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## Changing Expectations, Same Perspective: Pre-service Teachers' Judgments of Professional Efficacy

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*Abstract: This two-part study tracks and measures the professional self-efficacy judgements of two cohorts of pre-service teachers (PST). In Part One, the GTCE's Code of Conduct and Practice (GTCE, 2009) was used to help form an instrument which tracked changes in the professional self-efficacy judgements of 211 PST through a one-year graduate program. Judgements were sought from PST both about themselves, and importantly, also about practicing teachers in the profession. In Part Two, statements making up the new DfE Teaching Standards (DfE, 2011) were similarly used to form an instrument and used with a subsequent cohort of 416 PST. Outcomes showed that PST's judgement of professional self-efficacy were extremely high on both occasions, and in nearly all cases, significantly more positive than their ratings for current serving teachers. Tracked through their one-year program, the self-judgements barely changed, although views of the practicing teaching increased markedly, although never quite reaching the levels of self-judgements. The detail and significance of these findings is analysed and discussed.*

### Introduction

In September 2000 the UK government established the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) as an independent arm's length body (ALB) to promote and regulate the teaching profession in England. The GTCE's remit was: to keep a register of qualified teachers; to provide policy advice to government and other agencies; and to formulate and maintain standards for the teaching profession. The self-declared aims of the GTCE were to inspire confidence amongst the general public and to promote the teaching profession. However, due to its perceived high-profile 'policing methods' in which teachers who had behaved unprofessionally were 'named and shamed', it became recognised more for its role in regulating teacher behaviour than for promoting the virtues of teaching, (see for example Spendlove, Barton, Hallett and Shortt, 2012). In a move to lay down more unambiguous expectations and tighten regulation of the profession, the GTCE (2009) published a revised Code of Conduct and Practice (Code) setting out the minimum professional expectations for all 540,000 registered teachers employed within English schools. The content of the revised Code reflected 'the standards that teachers expect of themselves and others expect of the profession' (p.2). Implicit in the regulation of the Code, and within the cited examples of

instances where teachers had fallen seriously short of expected standards, were a number of professional dispositions and professional competences which built up to what the Code called 'a shared picture of teacher professionalism' (p.1).

In previous research, Shortt, Hallett, Spendlove, Hardy and Barton (2012) examined the implicit moral and ethical assumptions of the Code by using a Structuralist analytical methodology and revealed how encoded ideologies and meaning are layered within the document. They concluded that 'the Code seeks in some way to work out how teachers can simultaneously claim to be autonomous individuals whilst also laying claim to the benefits of being part of a mutually dependent society' (p.130). In addition, Spendlove et al. (2012) investigated pre-service teachers' ethical alignment with the Code through the application of Q-methodology to analyse how pre-service teachers rank (in order of seriousness) a number of statements describing real-life reported violations of the Code. In this, they found that those entering teaching generally represented a morally homogeneous group whose ethical values appeared consistent both with the profession as a whole and with the GTCE.

In this paper, we analyse the ways in which a sample of pre-service teachers (PSTs) in England evaluate their emerging competence in undertaking their future professional role, and how these Self-judgements compare to those they make about current practicing members of the teaching profession. We do this by utilising two professional frameworks, introduced under successive British governments and viewing PSTs responses through Bourdieu's concept of 'dispositions', 'habitus' and 'field'. The wider context for this analysis is one of rapid political and ideological change which, from May 2010, saw the newly formed Conservative and Liberal UK coalition government beginning its administration in the midst of significant economic challenges affecting the global economy. Urged on by reports such as 'Read Before Burning' (Gas, Magee, Rutter and Smith, 2010), the Government acted swiftly in what became known as the 'Bonfire of the Quangos' (Cameron, 2009) and moved, for both cost-cutting and ideological reasons, to abolish a significant number of ALBs, including the GTCE.

Michael Gove, the new Secretary of State for Education, in announcing the 'scrapping' of the GTCE, claimed that 'there has been one organisation of whose purpose and benefit to teachers I am deeply sceptical - the General Teaching Council for England. I believe this organisation does little to raise teaching standards or professionalism' (DfE 2010). A further casualty of this 'bonfire' was the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), which had previously held responsibility for recruitment, education, and training of the school workforce, and had, as one of its primary duties, the formulation of general principles and specific benchmark criteria of entry for new teachers into the profession. The TDA (2008) set out the 33 Standards that had to be met before PSTs could be recommended for Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). In 2010, the powers that were once delegated to the TDA and the GTCE were brought back into the Department for Education under the direct control of the Secretary of State.

Subsequent to the abolition of the GTCE and TDA, and following a short consultation exercise, the DfE formulated a set of new professional Teachers' Standards that came into effect on 1st September 2012. This new set of statutory benchmarks replaced both the preceding Code and the TDA's 33 Standards, forming a new rationalised and slimmed-down professional framework that would apply, for the first time, simultaneously to both pre-service and serving teachers. Together, these two documents (the GTCE's now-obsolete Code and the DfE's new Teachers' Standards) form the centre of our research study. We use each of these documents separately to construct a performance framework aimed to facilitate the measurement of, first, the PSTs' judgments regarding their projected professional Self-efficacy and, second, the same PSTs' judgements of the professional efficacy of practicing qualified teachers.

### Frameworks of Professional Competence

The first part of this study uses the GTCE Code. The Code is made-up of 42 separate statements, collected together into eight principles. The eight principles are set out below and a copy of all the statements can be found in Table 1 in the Results Section. Contained within the eight principles are traditional themes relating to typical areas of teacher professionalism, including facilitating student achievement, developing reflective practice, and team working. Also incorporated into the principles are moral aspects of conduct, such as demonstrating honesty, integrity, and upholding public trust in the profession. These latter aspects of the Code provoked some disquiet both amongst teachers and the national press, as they suggested that teachers would be bound by the Code even out of school hours and when away from the school site and, even, on ‘down-time’ such as weekends and vacations.

The eight principles of the Code are:

1. Put the wellbeing, development and progress of children and young people first.
2. Take responsibility for maintaining the quality of their teaching practice.
3. Help children and young people to become confident and successful learners.
4. Demonstrate respect for diversity and promote equality.
5. Strive to establish productive partnerships with parents and carers.
6. Work as part of a whole-school team.
7. Cooperate with other professionals in the children’s workforce.
8. Demonstrate honesty and integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the teaching profession

(GTCE, 2009).

Part Two of the paper uses the *Code’s* replacement, the *Teachers’ Standards*. In this document, the Secretary of State for Education (DfE, 2011) sets out the range of professional standards against which the performance of all teachers (PST and fully-qualified) will be judged. These new standards were not intended to be a like-for-like replacement for the *Code* but, rather, that the *Code* had been subsumed into the standards. The *Teachers’ Standards* are set out in two sections: Part One consists of eight standards and is entitled ‘Teaching’ (supplemented with 35 additional dot-pointed expansions); and Part Two consists of three standards (one of which is supplemented with five additional dot-pointed expansions) and is entitled ‘Personal and Professional Conduct’. In relation to both parts, PSTs are required to be able to demonstrate that they could fulfil the expectations of each of the standards before being awarded Qualified Teacher Status and, therefore, taking their place in the profession.

