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, 13(3), 185–198. <https://doi.org/10.2304/csee.2014.13.3.185>
- Simmie, G. M., Moles, J., & O'Grady, E. (2019). Good teaching as a messy narrative of change within a policy ensemble of networks, superstructures and flows. *Critical Studies in Education*, 60(1), 55–72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2016.1219960>

- Simola, H. (2000). Construction of the finish teacher in the national steering documents of the 1990s: Tasks and qualifications in Carlgren, I. & Klette, K. (2008). Reconstructions of Nordic Teachers: Reform policies and teachers' work during the 1990s. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 52(2), 117–133. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00313830801915754>
- Skerritt, C. (2020). School autonomy and the surveillance of teachers. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2020.1823486>
- Søreide, G. E. (2007). The public face of teacher identity—Narrative construction of teacher identity in public policy documents. *Journal of Education Policy*, 22(2), 129–146. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680930601158893>
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2007). *Code of professional conduct for teachers*. Teaching Council.
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2011a). *Initial teacher education: Criteria and guidelines for Programme providers*. Teaching Council.
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2011b). *Policy on the continuum of teacher education*. Teaching Council.
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2012). *Code of professional conduct for teachers*. Teaching Council.
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2013). *Droichead: The integrated professional induction framework*. Teaching Council.
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2016). *Code of professional conduct for teachers*. Teaching Council.
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2017a). *Initial teacher education: Criteria and guidelines for programme providers*. Teaching Council. <https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/publications/ite-professional-accreditation/criteria-and-guidelines-for-programme-providers-march-2017-.pdf>
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2017b). *Droichead: The integrated professional induction framework*. Teaching Council.
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2017c). *Cosán: Framework for teachers' learning*. Teaching Council.
- Teaching Council of Ireland. (2020). *Céim: Standards for initial teacher education*. Teaching Council.
- Webb, P. T., & Gulson, K. N. (2012). Policy prolepsis in education: Encounters, becomings, and phantasms. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 33(1), 87–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2012.632169>
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- Woolhouse, C. (2023). Technologies of the self and narrating an ethical teacher identity, or how to tell stories of a life well lived. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2023.2181453>
- Wrench, A., & Garrett, R. (2015). Emotional connections and caring: Ethical teachers of physical education. *Sport, Education and Society*, 20(2), 212–227. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2012.747434>
- Zeichner, K. (2012). The turn once again toward practice-based teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 63(5), 376–382. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487112445789>
- Zeichner, K. (2023). The “turn once again toward practice-based teacher education” revisited. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 74(2), 178–180. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224871231160401>
- Zembylas, M. (2003a). Interrogating ‘teacher identity’: Emotion, resistance and self-formation. *Educational Theory*, 53(1), 107–127. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5446.2003.00107.x>
- Zembylas, M. (2003b). Emotions and teacher identity: A poststructural perspective. *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice*, 9(3), 213–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13540600309378>
- Zembylas, M. (2005). Beyond teacher cognition and teacher beliefs: The value of the ethnography of emotions in teaching. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 18(4), 465–487. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390500137642>
- Zembylas, M. (2007). Emotional ecology: The intersection of emotional knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge in teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(4), 355–367. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2006.12.002>
- Zembylas, M. (2018). Rethinking the demands for “preferred” teacher professional identities: Ethical and political implications. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 76, 78–85. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.08.011>
- Zembylas, M., & Chubbuck, S. M. (2018). Conceptualising ‘teacher identity’ a political approach. In P. Schutz, J. Hong, & F. D. Cross (Eds.), *Research on teacher identity: Mapping challenges and innovations* (pp. 183–195). Springer.

**How to cite this article:** Carswell, D. & Conway, P. F. (2023). An ethico-political analysis of a national teacher competence framework: Unravelling a ‘preferred’ teacher identity. *British Educational Research Journal*, 00, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3893>