"I feel ... I feel different": A Psychosocial Exploration of Trainee Educational Psychologists' Experiences of Personal and Professional Change Over their Doctorate Training.

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Abstract

The available literature has shown that the topic of trainee educational psychologists' (TEPs) experiences of training has been explored predominately through the structures of course content reviews, supervision and evaluations of frameworks and tools. This research chose to take a different approach and studied the psychosocial experience of training. This exploratory study used the method of thematic analysis with a psychosocial lens for the purpose of exploring TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctoral training.

A psychosocial position was taken by the researcher, complementing the psychoanalytic concepts of the unconscious and the 'defended subject' and the 'defended researcher'. This psychosocial position in line with the methodological approach, enabled the researcher to consider both the psychological and social aspects that influence the TEPs' experiences of change, but also the intersubjective dynamic within the research interviews for both the participant and researcher.

The interviews were ten in total, five third year participants each took part in two semi-structured interviews. Through the free association narrative interview (FANI) technique, the researcher facilitated the participant to explore what came to mind around their experiences of change, and through a second interview the researcher was able to return to the rich content of the first interview and reflect on this further. A reflective research diary was used to record the researcher's personal responses to all aspects of the research.

The findings provide a rich account of five connected themes that were generated from the data: journey; challenges and painful learning; developing educational psychologist (EP) identity; nurture and containment and navigating the course impact on personal relationships. The strengths and limitations of the study are discussed, together with its implications.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks go to the five participants, who chose to take part in this study during a very busy time towards the end of their training. The interviews with these participants offered a depth of awareness into the experiences of personal and professional change and development that can occur over the EP training. Their stories had a positive influence on how I approached my own journey in my final year of training.

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List of Abbreviations

AEP	Association of Educational Psychology
BNIM	Biographic Narrative Interview Method
BPS	British Psychological Society
CBT	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
CYP	Children and Young People
DEPSM	Developmental/ Ecological/ Problem-Solving Model
DfE	Department for Education
DoH	Department of Health
EBL	Enquiry Based Learning
EHCP	Education, Health and Care Plan
EP	Educational Psychologist
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
IDM	Integrative Developmental Model
IPA	Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis
LC	Lancaster Cycle
MLE	Mediated Learning Experience
MSc	Masters
OSPA	Objective Structured Professional Assessments
PBL	Problem Based Learning
PEP	Principal Educational Psychologist
RQEP	Recently Qualified Educational Psychologist
SEEL	South East, East, and London

SEN	Special Educational Needs
TEP	Trainee Educational Psychologist
VERP	Video Enhanced Reflective Practice
VIG	Video Interaction Guidance
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

Confidentiality and Anonymity

To protect the identities of the participant TEPs, all identifying information has been either anonymised or replaced with pseudonyms. This includes all details of families, friends, tutors, colleagues and settings associated with the professional training.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter Overview

This research offers an insight into TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctorate training. This introductory chapter will:

1. discuss the national context of educational psychology training;
2. describe the educational psychology training history;
3. discuss change and its links with personal and professional self;
4. discuss trainee psychologists' experiences;
5. discuss the grey literature on TEPs;
6. discuss personal identification with this study;
7. offer a chapter summary.

1.1 The National Context of Educational Psychology Training

Within the United Kingdom (UK), to qualify as an educational psychologist (EP) one must be recognised by the British Psychological Society (BPS) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC). EPs are required to meet all competencies from the BPS (2019) *Standards for the Accreditation of Doctoral Programmes in Educational Psychology* and the HCPC (2015) *Standards of Proficiency* on the completion of a three-year doctorate programme.

Within the BPS (2019) competencies, *Competency 1. Promoting Development and Education* requires EPs to be able to promote development and change, by understanding a range of factors which influence individual differences, cognitive ability and wellbeing. In addition, the BPS (2017) *Practice Guidelines Section 1.2* maintained the importance of ethical practice to promote development and facilitate change for service users, using the psychologist's psychological knowledge and skills. This is also emphasised by the HCPC (2015) in *The Standards of Proficiency, Section 13.37* which state that EPs should actively support the service user to understand factors which influence effective change and development at different levels (personal, group and organisational).

Moreover, the BPS (2019) maintained that EPs should welcome change and development themselves and should undertake a position of lifelong learning as an integral part of professional growth. This is supported by the HCPC (2015) in *The Standards of Proficiency, Section 3.*3 which draws upon the importance of career long learning as a way of maintaining one's fitness to practice. Both the HCPC (2015) and the BPS (2019) have highlighted the importance of promoting development and change for others, but also within the EP profession itself, encouraging continuous learning and development for EPs.