Part One of the *Teachers’ Standards*, listed below, outlines the eight major standards from the teaching section (for brevity, the 35 dot-pointed expansions are not included):

- |    |                                                                             |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T1 | Set high expectations which inspire, motivate and challenge pupils          |
| T2 | Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils                                |
| T3 | Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge                           |
| T4 | Plan and teach well structured lessons                                      |
| T5 | Adapt teaching to respond to the strengths and needs of all pupils          |
| T6 | Make accurate and productive use of assessment                              |
| T7 | Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good and safe learning environment |
| T8 | Fulfil wider professional responsibilities                                  |

Part Two (including the dot-pointed expansions) outlines the three major teacher conduct standards:

- P1 Teachers uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school
- P2\* Treating pupils with dignity, building relationships rooted in mutual respect, and at all times observing proper boundaries appropriate to a teacher's professional position
- P3\* Having regard for the need to safeguard pupils' well-being, in accordance with statutory provisions
- P4\* Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others
- P5\* Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs
- P6\* Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.
- P7 Teachers must have proper and professional regard for the ethos, policies and practices of the school in which they teach, and maintain high standards in their own attendance and punctuality.
- P8 Teachers must have an understanding of, and always act within, the statutory frameworks which set out their professional duties and responsibilities.

• = dot-points that are not main *Standards*

For the purposes of this study, in order to differentiate the standards contained in the two parts above we have prefixed a 'T' to the teaching standards and a 'P' to the conduct standards. We have then used these two lists of standards to form a framework to probe the PSTs' sense of projected professional Self-efficacy and to compare their Self-evaluations with their evaluations of the profession as a whole. We acknowledge that projected professional Self-efficacy may not be the only measure of professional competence as PSTs set out on their professional developmental journey but, in our judgement, it is an important one.

### **Pre-Service Teachers' Professional Journey**

As PSTs embark on their initial teacher-education training programs they undoubtedly bring with them their own notions of what it means to be professionally competent in the context of being a teacher. These notions will likely have been formed partly by their own learning biographies, especially the role models of significant teachers, together with their individual social, ethical, moral and political viewpoints. The nature of these models of professionalism, at least for the younger first-career PSTs, will probably be built more on ideas relating to them as 'learners' than to them as 'teachers'. These models may well undergo significant shifts as their experiences and knowledge of schools, children, teachers, staffrooms, and parents grow as a consequence of their expanding professional duties.

Raffo and Hall (2006), in their work on 'transitions to becoming a teacher', have drawn on Bourdieu's (1986) notions of cultural capital together with manifestations of biographical identity to analyse PSTs' evolving dispositions within the teaching profession.

Their analysis provides a useful lens through which influences on PSTs' notions of professionalism may be explored, particularly 'the central importance for PSTs of coming to terms with the rules, roles, procedures, norms and values' (Raffo et al., 2006) which have such an effect on shaping their dispositions. The extent to which PSTs feel they can meet the demands of the teaching profession may well be wrapped up in their sense of professional Self-efficacy. We shall return to Raffo and Hall's Bourdieuan-informed analysis in our discussion of our data findings and, in particular, we will apply the analytic concept of 'dispositions'.

In relation to these PSTs' professional dispositions, Flowers (2006) has carried out research in the United States using confirmatory factor analysis. She found evidence for a three-factor model of dispositions towards teaching comprising 'professionalism', 'teaching qualities', and 'relationship with others'; she calls this her Clinical Experience Rubric (CER) scale. Flowers' scale used reports by supervising teachers to rate the professional dispositions of the PSTs. She found that the three-factor model showed a significant improvement in fit over previous one-factor models. The scale-factor concerned with professionalism is of particular interest here and, being a discrete and identifiable element, can be explored validly separate from the broader description of teacher dispositions.

The perceptions of PSTs that they can meet the demands of the teaching profession and, indeed, their perceptions of their developing professional dispositions, may well be wrapped up in their sense of professional Self-efficacy. Pendergast, Garvis and Keogh (2011) measured the Self-efficacy of PSTs at the beginning and end of three Diploma programs using the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale. What they found is that PSTs overestimated their level of teacher Self-efficacy at the beginning, before recalibrating downwards at the completion. Other research in this area focuses upon teachers' professional identity that contains, amongst other things, Lamote and Engels argue, components of Self-confidence, commitment and Self-efficacy (2011). In terms of measures of Self-efficacy, they found their research was consistent with that of others including Woolfolk (2001), Erdem and Demiral (2007) and Pendergast et al. (2011) in that, at the beginning of a training programs, PSTs' Self-efficacy is found to be extremely high, particularly if measures are taken before PSTs face the sobering realities of teaching.

Within this context there is a potential and perhaps crucial connection between the concept of Self-efficacy and the professional competencies PSTs are required to satisfy in order to gain qualified teacher status. The individual statements of both the GTCE Code and the DfE Teachers' Standards appear formulated in such a way that they allow the insertion of the words 'I can' as a preface to each of the individual statements. By doing this, the statements can then be viewed as Self-efficacy beliefs in relation to discharging the teacher's range of professional duties as outlined through the documents. This means that, in asking PSTs to state how well they believe that they can fulfil the expectations of each statement, they are in fact implicitly making Self-efficacy judgements about their future professional competence.

### **Self-Efficacy**

A teacher's Self-efficacy is defined as a 'teacher's belief in his or her own capability to organize and execute courses of action required to successfully accomplishing a specific teaching task in a particular context' (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998, p. 233). PSTs' perceived Self-efficacies in meeting the professional requirements are thought to be a key element to their developing competency. Indeed, efficacy beliefs among teachers have generated a great deal of research interest over the past three decades. This is perhaps a

consequence of the growing evidence that a teacher's sense of efficacy has strong associations with desirable educational outcomes such as pupils' motivation and achievement (Midgley, Feldlaufer, & Eccles, 1989; Ross, 1992). Efficacy beliefs are also seen as impacting positively upon teacher attitudes such as persistence, enthusiasm, and commitment (Ross 1998), teachers' pedagogical actions in the classroom (Woolfolk, Rosoff, and Hoy, 1990), the quality and number of teachers' goals (Muijs & Reynolds, 2002), and a stronger commitment towards teaching (Coladarci, 1992).

Bandura (1986) defines Self-efficacy as representing a person's 'judgement of their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action to attain designated types of performances' (p.391). These Self-efficacy judgements relate to the level of competence and conviction with which an individual thinks they can achieve a specific outcome. The level of specificity of Self-efficacy judgements are relatively high, and much higher than they are for related Self-measures such as Self-esteem or Self-concept; Self-efficacy decisions are personal judgements of the likelihood of success in specific circumstances rather than a judgement of general competence in the area.

According to Pajares and Schunk (2002), Self-efficacy beliefs develop by asking 'can' questions, for example: '*can I complete this specific task successfully?*' They are also future oriented and tend to be relatively malleable (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003). Even though Self-efficacy judgements, according to Markus and Nurius (1986), are inherently future-oriented, they are firmly based upon mastery criteria from the past in order that judgements can be made about confidence to successfully complete future tasks. Bandura (1997) argues that expectations of Self-efficacy beliefs derive from four principal sources of information: performance accomplishments (or mastery experiences); vicarious experiences; verbal persuasion; and physiological states. Performance accomplishments, according to Bong & Skaalvik (2003), are the most powerful in raising Self-efficacy since successful outcomes boost self-efficacy whilst unsuccessful outcomes tend to undermine it.