Within EP training, the HCPC (2015) and BPS (2019) require TEPs to evidence how they are developing essential skills for practice, including how one can promote and support change for children, families and schools. Moreover, to demonstrate this skill, TEPs are expected to go through their own changes and developments and are advised in *The Practice Placement Partnership Framework* (Association of Educational

Psychology (AEP), 2019) to document their progression and learning in a midway and end of year evaluation and professional development plan.

In addition, *The Practice Placement Partnership Framework* (AEP, 2019) maintained 'three-way' meetings between the TEP, their university tutor and placement supervisor should take place minimum once per term, to allow for review of the TEPs development. Thus, it seems inherent to the training, that TEPs should undergo continuous development and change over the course of their training.

1.2 The History of EP Training

The role of the EP was first established in 1913 when Cyril Burt became the first EP to join the London County Council (Arnold & Leadbetter, 2013). After this, the profession was slow to develop, but when recommendations for psychologists in educational settings were made in the publication of *The Summerfield Report* (Department for Education and Science, 1968), this saw an increase in the training of EPs and the EP population grew.

Yet, despite the growing EP population there was still not enough to meet the demand and need for psychologists in educational services (Farrell & Lunt, 1995). This was linked to the complicated EP training route, which required all prospective TEPs to be trained as teachers. Holding at least two years teaching experience and an undergraduate degree in psychology before being eligible for the one-year EP Masters (MSc) (Farrell & Lunt, 1995).

Also, major barriers for many teachers drawn to the EP role was the potential challenges of earning less income and the idea of going back to studying after several years of establishing a career (Farrell & Lunt, 1995). This sparked a debate on whether a teaching qualification should be required for the training and whether the EP training should be restructured (Farrell & Lunt, 1995).

Evans, Grahamslaw, Henson and Prince (2012) is discussed in the literature review of this study, however, it is important to mention them at this point as they offered a clear explanation to the complicated history of the EP training. Evans et al. (2012) highlighted various papers from the 1990's (Frederickson & Collins, 1997; Frederickson, Curran, Gersch, & Portsmouth, 1996; Maliphant, 1997), which called for the EP training to be extended and restructured in correspondence with the developing EP role and increase of responsibilities.

Furthermore, Farrell, Gersch, and Morris (1998) made several justifications for the additional educational psychology training:

- They questioned the degree to which after just one year of MSc training, EPs were ready to take on intricate complex work such as critical incidents and tribunals.
- The recognition of further training required for EPs had stemmed back as far as 1984 by various governing bodies such as the BPS and AEP.
- Counterparts in other fields of psychology, for example, clinical psychologists, were required to have three years of applied psychological practice before qualifying.

- The BPS Diploma in educational psychology maintained that for EPs to gain chartered status they should hold research and practitioner competencies completed over a minimum of 300 days of supervised practice, and this was not feasible in a one-year MSc programme.

Subsequently in 1999, an optional doctorate was established in educational psychology, a four-year part-time continuing professional development programme for qualified EPs (BPS, 2006). Following this in 2006, the EP training was officially restructured and became a three-year professional doctorate programme (BPS, 2006; Fredrickson, 2013). Applicants were required to hold an honours degree in psychology and were no longer obliged to have trained as teachers (Fredrickson, 2013). Although teacher training was still desirable, it was now on equal par with previous work with children and young people (CYP) in mental health services or other educational settings (Evans et al. 2012).

However, before the three-year professional doctorate programme was rolled out a comprehensive core curriculum was established. The Doctoral Working Party, which consisted of representatives from the AEP and DECP, course directors and principal educational psychologists (PEPs) held an extensive one-day consultation at the University of Birmingham in 1996 and together developed the new curriculum (Farrell, Gersch & Morris, 1998). This curriculum is still used today, and draws from a wide range of theories and psychology to establish four key domains for training (Farrell, Gersch & Morris, 1998):

- psychological assessment and intervention;
- interpersonal effectiveness;

- the profession and its context;
- research and enquiry.

In current times, training providers have seen an increase in their capacity of course places for aspiring TEPs. This arose with support from the findings of *The Research on the Educational Psychologist Workforce Report* (Lyonette, Atfield, Baldauf & Owen, 2019) commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) and pressure from local authority children's services (DfE, 2019b). This saw the DfE promise to fund an extra £350 million to provide tailored facilities and specialist support for those with complex needs, which lead to the pledge of £31.6 million to combat the shortage of EPs and increase the number of TEPs on courses nationwide (DfE, 2019a).

1.3 Change: The Personal and Professional

It may be anticipated that an individual immersed in a learning process will experience change in some form. Higginson and Mansell (2008) explained that change is a dynamic and subjective process continuously experienced throughout life and influences the entirety of being, yet it cannot solely be defined given its objectivity and often latent presence. Parkes and Prigerson (2013) extended this explanation by suggesting change is an inevitable process embedded throughout life and described it as *"Our experiences of arriving, departing, growing, declining, achieving, failing — every change involves a loss and a gain. The old environment must be given up, the new accepted"* (p.8).

Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons (2006) suggested the process of personal change influences one's professional identity, or on the contrary, that our professional changes influence our personal identity. Day et al. (2006) explained that the enmeshment of the personal and professional aspects of one's identity is unavoidable given that one's professional identity usually demands personal investment.

This was also explored by Kelchtermans (1993) who suggested that both the professional and personal self evolves and changes over time and consists of five interconnected factors:

- self-image- how one describes themselves through their professional events or stories;
- self-esteem- the development of one's self in role, their worth or value as defined by self or others;
- job-motivation- what makes one choose, remain committed to and wish to leave their role;
- task perception- how one defines and describes their jobs;
- future perspective- one's expectations for their prospects.

These factors highlight that the professional self is formed from the fundamental qualities and characteristics of one's personal identity (Kelchtermans, 1993). This connects with the *BPS Practice Guidelines* (2017) for psychologists, as *Competency 10. Transferable skills, 10.F* promotes the practice and development of interpersonal skills, which are influenced by one's personality. Therefore, within this study, the personal and professional aspects of oneself are believed to be connected.

1.4 Literature on Trainee Psychologists' Experiences

Internationally, there is a developing literature base on the training experiences of psychologists in the clinical and counselling domains. These fields of psychology share some similar training requirements to those of educational psychology, including placement, supervision, doctoral- level research and working with vulnerable people in society. Spendelow (2017) found in his study of clinical trainees that the environment in which trainees were studying had a significant impact on trainee-trainee and trainee-staff relationships. Spendelow (2017) also found a significant relationship between trainee wellbeing and trainee-staff relationships.

Similarly, Silvester (2011) found for counselling trainees that trainee-staff relations and staff flexibility impacted how supported the trainees felt. Silvester (2011) found passion, voice and personal development were three key themes when reviewing trainees' thoughts, experiences and relationships regarding their training. In the same vein, Watts, Barclay and Mead (2017) also discussed the importance of wellbeing and support within clinical training, and described the challenges of having to relocate for the course and experiences of change in self-concept and a feeling of being under scrutiny in training.

Chui, Ziemer, Palma and Hill (2014) reviewed the importance of peer relations for counselling psychologist trainees. Chui et al. (2014) maintained that peers in training can develop a mutual understanding of the experience, which helps trainees to feel supported by their cohort. This was felt to positively contribute to the trainees' learning

experiences and emotional wellbeing. However, Chui et al. (2014) also acknowledged that individual trainee beliefs about peer relationships may impact the relational dynamics, for example, some trainees may take a competitive approach with their peers, rather than a co-operative approach which may act as a barrier to this supportive peer culture.

Given the overlap of some of the specific training elements mentioned in relation to the clinical and counselling psychologist training courses, it is suggested that such papers may also be relevant to those experiences of TEPs. However, it is acknowledged that the type of workload, placement and supervision may be significantly different between the respective trainee groups. Some grey literature found on TEPs' experiences of training will now be discussed.

1.5 The Grey Literature on TEPs

Grey literature consists of materials produced outside of the traditional commercial or academic publishing and distribution networks (Mahood, Van Eerd, & Irvin, 2014). The most common types of grey literature include unpublished papers, project reports, theses, presentations, working papers and evaluations (Mahood et al., 2014). Within the context of TEPs in the UK, there are a handful of available sources of grey literature which explored TEPs' experiences whilst training. Although not an exhaustive list, the researcher has offered some insight into some of these pieces.

Within the South East, East, and London (SEEL) consortium, as part of adhering to the BPS (2019) *Programme Standards*, research on TEPs has been conducted in the form

of data orientated surveys, to measure impact and satisfaction of various training components. Each year, SEEL course providers encourage TEPs to complete placement quality assurance surveys to monitor elements of their placement experience. The most recent available data was from SEEL (2018) and showed from those TEPs who completed the surveys, 65% of third year TEPs felt their placements were a suitable match and approximately 88% were generally happy with their placements and felt appropriately supported.