Further contributors to the promotion of Self-efficacy are vicarious experiences, which are observations of others who are performing the desired skill or technique within the particular context under scrutiny. This modelling of mastery performance by others is an effective influence in promoting Self-efficacy, particularly when the individual is uncertain of their performance levels or has yet to have opportunity to engage in the situation (Bandura 1977). Additionally, persuasive communication has the potential to raise Self-efficacy and is strongest when feedback is delivered by someone with status and whose judgment is viewed to be reliable and competent. The fourth source of efficacy information derives from the body's physiological responses where individuals 'rely partly on information from their physiological state in judging their capabilities' and 'in activities involving strength and stamina' where 'people read their fatigue, aches and pains as indicants of physical inefficacy' (Bandura, 1982, p. 127). Persuasive communication and vicarious experiences will be explored below as key contributors to PSTs' developing sense of professional competence.

There is widespread agreement among researchers, (see, for example, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007)), that teacher Self-efficacy is multidimensional in nature. There is less agreement, however, on the nature of domain specificity or the subcomponents of each domain. Skaalvik et al. (2007) found strong support for six separate but correlated dimensions of teacher Self-efficacy related to: (i) instruction; (ii) adapting education to individual students' needs; (iii) motivating students; (iv) keeping discipline; (v) cooperating with colleagues and parents; and (vi) coping with changes and challenges. Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk (2001), by contrast, found support for a *teachers' sense of teacher efficacy scale*, which had three dimensions: efficacy in student engagement; efficacy in instructional practices; and efficacy in classroom management.

This paper uses the lens of the GTCE Code the new Teachers' Standards to shed light on the Self-efficacy of PSTs. However, in contrast to a narrower conception of teacher Self-efficacy, which have been mostly concerned with events that occur between teachers and learners in the classroom, this study takes a broader view of Self-efficacy by incorporating a wider sense of teacher professionalism, including personal and professional conduct, and ethical decision making. The study is in two parts, and monitors two separate cohorts of PSTs as they were asked to make projected professional Self-efficacy judgements about being able to fulfil the expectation of the statements from one of the two frameworks: the GTCE Code, and the DfE Teachers' Standards. The Self-efficacy is 'projected' since the PSTs are making forward-thinking judgements about their performance and competence at the end of their training programme. It is 'professional' since the frameworks enquire into more than classroom or teaching competence, but incorporate social, moral, and ethical elements.

### **This Study**

This two-part research study focusses upon PSTs undertaking a one-year postgraduate program in one of two universities in England. In the first part of our research, we asked PSTs (who were training to teach in secondary schools) to make professional efficacy judgements on two separate occasions. The first occasion was at the very outset of their training during the first week of the program; the second occasion was during the final week of their training, by which time they had undertaken three substantial school placements and had completed all associated university assessments. On each occasion, the PSTs were asked to make two sets of judgements, one relating to their perception of their own competence (projected forward to when they would take up their first teaching post), and the second relating to their perception of the competence of the profession as a whole.

The second part of our study focuses upon a subsequent cohort of PSTs who were undertaking their training in the following academic year. The sample was broadened to include PSTs from two different universities and PSTs training to teach in both primary (4-11 years) and secondary (11-18 years) settings. although, partway through their one-year training, the Department for Education, following the general election, published its new Teachers' Standards document which was scheduled to come into force shortly after the second cohort had completed their initial teacher education program. Although the teacher education courses that the PSTs were undertaking had not explicitly set out to enable the cohort of PSTs to meet these new standards, and although there was no expectation that they should be able to meet them, none-the-less, as in part one of the study, the PSTs were asked to make professional efficacy judgements both of themselves and the profession through the lens of the new standards. The cohort under investigation was not affected by the publishing of the new standards and, naturally, had not been prepared to satisfy their requirements. The fact that the new standards formed the basis of the Self-efficacy measure made it all the more noteworthy. This set of professional efficacy measures was taken during the final week of their one-year program.

### **Research methods**



## Part One

As mentioned above, the GTCE's Code articulates eight explicit principles of conduct and practice. Each of these eight principles is supplemented (or expanded) by between four and six dot-pointed statements, giving a total of 40 statements. We present a slightly truncated version of all 40 statements in Table 1 below. These statements cover the range and scale of professional duties expected of teachers by the GTCE and, as such, represents an appropriate contextual framework from which we derive a set of Self-efficacy statements.

The first part of our study sets out to address the following three research questions:

1. At their entry point to a teacher-education course, what are graduate pre-service teachers' projected Self-efficacy judgements in relation to fulfilling their professional expectations?
2. How do these projected Self-efficacies of professional competence compare to their judgements of the teaching profession as a whole?
3. How do these two efficacy judgements change over the course of completing a one-year graduate teacher education program?

We collected empirical data through a two-section self-completion questionnaire. Each section contained forty statements taken directly from the GTCE's *Code*. In the first section of the questionnaire, we asked the PSTs how well they thought the '*teaching profession as a whole*' fulfilled each of the statements' expectations. Responses were presented on a five-point Likert scale incorporating the responses 'wholly fulfil', 'substantially fulfil', 'partially fulfil', 'marginally fulfil' and 'not fulfil'. The second section presented the same statements randomly re-organised, and we asked the PSTs how much they believed that *they* would fulfil the expectations of the statements once they had qualified and were part of the teaching profession. We administered the two sections of the questionnaire together to 231 secondary age-range PSTs at the very beginning and at the very end of a one-year postgraduate training course at a high prestige, research-intensive university (Institution 1) in the North of England. In total, 211 questionnaires were returned: 126 were completed by female, and 85 by male PSTs. This reflected the ratio of male and female PSTs enrolled on the course. The data-collection methods employed were consistent with the requirements of the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011). The validity of the instrument was addressed through (i) piloting and evaluation, (ii) discussion of items with a focus group of PSTs, (iii) screening by small group of uninvolved experienced teacher education researchers.

We purposely delivered the first questionnaire (consisting of 80 items in total (40 directed at Self and 40 directed at the Profession)) at the very beginning of a 36-week course because it helped us to capture the opinions of the PSTs before they had begun their first seven-week school block placement, at a point when their perceptions would not have had the opportunity to be influenced in any significant way by the experiences of the program, particularly those associated with school based experiences. We administered the questionnaires for the second time in the final few days of the program, after the PSTs had completed a total of 24 weeks of school-based practice (within two different schools) and 12 weeks of university based tuition. On this occasion, 198 questionnaires were completed, (119 female and 79 male).

## Part Two

The second phase of our data-collection took place in the following academic year with a new cohort of PSTs. In this phase, we collected data concerning PSTs' sense of professional Self-efficacy in relation to the professional expectations as set out in the new *Teachers' Standards* (DfE, 2011). As in first phase of data-collection, we asked the PSTs to make projected efficacy judgements and, again, they were asked to make similar efficacy judgements about how well they thought that teachers in the profession, as a whole, fulfilled the expectations of the statements. The *Teachers' Standards* statements, which covered the range and scope of professional expertise, dispositions and attitudes, were newly published, and the PSTs had not previously seen these statements. As mentioned above, the new *Teachers' Standards* sets out performance criteria in two sections. The first section contains eight headline standards relating to *teaching* which were expanded through a further 35 dot-pointed statements. The second section contains three standards relating to personal and professional conduct, and are expanded through a further five dot-pointed statements.

We sent invitations to complete the questionnaire to all primary and secondary postgraduate PSTs from two higher education institutions (HEIs). Both HEIs are in the north of England, one from a research-intensive university judged by OfSTED (a UK government education inspection organization for universities and schools).to be an 'outstanding' provider (Institution 1), and the second from a teaching-focussed post-1992 university with a recent OfSTED inspection grade of 'good' (Institution 2). These two HEIs offered contrasting contexts from which to survey PSTs. The entire primary and secondary postgraduate cohorts were invited to participate in the study and we collected data from 416 PSTs: 282 from Institution 1 (168 secondary and 114 primary); and 133 from Institution 2 (58 secondary and 90 primary). The participation rate was over 95% for those attending on the day. The PSTs completed the questionnaire during the final week of their training course, shortly before taking up their first teaching post.