Other forms of grey literature such as theses, has shown how TEPs have valued and recognised supervision as an integral part of their development in training. Shaldon (2015) detailed in his thesis, some of the latent factors such as power imbalance and defence mechanisms which influence the dynamics between a TEP and their supervisor, thus highlighting some of the more holistic and psychosocial elements of the TEP experience.

Like Shaldon (2015), Vallily (2014) studied the TEP experience in her thesis and described her own experience being employed on placement by an academy. Vallily (2014) explained the barriers she faced in developing her identity and her need for belonging. Vallily (2014) attributed these challenges to three factors: systemic issues and implications, ethics and power, and TEP professional development.

Parker (2009) explored through his thesis, PEPs' hopes, expectations and concerns for TEPs joining their teams on placement. Parker (2009) found that PEPs acknowledged issues within a local authority (LA) context and different practice methods of EPs

within LA teams could cause confusion for TEPs and influence their learning and subsequent trajectories in training.

The theses mentioned above is not an exhaustive list, more EPs and TEPs (Bartle, 2016; Begley, 2013; Heaney, 2010; Vanderman, 2017) chose to undertake their doctoral thesis in the domain of TEP training. Although these additional theses do offer some insights into the different components of the TEP training, these studies are not considered significantly relevant to the focus of this research.

Another form of grey literature is illustrated by France (2019), who wrote a short reflective blog on how to 'survive' the final term of training. France (2019) offered advice on thesis writing and encouraged TEPs to make the most out of their placement experience. Another short reflective piece was offered by Chesnutt (2018), who wrote a short letter to her first year- self, reflecting on her experiences of training and the transformative journey she underwent.

Chesnutt (2018) discussed personal values, the emotional rollercoasters and the lessons she learned during training. She described her training not only as journey but also as an adventure. The short letter offered a 'snapshot' into the lived experience of being a TEP, offering a sense of the rich and whole emotional experience of training; rather than focusing on specific mechanisms within it.

1.6 Personal Identification with the Study

Given that the researcher is a TEP researching the experience of training, it felt pertinent to discuss the reason for the interest in conducting this study. During the researcher's own experience of training, she was part of and listened to many rich discussions about TEPs' learning experiences and how these experiences influenced lives. For most individuals, their stories were positive ones of growth and development, while others shared more difficult stories of loss and sacrifice. It resonated with the researcher, that these stories could provide insightful learning about the TEP training experience.

On her own training path, the researcher felt a 'shift', a change within herself and her identity. But, mindful of her own experience and how this may have influenced the participants and the data set, the researcher consciously acknowledged that her own experiences were unique to those of the research participants. Given the common TEP identity between the researcher and the participants, awareness and respect of individual differences was important within this psychosocial study

The researcher appreciated each participant's path to becoming an EP by recognising their individual trajectories of learning and change. By making these reflections explicit in this introductory section, it is hoped the reader can appreciate the researcher's sensitivity to the importance of recognising one's own positioning and potential bias throughout this study, especially within research of this nature.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This introductory piece has offered context to the educational psychology training and its history. It has provided definitions of change and its links with the personal and professional self. Furthermore, it is hoped that by offering an overview of some available literature on trainee psychologists, by highlighting examples of grey literature, and offering the researcher's identification with the study, the reader will feel well informed to the context of this research.

Chapter 2

Systematic Literature Review

Chapter Overview

This chapter aims to:

1. detail the literature review questions;
2. explain the systematic literature search detailing the search strategy and criteria;
3. offer a review overview of the chosen literature;
4. answer literature review question 1;
5. answer literature review question 2;
6. offer a critique of the literature methods;
7. offer a rationale for the current study;
8. offer a chapter summary.

2.1 The Literature Review Questions

The aim of this systematic literature search was to develop the researcher's understanding of the available research within the topic of TEPs and doctorate training within the UK, and subsequently, identify what further research questions can be posed. Therefore, a preliminary systematic literature search was conducted in April 2019, August 2019, and October 2019 in the areas of TEPs and doctorate training within the UK. These searches showed up few relevant studies and subsequently helped to establish the following literature review questions:

- *What is the available research on TEPs in doctorate training in the UK?*
- *To what extent does this available literature share TEPs' views?*

2.2 Literature Search Strategy

The online platform EBSCOHost was used to survey the available literature. EBSCOhost provides an extensive range of quality content for academic libraries and organisations, including academic research databases and academic journals (EBSCOhost, 2020). The search dates were restricted to papers published between '2006- 2020' as these dates were deemed applicable to the current doctoral training programme of EPs in the UK, EP training before 2006 was not a mandatory doctorate.

Moreover, research studies conducted on the EP training in Scotland was not included, as Scottish training is not to doctoral level. In the literature search, search modes 'Also search within the full text of the articles' and 'Apply equivalent subjects' were unticked to produce a focused search and to avoid identified papers becoming diluted amongst other less relevant papers. Search terms were searched by the Boolean operator. This allowed terms within each key search term category to be searched separately by the Boolean operator "OR". The Boolean operator "AND" was used between key search term categories to ensure both key search terms were found within the same paper, see Table 1 for search terms.

Table 1. *Search Terms*

Search Strategy: (trainee educational psychologist OR educational psychologists in training) AND (United Kingdom OR UK OR England OR Great Britain OR Northern Ireland OR Wales)
Limiters: Peer reviewed; Date published: 2006-2020; Search mode: Boolean/ Phrase search and untick apply 'equivalent subjects' and 'also search within the full text of articles'
Papers generated: 179

See appendix 1 for inclusion and exclusion criteria table and appendix 2 for excluded papers. Academic journals were chosen for inclusion as they require papers to be peer reviewed and meet a 'quality threshold'. Academic journals can also offer a source of information that can portray and describe research accurately; and stimulate thought, discussion and debate (Finlay, 1997). To promote a quality threshold within this study, only empirical papers were chosen as these can be critiqued against research quality screening tools.

The literature search produced 9 appropriate papers. One further paper Evans, Grahamslaw, Henson and Prince (2012) was found through backward reference searching (also known as chain searching) through Atkinson, Dunsmuir, Lang and Wright (2015). Backward reference searching involves examining the references cited in an article and allows one to investigate studies which may not have been available in the original literature search (Ballard & Henry, 2006). This brought the total papers generated for review to 10. The literature search was conducted again in March 2020

to search for additional suitable research articles that may have been published since the original search, however none was found.

All selected qualitative articles were screened for quality using the Walsh and Downe (2006) evaluation tool. This tool was chosen owing to the inclusion of reflexivity in the appraisal criteria which complements the psychosocial element of this study. Other studies employed a mixed-method design, these were critiqued against the evaluation tool for mixed methods study design (Long, 2005). This mixed methods tool was chosen for its inclusion of researcher bias, which also complements the psychosocial element of this study (see original critique tools in appendix 3). A summary of the critique of each paper can be found in appendix 4. The support of these tools helped the researcher to think critically about the studies, considering the strengths, limitations and patterns between them.

2.3 Review Overview

The systematic literature review papers were published between 2007 and 2018. All research was conducted within England but also have relevance to TEP training in Wales and Northern Ireland. Eight of the papers (Atkinson, Dunsmuir, Lang & Wright, 2015; Atkinson & Woods, 2007; Bozic & Williams, 2011; Dunsmuir, Atkinson, Lang, Warhurst, Wright, 2017; Hill, Bond, Atkinson, Woods, Gibbs, Howe & Morris, 2015; Murray & Leadbetter, 2018; Squires & Dunsmuir, 2011; Woods, Atkinson, Bond, Gibbs, Hill, Howe & Morris, 2015) involved author EPs who work for training provider universities. The other papers were conducted by EPs (Evans et al., 2012) and TEPs (Mills & Swift, 2015).

Five of the research articles involve the author Cathy Atkinson (Atkinson et al., 2015; Atkinson & Woods, 2007; Hill et al., 2015; Dunsmuir et al., 2017; Woods et al., 2015). Both Woods (Atkinson & Woods, 2007; Hill et al., 2015; Woods et al., 2015) and Dunsmuir (Atkinson et al., 2015; Dunsmuir et al., 2017; Squires & Dunsmuir, 2011) were involved in three of the studies. Subsequently, the reader should consider how these authors' potential biases, for example, conflict of interest, may have influenced the research and findings explored in this review.

To offer some guiding clarity on the interchanging terms within this review, theories are understood as formal statements of ideas intended to explain phenomenon and models are examples of how one explains these theories (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). Frameworks are understood as supporting structures underpinned by beliefs in order to attain an outcome and mechanisms are understood as parts of a system which enable function (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

2.4 Question 1: *What is the Available Research on TEPs in Doctorate Training in the UK?*

This question sought to review the pre-existing research on TEPs in doctoral training in the UK, excluding Scotland. Below, the subheadings offer the most prevalent themes found across the papers, these include learning theories and models, learning and assessment frameworks, supervision, implications for training and practice.