This second phase of our study re-visited the first two research questions from phase one, though this time using the DfE's new standards as a second lens. Tables 1 and 2 below show the full list of statements used to form the efficacy statements. They are separated into the two sections for convenience of reading, though this was not they way that they were presented to the participants during data-collection. As before, the *Teachers' Standards* are written in such a way as to allow, with minor adjustment, the statements to become Self-efficacy statements through the insertion of the words 'I can' as a preface to each statement.

## Results

### Part One

We collected data from 211 PSTs (126 females and 85 males). The full data-set for all 40 statements can be found in Table 1, whilst a summary of the data can be found in Table 2. The numerical scores in Table 1 are divided into two sections; Mean Scores and Comparisons of Scores. The Mean Scores section is further sub-divided in two: scores for the profession and Self-scores for the PSTs. Within each of these two columns, we present the before and after mean scores for the profession and for the PSTs. In the Comparison of Scores section, we present four sets of calculations that show various sizes of difference between each of the PSTs' two judgements. The first two comparison columns show the differences between the Profession-score and the Self-score from the beginning to the end of the program. The second

two comparison columns show how the rating of the Profession and Self changed over the duration of the program. Later in the paper, we will discuss each of these differences in turn.

Truncated Statements from Code of Conduct and Practice. Set out in the eight Principles	Mean Scores				Comparisons of Scores			
	Score for Profession		Score for Self		Prof: Before – After	Profession – Self After	Prof: Before – After	Self: Before – After
	Before	After	Before	After				
<b>Average score for all statements</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>1.80</b>	<b>1.44</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>0.66</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>0.04</b>
Use their prof expertise to do the best for the children in their care 1.1	1.91	1.62	1.38	1.32	0.53	0.30	0.29	0.06
Take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children 1.2	1.72	1.51	1.25	1.28	0.47	0.23	0.21	-0.03
Follow their school's child protection policies and procedures 1.3	1.62	1.40	1.24	1.20	0.38	0.20	0.22	0.04
Maintain appropriate prof boundaries in their relationships with children 1.4	1.79	1.48	1.24	1.23	0.55	0.25	0.31	0.01
Take responsibility to ensure that they do not have a negative impact 1.5	2.19	1.89	1.45	1.50	0.74	0.39	0.30	-0.05
Meet the prof standards for teaching relevant to their role and stage 2.1	1.82	1.54	1.31	1.27	0.51	0.27	0.28	0.04
Develop their practice within the framework of their school's curriculum 2.2	2.01	1.81	1.54	1.43	0.47	0.38	0.20	0.11
Base their practice on specialist knowledge and research about T&L 2.3	2.12	2.08	1.44	1.43	0.68	0.65	0.04	0.01
Make use of 'appropriate pedagogy' to meet individual learning needs 2.4	2.05	1.78	1.41	1.36	0.64	0.42	0.27	0.05
Reflect on their practice and use feedback to help their development 2.5	2.23	1.96	1.47	1.36	0.76	0.60	0.27	0.11
Meet the requirements of the GTCE and maintain their registration status 2.6	2.01	1.54	1.41	1.30	0.60	0.24	0.47	0.11
Uphold children's rights, help them to understand their responsibilities 3.1	2.11	1.81	1.39	1.40	0.72	0.41	0.30	-0.01
Listen to children, consider their views, and involve them in decisions 3.2	2.33	2.01	1.68	1.55	0.65	0.46	0.32	0.13
Have high expectations of all children whatever their background 3.3	2.47	1.83	1.42	1.30	1.05	0.53	0.64	0.12
Promote children's confidence, self-awareness & celebrate their success 3.4	2.26	1.98	1.42	1.42	0.84	0.56	0.28	0.00
Communicate clear expectations to ensure disruption is minimized 3.5	2.11	1.82	1.36	1.36	0.75	0.46	0.29	0.00
Help children prepare for the future and offer them impartial advice 3.6	2.49	2.06	1.57	1.57	0.92	0.49	0.43	0.00
Act appropriately to all children & parents whatever their background 4.1	1.98	1.61	1.28	1.24	0.70	0.37	0.37	0.04
Comply with school policies on equality, inclusion and bullying 4.2	1.99	1.65	1.33	1.29	0.66	0.36	0.34	0.04
Address unlawful discrimination, bullying, and stereotyping 4.3	2.34	1.90	1.27	1.34	1.07	0.56	0.44	-0.07
Help create an inclusive school; improve the wellbeing of those with SEN 4.4	2.21	1.80	1.54	1.41	0.67	0.39	0.41	0.13
Help children to understand different views and perspectives 4.5	2.29	2.03	1.54	1.47	0.75	0.56	0.26	0.07
Provide parents with accessible, accurate info about their child's progress 5.1	2.30	2.11	1.67	1.69	0.63	0.42	0.19	-0.02
Involve parents in important decisions about their child's education 5.2	2.51	2.06	1.67	1.70	0.84	0.36	0.45	-0.03
Consider parents' views including those relating to child development 5.3	2.54	2.11	1.59	1.57	0.95	0.54	0.43	0.02
Follow school procedures on communication and involvement of parents 5.4	1.97	1.66	1.42	1.45	0.55	0.21	0.31	-0.03
Develop productive & supportive relationships with all school colleagues 6.1	2.17	1.90	1.46	1.43	0.71	0.47	0.27	0.03
Exercise any leadership responsibilities in a respectful, and fair way 6.2	1.89	1.70	1.52	1.48	0.37	0.22	0.19	0.04
Uphold school policies and raise concerns in a responsible way 6.3	2.05	1.86	1.41	1.40	0.64	0.46	0.19	0.01
Contribute to colleagues' learning; provide honest & justifiable comments 6.4	2.19	1.95	1.64	1.59	0.55	0.36	0.24	0.05
Participate in whole-school development and improvement activities 6.5	2.28	1.96	1.54	1.51	0.74	0.45	0.32	0.03
Recognise role of school in life of the community, uphold its reputation 6.6	2.18	1.90	1.62	1.55	0.56	0.35	0.28	0.07
Seek to understand role of other professional's in children's workforce 7.1	2.37	2.05	1.64	1.54	0.73	0.51	0.32	0.10
Establish productive working relationships with other prof colleagues 7.2	2.02	1.72	1.44	1.37	0.58	0.35	0.30	0.07
Ensure they are clear about their own prof contribution to joint working 7.3	2.15	1.80	1.52	1.46	0.63	0.34	0.35	0.06
Share responsibility for wellbeing by acting within their own competence 7.4	2.01	1.70	1.33	1.29	0.68	0.41	0.31	0.04
Exercise their responsibilities to exam/assess in a fair and honest way 8.1	1.93	1.74	1.27	1.32	0.66	0.42	0.19	-0.05
Demonstrate honesty and integrity in management and admin duties 8.2	2.13	1.78	1.36	1.38	0.77	0.40	0.35	-0.02
Understand that their duty to safeguard children comes first 8.3	1.76	1.51	1.35	1.27	0.41	0.24	0.25	0.08
Represent their professional status accurately, avoid taking advantage 8.4	1.91	1.57	1.35	1.23	0.56	0.34	0.34	0.12
Maintain standards in their own behaviour and uphold public trust in prof 8.5	1.96	1.56	1.29	1.26	0.67	0.30	0.40	0.03

Table 1: 'Self' and 'Profession' scores taken at the beginning and end of the program

Comparison measure	Data 1	n	SD	Data 2	n	SD	Mean Diff	p-value for mean diff (2-tailed T-test)	Effect Size	Bias corrected (Hedges)	Standard Error of E.S. estimate
SELF: Before-After	1.44	211	0.62	1.42	198	0.57	0.020	0.7348	0.04	0.07	0.10
PROF: Before-After	2.10	211	0.80	1.82	198	0.69	0.280	0.0002	0.41	0.75	0.10
PROF-SELF: Before	2.10	211	0.80	1.44	211	0.62	0.660	< 0.0001	0.92	1.84	0.12
PROF-SELF: After	1.82	198	0.69	1.42	198	0.57	0.400	< 0.0001	0.70	1.26	0.11

**Table 2: Comparisons between mean scores for *SELF* and/or *PROFESSION* at the beginning and end of the program**

What can be seen from the tabulated data is that the PSTs rated their projected professional Self-efficacy significantly higher than they rated teachers in the profession as a whole, (significant to more than the 1% level, see Table 2). As can be seen from Table 1, this happened on each one of the 41 statements. On average, over the all statements, the PSTs rated themselves to be 1.44 on the 1 to 5 scale, and rated the profession on average to be 2.10 on the same scale, giving themselves an elevated score of 0.66 compared to the profession. This higher relative Self-measure was reported by the PSTs almost universally. Only 11 of the 211 PSTs (5.7%) rated themselves, on average, lower than serving-teachers generally and for those 11 PSTs the average difference was a relatively marginal value of 0.20.

To establish a comparable measure of the differences between the PSTs' scores, we calculated the *effect sizes* of each of the differences. As reported above, the overall average SELF and PROFESSION scores were 1.44 and 2.10 respectively, with associated standard deviations being 0.62 and 0.80. This generates an effect size of 0.92 between the two means, using a pooled standard deviation of 0.72. To give some context to this, Cohen (1988) argues that an effect size of 0.2 equates to the difference in heights between 15 year old and 16 year old girls in the US, and an effect size of 0.8 equates to a difference in heights between 13 year old and 18 year old girls. Using a different comparison, Coe (2010) calculated that for mathematics and English GCSE grades (UK national examination at age 16), an effect size of 0.6 equates to a difference of around one grade. As can be seen, an effect size of 0.92 is considerable and suggests that the average score for 'Self' judgement would exceed 84% of the average scores for the 'profession' judgements.

The average values of the Self-scores across the 41 statements ranged from 1.23 to 1.67. This is considerably higher (more positive) than the judgements the PSTs made of the Profession against the same statements, which ranged from 1.59 to 2.53. On only one statement did the scores for the Profession lie within the range of the mean scores for the PSTs (Statement 1.3: Follow the school's child protection policies and procedures); for all other statements, the PSTs rated the Profession less positively than even their lowest-rated statement. The ranking of items for both Self and Profession were broadly similar, so, for statements against which the PSTs rated themselves highly, they also tended to rate the profession highly as well, and vice versa. Highly rated statements included:

- 1.3: Follow their school's child protection policies and procedures, and
- 1.4: Establish and maintain appropriate professional boundaries in their relationships with children and young people

Low rated statements included:

- 3.2: Listen to children and young people, consider their views and preferences, and involve them in decisions that affect them, including those related to their own learning, and
- 5.2: Involve parents and carers in important decisions about their child's education

Generally, statements that the PSTs rated most positively were concerned with honesty, integrity, well-being and expectations for children. Statements that they rated least positively were concerned with teamwork, collegiality, listening and inclusion.

Perhaps the most striking outcome of our data analysis is the lack of change in the Self-scores between the beginning and the end of the program (see Table 1). The difference in mean score between initial rating and final rating was a tiny 0.02 of a division, which effectively indicates no difference at all. Further to this, the mean of the (modulus of the) differences between initial and final Self-scores was 0.05. This low score indicates that the *averaging process* did not conceal some large individual differences; in other words, we can say with confidence that the PSTs' Self-scores across all of the statements remained virtually unchanged. In contrast, the PSTs' views of the Profession became significantly more positive ( $p=0.0002$ ) so that, by the end of the program, the mean score had changed from 2.10 to 1.82, corresponding to an effect size of 0.41. The statements that showed least change over the program were:

- 2.3: Base their practice on knowledge of their subject area/s and specialisms, and make use of research about teaching and learning, and
- 5.1: Provide parents and carers with accessible and accurate information about their child's progress

The Statements for which the PSTs' views of the profession changed the most were:

- 4.3: Address unlawful discrimination, bullying, and stereotyping no matter who is the victim or the perpetrator, and
- 4.4: Help create a fair and inclusive school environment by taking steps to improve the wellbeing, development and progress of those with special needs, or whose circumstances place them at risk of exclusion or under-achievement

It seems reasonable to infer from this evidence that PSTs were of the opinion that the teachers are well intentioned although not always well informed.

#### *Multidimensionality of Self-efficacy judgements*

As a construct, Self-efficacy is widely recognised as possessing multidimensional characteristics and, according to Bong and Skaalvik (2003), its multidimensional nature is a crucial component of Self-efficacy theory. In our study, however, the objective was not to create or validate a new scale to determine the form and structure of projected professional Self-efficacy, but to determine, in a broader sense, how elements of a possible construct change over the duration of a training course and how evaluations of Self differ from evaluations of others. We carried out a tentative analysis of the possible multidimensional nature of professional Self-efficacy by using exploratory factor analysis, and the results appear to indicate that the eight core principles of the *Code* formed into five stable and discernable factors. However, the primary interest of this study is the nature of the differences and changes, and, since the results indicate that those differences and changes were always in

the same direction for every statement item, we can conclude with confidence that the grouping of statements within a multidimensional structure will make no difference to the outcomes in this particular instance. That is, all Self-scores were lower than the related Profession-score; and all post-scores were lower than pre-scores. It is important to point out that whilst further exploration of the multidimensional data would be interesting it is beyond the scope of this paper

**Part Two**

In the second part of the study, which involved a different cohort of pre-service teachers from a subsequent academic year, we collected data from 416 students attending two different institutions. Following collection of the questionnaires and the removal of spoilt and incomplete papers, we carried out a statistical analysis on 387 returns (comprising 256 male and 131 female PSTs), including 265 from Institution 1 and 122 from Institution 2. Table 3 shows a summary of statement scores for all PSTs, whilst the full data set can be found in Appendix 1.

Consistent with what we discovered in Part One of the study, the PSTs rated their own Self-efficacy significantly more highly than they rated the Profession (significance greater than the 1% level, see Table 4). We found this across all subgroups, with the exception of Secondary age-phase teachers from Institution 2 where their Self-scores were also consistently higher but where the difference was not statistically significant at the 5% level. This situation was true for both sections of the *Teachers' Standards*, the *Teaching* section and the *Personal and Professional Conduct* section. The full set of p-values for this sub-group can be found in Appendix 1.