2.4.1 Learning Theories and Models

It is suggested by the researcher that theories of learning are central for developing an understanding of the teaching and support required for successful learning in adults. Mills and Swift (2015) researched the gains of TEP peer supervision and drew from learning theories to explain the valuable learning from supervision. For example, Mills and Swift (2015) explained that the experiential learning model (Kolb, Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 2001) accepts the view that one learns based on one's own style and can become *"stuck"* (p.108) within this. Yet, through collaborative peer supervision, different styles of learning and perspectives can support the problem owner to become *"unstuck"* (Mills & Swift, 2015, p.108).

Moreover, Mills and Swift (2015) highlighted the Johari window (Luft & Ingham, 1982) as an important learning theory pertinent to those in training. Mills and Swift (2015) cited Luft and Ingham (1982) to explain that the Johari window upholds four dimensions of learning: known to self and known to others; known to self and not known to others; not known to self and known to others, and not known to self and not known to others. These dimensions are connected, one may shift and move between them, and in peer supervision, these shifts are supported by peers (Mills & Swift, 2015).

Thus, Mills and Swift (2015) maintained the consideration of one's Johari window whilst undertaking an enquiry- based learning (EBL) approach (Kahn & O'Rourke, 2005) was the most beneficial way of promoting cooperative learning amongst TEPs. Given the dynamic process of EBL, where lines of enquiry are taken with the exploration of prior knowledge (Mills & Swift, 2015).

In comparison to the learning theories detailed by Mills and Swift (2015), Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) offered an overview of the Lancaster cycle (LC) (Burgoyne, 1992) when proposing a model for adult learning of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT). Like the Johari window, the LC model upholds the learner's inner and outer worlds. It appreciates experiential learning (Kolb, Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 2001) through experimental practice and seeks enquiry through discovery and response in the learner's outer world (Squires & Dunsmuir, 2011).

However, it is argued by the researcher that despite importance drawn to the learner's internal world, the LC model (Burgoyne, 1992) discussed by Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) lacks a layer of depth, as it fails to address the influence of the unconscious on learning, which was addressed by Mills and Swift (2015) in their explanation. Subsequently, Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) may have potentially missed out a significant factor when attempting to explain adult learning in the context of the TEP experience.

Like Mills and Swift (2015, p.108) who acknowledged individuals can become *"stuck"* within their own experiential learning style, Murray and Leadbetter (2018) maintained the significance of the mediated learning experience (MLE) (Feuerstein, 1991) as a way of supporting difficulties with learning. Murray and Leadbetter (2018) explained MLE as important learning experiences which support the development of each unique learner through conditions of modifying stimuli to one's zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978).

Murray and Leadbetter (2018) explained MLE in the context of supporting video-enhanced reflective practice (VERP) (Coventry & Prior-Jones, 2010) for TEPs reviewing their skills in consultation and peer supervision. Murray and Leadbetter (2018) explained that VERP is founded on the principles of attuned interaction, based on the foundations of intersubjectivity and mediated learning.

Hill et al. (2015) reviewed learning theories which influence supervision and like Mills and Swift (2015), recognised experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) as an important learning cycle to support planning, practice and integration of theory in supervision. However, Hill et al. (2015) also maintained there is limited evidence to support models of learning in EP training, arguing that many theories do not consider the changing needs of TEPs over time.

This argument by Hill et al. (2015) raises an interesting reflection on the learning theories that have been discussed thus far by Mills and Swift (2015), Murray and Leadbetter (2018) and Squires and Dunsmuir (2011), as it seems none of these authors explicitly addressed the relevance of changing learning needs over time. Moreover, the argument raised by Hill et al. (2015), raises a further question around which learning models for TEPs do acknowledge this important development.

Subsequently, Hill et al. (2015) offered the integrative developmental model (IDM) (Stolenberg & McNeill, 2010) and the developmental/ ecological/ problem-solving model (DEPSM) by Simon, Cruise, Huber, Swerdlik and Newman (2014) as two potential learning models that could address this criticism.

IDM originated from counselling practice and considers the learning process of growth, by appreciating and emphasising the dynamic and non-linear features of attitude, skill and knowledge over a duration of time (Stolenberg & McNeill, 2010). The IDM is maintained upon three phases characterised by different needs in relation to one's self-awareness and awareness of others and is similar to the Johari window (Luft & Ingham, 1982) in how it acknowledges levels of awareness.

The DEPSM (Simon et al., 2014) also complements this perspective, by encompassing the importance of levels of awareness in contextual and cultural factors such as race, religion and societal class and how these may influence one's problem-solving skills. Hill et al. (2015) explained the IDM and the DEPSM allows for the development of autonomy over time which is pertinent to the professional development of TEPs.

Overall, it is argued by the researcher that the learning theories and models discussed on one level interlink in principles and highlight that certain elements, such as the opportunity for experiential learning, is central for successful TEP learning. However, it is suggested that the discrepancies between what each model and theory encompass, in particular, the inclusion or exclusion of the unconscious, and the degree of consideration given to how changing needs over time influence learning, strengthen the argument of Hill et al. (2015), who maintained there was limited evidence to support models of learning in EP training. This may suggest that as a profession we are still learning about how TEPs learn best and the effectiveness of applying adult learning theories to TEPs.

2.4.2 Learning & Assessment Frameworks

Connected to learning theories and models are frameworks for learning and assessment. Evans et al. (2012) reviewed the entire learning structures of the TEP training by investigating if the doctorate training was still *"fit for purpose"* (p.373). This study reviewed the input and teaching in the different components of the training course by asking recently qualified EPs (RQEPs) to share what they felt as TEPs, was useful learning on the course and if it was relevant to their practice since qualifying. PEPs were also asked for their views on the relevance of the TEP training and its applicability to practice.

Evans et al. (2012) explained that the learning frameworks adopted by courses were required to include four areas: psychological assessments and intervention; interpersonal effectiveness; the profession and its context; research and enquiry. Although keeping within BPS accreditation, it seems how each training course chose to deliver this teaching was at its own discretion. Some training courses seemed to vary in their structure and offered different foci, as Evans et al. (2012) found some differences between what RQEPs reported of their training.

Evans et al. (2012) found some RQEPs had not received training in areas such as presentation skills, communication and interpersonal skills and group work, yet were using these in their practice. It was also found that some RQEPs felt they lacked input on parent and staff support. Moreover, most RQEPs reported that although they were trained in research skills and systemic approaches, they did not use them, and the

majority of RQEPs commented that the breadth of the curriculum was at the expense of in-depth learning opportunities (Evans et al., 2012). Although Evans et al. (2012) found overall the structure and learning frameworks were indeed fit for purpose, there were some discrepancies between training and practice, and argued these should be recognised and addressed by the appropriate training providers.

Perhaps addressing some of this discrepancy, was the study by Atkinson et al. (2015) which aimed to develop a competency framework for the initial training of TEPs working with 16 to 25-year olds. The study developed six key curriculum areas: context; legislation; assessment; interventions and outcomes; development and transitions. This study came in response to the increasing socio-legislative challenges that were felt to impact on the role of EPs, including the new *SEND Code of Practice* (DfE & Department of Health (DoH), 2014) (Atkinson et al., 2015).

It is suggested that while the research by Evans et al. (2012) predates the legislative changes of 2014, similar social challenges in the working climate like offering support to over 16s and parents, may also have been experienced by the participant RQEPs as they described discrepancies between their training and experiences of EP practice, such as offering parent support. Evans et al. (2012, p.389) discussed the challenges of meeting *"real world demands"* and the changing role of the EP, which further suggests these social challenges discussed by Atkinson et al. (2015) were possibly present in the working context for EPs in 2012.

Like Atkinson et al. (2015), Bozic and Williams (2011) were also interested in frameworks for TEP training and queried the use of online problem-based learning

(PBL) and enquiry-based learning (EBL) as facilitating frameworks for learning. Bozic and Williams (2011) explained EBL differs from PBL as it applies to a wider range of potential tasks such as investigations and research activity. Both structures could create a learning experience by offering out a real-life problem that requires solving from a collaborative yet self-directed problem-solving group (Bozic & Williams, 2011). These frameworks seem to encapsulate some of the principles of experiential learning (Kolb, Boyatiz & Mainemelis, 2001) discussed by Mills and Swift (2015).

The study of Bozic and Williams (2011) found that TEPs enjoyed this learning structure given its virtual access, as they could learn from home and, rather than giving immediate responses to group tasks, it allowed more time to reflect on their input. Moreover, it seems the two studies Evans et al. (2012) and Bozic and Williams (2011) complement each other, as it is argued by the researcher that the learning content reviewed by Evans et al. (2012) could be mapped onto the new online learning framework presented by Bozic and Williams (2011), thus, potentially offering an alternative way of training TEPs.

Murray and Leadbetter (2018) also promoted an alternative framework for training, with the use of VERP for reflective practice on consultation and peer supervision skills. Although originally a therapeutic tool, Murray and Leadbetter (2018) found VERP was successful for the learning of TEPs. It is argued by the researcher that VERP has also contributed to the push towards the idea of ‘modern training’ as video recording, in the same way as online PBL and EBL draws on technology and strengthens the role of technology in TEP learning.