	<i>Standards</i> from the Teaching Section	All PS Teachers		
		Prof	Self	Diff
T1	Set high expectations which inspire, motivate & challenge	1.89	1.43	0.46
T2	Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils	1.83	1.47	0.36
T3	Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge	1.76	1.49	0.27
T4	Plan and teach well structured lessons	1.97	1.52	0.45
T5	Adapt teaching to respond to strengths & needs of all pupils	2.00	1.63	0.37
T6	Make accurate and productive use of assessment	2.04	1.75	0.28
T7	Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good environ	1.92	1.62	0.30
T8	Fulfil wider professional responsibilities	1.90	1.64	0.26
P1	Uphold public trust in the profession	1.82	1.39	0.43
P2	Treating pupils with dignity rooted in mutual respect	1.72	1.23	0.49
P3	Having regard to safeguard pupils' well-being	1.53	1.31	0.22
P4	Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others	1.71	1.25	0.46
P5	Not undermining fundamental British values	1.76	1.40	0.36
P6	Personal beliefs do not exploit pupils' vulnerability	1.68	1.37	0.30
P7	Have proper regard for the ethos & policies of the school	1.73	1.38	0.34

P8	Understand and act within statutory frameworks	1.74	1.57	0.18
	Mean score for Teaching <i>Standards</i>	<b>1.91</b>	<b>1.57</b>	<b>0.34</b>
	Mean score for Personal and Professional Conduct	<b>1.71</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>0.35</b>
	Mean score for <i>Standards</i> on BOTH sections	<b>1.81</b>	<b>1.47</b>	<b>0.35</b>

**Table 3: Comparisons between mean scores for *Self* and mean score for *Profession* for all PSTs**

T = Teaching Standard; P = Personal and Professional Conduct Standard

The average Self-scores for the cohort ranged from 1.23 to 1.75, whilst the PSTs’ judgements of the Profession ranged from 1.53 to 2.04. On average, over all statements, the PSTs rated themselves between 1.47 on the 1 to 5 scale whilst they rated the Profession at 1.81 on the same scale, giving a difference of 0.35. Considering the two sections separately, the differences in the *Teaching* section were 1.91 to 1.57, with Self being more positive, and in the *Personal and Professional Conduct* section they were 1.71 to 1.36, again with Self being more positive. In all cases, the PSTs rated themselves more positive by about a third of a division, giving an *effect size* of 0.58 between the two average scores.

Comparison measure	PROFESSION Score			SELF Score			Mean Diff	p-value for mean diff (2-tailed T-test)	Effect Size	Bias corrected (Hedges)	Standard Error of E.S. estimate
	Data	n	SD	Data	n	SD					
All PSTs	1.81	387	0.69	1.47	387	0.59	0.35	<0.0001	0.58	0.53	0.07
Institution 1 Secondary	1.93	162	0.71	1.48	162	0.60	0.45	<0.0001	0.75	0.68	0.11
Institution 1 Primary	1.49	103	0.55	1.29	103	0.47	0.20	0.0055	0.43	0.39	0.14
Institution 2 Secondary	1.83	52	0.70	1.68	52	0.63	*0.15	0.2534	0.24	0.23	0.20
Institution 2 Primary	1.98	70	0.68	1.53	70	0.60	0.45	<0.0001	0.74	0.70	0.17

\* Non-significant difference

**Table 4: Part 2 comparisons between mean scores for *Profession* and *Self* at the beginning and of the program for ALL Statements**

The ranking of items for both Self and Profession were again broadly similar, so, for statements against which the PSTs rated themselves highly, they also tended to rate the Profession highly, and vice versa. This was also consistent with the previous cohort in Part One of our study who were addressing different statements. On average, the section relating to *Personal and Professional Conduct* was rated around 0.2 of a division more positive than the *Teaching* section in nearly all cases and all subgroups.

The lowest rated statements were:

- T6: Make accurate and productive use of assessment, and
- T5: Adapt teaching to respond to strengths & needs of all pupils

Among the most positive rated statements was:

- P3: Having regard to safeguard pupils’ well-being

Notably, on one key statement, the PSTs rated themselves relatively positively whilst, at the same time, they rated the Profession relatively negatively:

- P1: Uphold public trust in the profession and maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour, within and outside school

Generally, the PSTs rated themselves most positively on statements concerned with relationships, attitudes and well-being. Statements rated least positively were concerned with statutory frameworks and procedures.

#### *Differences between groups of pre-service teachers*

Analysis of subgroup scores reveal some interesting features, with the vast majority of data indicating that those PSTs preparing to teaching at primary school level were more positive about themselves than their secondary school counterparts. In addition, the PSTs in Institution 1 (the research-intensive institution) tended to rate themselves more positively than did their colleagues in Institution 2 (teaching-focused institution). Indeed, the primary school PSTs from Institution 1 had a remarkably positive outlook on both their own capabilities and those of the profession more generally: they rated themselves a very healthy score of 1.29 overall, with a near equally positive score of 1.49 for the Profession (this is a significantly more positive opinion than any other subgroup).

The secondary school PSTs from Institution 1 and the primary school PSTs from Institution 2 had very similar profiles, with near identical scores on many of the statements. Both subgroups rated themselves around 0.45 of a division more positive than the Profession, and this was true for both the *Teaching* and the *Personal and Professional Conduct* sections. The secondary school PSTs from Institution 2 also had a distinctive characteristic: they were the only subgroup for which their self-rating was not statistically significantly higher than their rating of the Profession. Indeed, on three statements they rated the Profession marginally more positively than they rated themselves. Interestingly, two of these statements were for P5 and P6:

- P5: Not undermining fundamental British values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- P6: Ensuring that personal beliefs are not expressed in ways which exploit pupils' vulnerability or might lead them to break the law.

It is unclear from this data alone if this is a characteristic of the student intake, the nature of the institution's ethos, the focus of the training, or merely an anomalous result.

Another outcome worthy of note is that the PSTs from Institution 1 appear to rate themselves significantly more positively, overall, than PSTs from Institution 2. Again there is not enough data to be confident that this is a consistent and reliable result, or whether or not this is a characteristic of the subgroup makeup. This may have been caused by an overly positive group of primary school PSTs from Institution 1, or an overly negative secondary school group from Institution 2. However, given that these differences do appear in our data, we will attempt to interpret the results below.



## Discussion

What can be seen from our presentation of data is that all PSTs entered into their one-year postgraduate teacher-education program with a confident and positive view of their own potential professional competence. Their projected professional self-efficacy was extremely high and their view was that they would, in their first teaching post, be able to wholly or, at least, substantially fulfil the statements of professional expectation set out by the GTCE Code of Conduct and Practice or the DfE Teachers' Standards. Indeed, 96% of PSTs judged themselves more likely than current practicing teachers to satisfy the requirements job.

The analysis of Part One of our research shows that PSTs judge themselves most positively in categories relating to protecting and maintaining the well-being of children, and they rated themselves least competently in aspects of collegiality and in their relationships with parents and fellow professionals. The PSTs judged that current practicing teachers are particularly competent in matters of child protection, but that they fall short when working for the best interests of children, particularly in matters relating to consultation with parents, addressing bullying and stereotyping, and providing pupils with impartial advice. The analysis of Part Two of our research shows that PSTs judge themselves to be most positive in categories relating to relationships, attitudes, and well-being. They also judge that practicing teachers are particularly competent in matters of safeguarding, but fall short on working for the best interests of children, and worryingly, particularly low in matters relating to upholding public trust, showing tolerance, and treating pupils with respect and dignity.

In overall terms, the effect size between the level at which the PSTs rated themselves and the level at which they rated the Profession was 0.92 at the beginning of the program and 0.58 at the end. The fact that these high levels of self-belief are manifest at the end of the program, even after having acquired significant experience of working in a school, is perhaps of greatest interest. From our data, we find these elevated levels of Self-efficacy across the whole primary and secondary age-range (5-16 years), and with PSTs studying at contrasting institutions. These outcomes appear to run contrary to research reported elsewhere (Woolfolk 2001; Erdem and Demiral 2007; Pendergast et al., 2011) that suggests PSTs' ratings of their own Self-efficacy increases early on during their teacher education programs but that their Self-views diminish when they come face to face with the realities of teaching.

The PSTs' views of the Profession as a whole, in contrast to their Self-view, did indeed become considerably more positive over the course of their training, but it never increased to such a degree that it came close to matching their evaluations of Self. Indeed, the data show that there were some notable changes in the PSTs' perceptions of the Profession. Of note was the fact that PSTs reported that teachers do not make use of research findings to improve their own practice. Of all the statements, this one slid furthest down the rankings to finish almost rock bottom, possibly reflecting a situation in school where theory is undervalued. This is certainly evidence of the difficulties that PSTs face in managing the differing expectations that exist between school and university cultures (see Spendlove, Howes and Wake, 2010). By contrast, the PSTs' appear to acquire, over the course of their training, a much more positive opinion about the skills that practicing teachers demonstrate in building a fair and inclusive school; this possibly reflects differences in the PSTs' judgements of teachers as they move from the view-point of a being learner to one of becoming a fellow professional.

The reasons as to why PSTs appear to privilege themselves above practicing teachers with respect to perceived professional competence need careful attention. One explanation might relate to the effect on the PSTs' Self-efficacy of both vicarious experiences and persuasive communication experiences. At the start of the program, when we administered our first questionnaire, there had been very few opportunities for the PSTs to moderate their

Self-efficacy judgements since they would have had limited experience of real classroom teaching. Most of the PSTs' previous experiences of fulfilling the role of teacher had been a limited two-week pre-program classroom observation. Therefore, at the beginning of the program, they had very limited understanding of how well they would perform as professionals in a school environment. Given this lack of opportunity to test themselves *in vivo*, and to refine their Self-evaluation of their capabilities and success, it was possible that the persuasive communication relating to quality that they received from their lecturers (particularly in Institution 1) may have had a disproportionately high effect on the PSTs' projected judgements of their own Self-efficacy.

This inculcation of positive Self-judgement relating to ability and potential is particularly strong if it originates from those perceived to have high expertise, and who are credible and trustworthy (Poulou, 2007; Woolfolk Hoy and Burke Spero, 2005). Self-efficacy is also strongly influenced by vicarious experiences where 'people compare themselves to particular associates in similar situations. Surpassing associates or competitors raises self-perceptions of efficacy in observers, whereas performing worse lowers them' (Poulou, 2007, p. 193). PSTs at the beginning of their course, whilst having ample opportunity to reflect on the performance of teachers and gently (or otherwise) critiquing their skill, craft and professionalism, have not necessarily experienced the Self-levelling feedback associated with a novice attempting to reproduce the actions of an experienced teacher with all the predicted associated triumphs and failures.

Regardless of how secure the PSTs were in their Self-perceptions of capability, they are unlikely, as novice practitioners, to be able to exhibit levels of professional competence that are higher than those of serving teachers. Indeed, the fact that they make such Self-enhancing judgements is intriguing. We might take one further line of explanation from the work of Falchikov & Boud (1989), who find that Self-evaluations by higher-education students on their intellectual and social skills correlate only modestly with their actual performance. Similarly, Dunning, Meyerowitz and Holzberg (1989) and Krueger and Mueller (2002) find evidence of widespread occurrences where people generally hold inflated views of their levels of capability, which cannot be justified by objective measures of their performance.

Further, Ehrlinger and Dunning (2003) attribute inconsistencies between Self-perception and actual performance as a symptom of what they call the *top-down nature of performance estimates*. This is a process whereby a person who begins with an inflated sense of Self-capability uses those levels of Self-beliefs when making projected evaluations of their future performance, since performance evaluations are 'formed by referring to a person's chronic view about his or her abilities in the specific domain in question' (p. 378). This could even escalate, according to Krueger and Dunning (1999), to a two headed problem where not only are incompetent professionals completely unaware of their poor levels of professional performance, but their skill deficiencies also prevent them from recognizing when their Self-judgments are accurate and when they are erroneous. This is not to suggest that the PSTs in this study were in any way incompetent, just that they may not have recognized that fact if they were.

Following the experiences of the program, the PSTs' views of themselves barely changed; indeed, the consistency between the before and after Self-judgements was quite remarkable. It is perhaps of greatest interest that these high levels of Self-belief were manifest at the end of the program, despite the trials, tribulations and, often, bruising experiences of initial teacher-education. These elevated levels of Self-efficacy seem to remain fixed, secure and resistant to change. A sociologically based explanation could be helpful here. An analysis of PSTs' sense of professional competence could be aided by using Bourdieu's conceptualisation of 'disposition' particularly in the ways in which PSTs might be

playing out ‘games of distinction’ between the life of a student-teacher within the university context and the life of a professional teacher within the schools-based context.

Raffo and Hall (2006) have suggested that these games of distinction may be necessary so that PSTs can create a secure professional identity as a new and beginning teacher that enables them to provide a clear personal agenda and mandate for future professional action. This process includes:

[...] ontological insecurities associated with the ‘reality’ gap between self-representation as teacher and the representation of the self as teacher by others creates a need to develop a symbolic and imaginary order of how things are; an order that is created by, and at the same time reaffirms, a set of beliefs and a way of justifying and explaining that attempt to reconcile this gap, (2006, p.63).

It may well be that the PSTs’ emerging self-conceptions of professionalism might be susceptible to the need to justify a strong professional Self-efficacy as a way of establishing and signalling that the right professional career choice has been made by the individual. They may well assert, ‘surely I haven’t chosen a career at which I’m not particularly good or well suited; and I’m surely better than average – I’m usually better than average!’.

In a sense, we can interpret the data as showing that PSTs, in their responses to our questionnaires, are simply articulating and reinforcing what Bourdieu refers to as ‘dispositions’ which Jenkins (1992) interprets Bourdieu as arguing that:

[...] the habitus *disposes* actors to do certain things, it provides a *basis* for the generation of practices. Practices are produced in and by the encounter between the habitus and its dispositions, on one hand, and the constraints, demands and opportunities of the social field or market to which the habitus is appropriate or within which the actor is moving, on the other (1992, p.76).

Now, to remind readers, the habitus, in Bourdieu’s theory, is ‘an internalized mental, or cognitive, structure through which people deal with the social world. The habitus both produces, and is produced by, the society’ and it therefore becomes the way ‘through which people deal with the social world (Ritzer 2008, p.86 & p.405). The habitus, then, is acquired by an individual over the course of their lives and it largely determines the way in which they perceive and experience the world. Followers of Bourdieu are quick to point out that the habitus is not deterministic, but rather it ‘merely “suggests” what people should think and what they should chose to do’ (ibid, p.406). In other words, a person’s dispositions are usually derived from their habitus.

Taking these ideas and applying them to our data, it can be seen that the overwhelming consistency in the PSTs’ positive evaluations of their own Self-efficacy, vis-à-vis that of practicing teachers, suggests two interlocked conclusions. First, we can conclude that the PSTs’ evaluations prove that the vast majority of entrants to the teaching profession believe that they can do a better job (as in meeting the articulated Standards) than those currently doing it. Second, we can conclude that the teaching profession only attracts to it (and only wants (because the selective system that is operated in England filters out those deemed unsuited to teach)) those candidates who believe that they can do a better job than the current incumbents. Interpreted in this way, our data lends weight to, and can be explained by, Bourdieu’s theory.

The final Bourdieuan concept we introduce is ‘field’, which is defined as ‘a structured system of social positions – occupied either by individuals or institutions – the

nature of which defines the situation for the occupants' (Jenkins 1992, p.85). In the context of our research, the 'field' for our PSTs would be the teaching profession as a whole or individual schools as institutions within which they find themselves professionally situated. Thus, the results of our data suggest that, as predicted by Bourdieu, the habitus of our PSTs create particular dispositions (that are articulated by the PSTs in their responses to our questionnaires) that are simultaneously defined by and are defining of the field (the teaching profession). More simply, the opinions that our PSTs hold about the teaching profession are simultaneously created by that profession and will also go towards (when they themselves begin to practice) defining the profession.

## Conclusions

This study sought to explore PSTs' projected professional Self-efficacy evaluations in relation their potential to fulfil their professional duties, as mapped against two regulatory frameworks. What we found is that the PSTs believed they would be particularly competent in fulfilling expectations in relation to the professional areas of 'honesty, integrity and professional boundaries' together with 'well-being of learners and expectations'. These particular professional skills are undoubtedly the core cultural expectations of being a teacher in England, i.e. keeping children safe and presenting a professional face to the world. By contrast, PSTs appeared to have more doubts about their own abilities to excel in aspects of the job relating to the school as an institution and to forming relationships with colleagues and parents. The PSTs perhaps see these skills as the ones they will need to build up as their experiences increase, and maybe they view them as dispositions that must be acquired rather being instinctive or innate.

What we also discovered in this study is that, at the start of their training, PSTs' views of the profession, from two different institutions and across different age phases are consistent with those expected by the GTCE or the DfE. In fact, PSTs' positive Self-image indicates that their entry trajectory to the profession is a positive one. The extent to which such ambitions is maintained across the demanding first year of teaching will be interesting and will form the basis of our future research. However, the initial data presented here provides an insight into PSTs' dispositions and identifies areas of training where teacher-educators might usefully expend more resources in addressing areas not ranked as highly by PSTs.

Ultimately, what our evidence suggests is that PSTs think that they will be extremely competent when they become teachers and that they will significantly outperform the teachers they will be joining. The fact that we utilised two radically different frameworks of benchmark statements, against which we asked PSTs to evaluate themselves and the Profession, seemed not to matter: in both cases, the PSTs had a significantly elevated view of their own professional Self-efficacy. Explanations may be sought from self-efficacy theory, or, alternatively, a sociologically based explanation, which might indicate the presence of a Self-serving bias within the PSTs that is, in part, a justification for their altruism in entering what is considered to be a demanding profession.

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**Appendix 1**

Comparisons between mean scores for *Self* and mean score for *Profession* for all pre-service teachers together with the four subgroups.

	Standards from the Teaching Section	All PS Teachers			Institution 1 Secondary			Institution 1 Primary			Institution 2 Primary			Institution 2 Secondary			
		Prof	Self	Diff	Prof	Prof	Prof	Prof	Self	Diff	Prof	Self	Diff	Prof	Self	Diff	p-value
T1	Set high expectations which inspire, motivate & challenge	1.89	1.43	0.46	2.09	1.88	1.88	1.88	1.26	0.20	2.06	1.44	0.62	1.88	1.60	0.29	0.01
T2	Promote good progress and outcomes by pupils	1.83	1.47	0.36	1.94	2.02	2.02	2.02	1.25	0.23	1.92	1.56	0.37	2.02	1.71	0.31	0.02
T3	Demonstrate good subject and curriculum knowledge	1.76	1.49	0.27	1.85	1.67	1.67	1.67	1.36	0.15	1.99	1.68	0.30	1.67	1.65	0.02	0.88
T4	Plan and teach well structured lessons	1.97	1.52	0.45	2.15	2.12	2.12	2.12	1.35	0.17	2.11	1.54	0.57	2.12	1.75	0.37	0.01
T5	Adapt teaching to respond to strengths & needs of all pupils	2.00	1.63	0.37	2.25	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.38	0.12	2.14	1.67	0.47	2.00	1.77	0.23	0.04
T6	Make accurate and productive use of assessment	2.04	1.75	0.28	2.16	2.12	2.12	2.12	1.54	0.08	2.30	1.82	0.48	2.12	1.92	0.19	0.14
T7	Manage behaviour effectively to ensure a good environ	1.92	1.62	0.30	2.07	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.35	0.17	2.09	1.61	0.47	2.00	1.88	0.12	0.35
T8	Fulfil wider professional responsibilities	1.90	1.64	0.26	2.09	1.81	1.81	1.81	1.47	0.15	1.97	1.73	0.24	1.81	1.65	0.16	0.25
	Mean score for Teaching Standards	1.91	1.57	0.34	2.08	1.95	1.95	1.95	1.37	0.16	2.07	1.63	0.44	1.95	1.74	0.21	0.11

	Standards from Personal and Professional Conduct section	All PS Teachers			Institution 1 Secondary			Institution 1 Primary			Institution 2 Primary			Institution 2 Secondary			
		Prof	Self	Diff	Prof	Self	Diff	Prof	Self	Diff	Prof	Self	Diff	Prof	Self	Diff	p-value
P1	Uphold public trust in the profession	1.82	1.39	0.43	1.95	1.40	0.55	1.54	1.20	0.34	1.97	1.50	0.47	1.77	1.62	0.15	0.20
P2	Treating pupils with dignity rooted in mutual respect	1.72	1.23	0.49	1.89	1.23	0.66	1.41	1.11	0.30	1.83	1.26	0.57	1.67	1.42	0.25	0.06
P3	Having regard to safeguard pupils' well-being	1.53	1.31	0.22	1.57	1.27	0.30	1.28	1.21	0.08	1.79	1.40	0.39	1.59	1.56	0.03	0.80
P4	Showing tolerance of and respect for the rights of others	1.71	1.25	0.46	1.77	1.24	0.54	1.40	1.12	0.28	2.00	1.29	0.71	1.71	1.50	0.21	0.12
P5	Not undermining fundamental British values	1.76	1.40	0.36	1.83	1.42	0.41	1.58	1.21	0.37	1.93	1.43	0.50	1.65	1.68	-0.03	0.84
P6	Personal beliefs do not exploit pupils' vulnerability	1.68	1.37	0.30	1.74	1.36	0.38	1.53	1.19	0.34	1.71	1.39	0.32	1.71	1.77	-0.06	0.67
P7	Have proper regard for the ethos & policies of the school	1.73	1.38	0.34	1.79	1.38	0.42	1.40	1.25	0.15	1.94	1.40	0.54	1.88	1.60	0.29	0.03



P8	Understand and act within statutory frameworks	1.74	1.57	0.18	1.82	1.53	0.29	1.51	1.40	0.11	1.94	1.76	0.18	1.71	1.75	-0.04	0.74
	Mean score for Personal and Professional Conduct	1.71	1.36	0.35	1.79	1.35	0.44	1.46	1.21	0.25	1.89	1.43	0.46	1.71	1.61	0.10	0.44
	Mean score for <i>Standards</i> from BOTH sections	1.81	1.47	0.35	1.93	1.48	0.46	1.49	1.29	0.20	1.98	1.53	0.45	1.83	1.68	0.16	0.25