Likewise, Dunsmuir et al. (2017) invested in the role of technology and video in TEP training, by using video recordings of TEP assessments for reflection opportunities. Dunsmuir et al. (2017) reviewed the use of objective structured professional assessments (OSPAs) for assessing TEP skills. This framework consisted of various stations of TEP assessment with each station focusing on a different area of training including initial consultation, assessment and explanation, action planning and communication and ethics.

These areas were assessed using vignettes, with actors playing parents or teachers. Dunsmuir et al. (2017) found that OSPAs generally received positive reviews from TEPs, although there was some criticism centred around time constraints and the perceived additional stress and anxiety experienced by some TEPs. In addition, some TEPs felt that being assessed by multiple assessors led to some uncertainty about the consistency of feedback.

Taking a broader perspective, it is evident that TEPs' skills and competence are developed and reviewed through various types of assessments and frameworks. Regardless of their focus, there appears to be common trends in the areas for learning. Each paper has emphasised the importance of context, development and reflection through the discussion of frameworks and TEP competence. Moreover, it seems the use of video and technology has grown within TEP training and it is argued by the researcher that this reflects the technological advances within society. Thus, it seems likely the prevalence of technology within EP training will continue to grow.

Yet, it could be argued the use of technological tools in supporting TEP learning may cause a barrier to the holistic intersubjective experiences created between people when learning face- to-face. It may also increase the skill set requirements upon TEPs to be familiar with, and confident in use of the technology tools, like videos. This was also implied by Murray and Leadbetter (2018) when they acknowledged the TEPs' lack of previous experience using video interaction guidance was a potential limitation to its impact on practice and that one TEP needed additional time to work out how to use the video.

2.4.3 Supervision

As mentioned in 2.4.1, Hill et al. (2015) explored the pertinence of supervision to TEP learning. Through a thematic analysis, using the data gathered by Woods et al. (2015) in an earlier study, Hill et al. (2015) generated five themes. These themes were: developing professional learning and professional role; responsiveness to developmental learning needs; sensitive management of emotional and motivational aspects of learning; developing a critical analysis of professional work; meta-analysis of professional activity and professional role. Interestingly, these themes are an extension of the themes generated by Woods et al. (2015) which may have influenced the interpretations made by Hill et al. (2015).

Woods et al. (2015) explored TEPs' placement experiences and needs with a focus on supervision, and through thematic analysis found seven main themes: context and governance; supervisor qualities and characteristics; management and practical arrangements; models and processes; educative development; supportive and affective

dimensions, and outcomes. It seems Woods et al. (2015) gives the context of TEPs' experiences and needs, which Hill et al. (2015) builds upon to explain the importance of supervision. It is apparent the two studies' themes appear to map onto one another.

In their research of peer supervision, Mills and Swift (2015) identified two broad outcomes that encompassed the benefits of peer supervision. Outcome one, developing of skills and moving forward, included the factors: group working skills; consultation skills; problem-solving; ethical decisions; reflection; autonomy and critical thinking. Outcome two, well-being, sharing and supporting, seemed to be prevalent throughout the development of the peer supervision group and was interwoven into the dynamics of supervision, for example, the sense of *"peerness",* which emphasised the value of sharing and supporting (Mills & Swift, 2015, p.113).

It is suggested the themes of Hill et al. (2015) relate to various factors highlighted in outcome one from Mills and Swift (2015). For example, Hill et al. (2015) discussed the development of critical analysis of professional work which links with the development of autonomy and critical thinking (Mills & Swift, 2015). In addition, Hill et al. (2015) highlighted the need to respond to the developmental learning needs of TEPs, while Mills and Swift (2015) emphasised the importance of skill development and moving forward.

However, Mills and Swift (2015) discussed the emotional and wellbeing aspects of supervision more than both Hill et al. (2015) and Woods et al. (2015). This may be influenced by the career position of the authors, since Hill et al. (2015) consisted of experienced and established EPs, whereas Mills and Swift (2015) were two TEPs living

the experience of training. Thus, it is argued by the researcher Mills and Swift (2015) may have been more emotionally invested in the experience in comparison to the other authors.

Atkinson and Woods (2007) was one of the first studies that investigated supervision for doctoral level TEPs. This research was conducted over six years (2000-2006) and suggested a potential model of fieldwork supervision for the new restructured doctoral training of TEPs in 2006. Although it could be argued this was a 'hypothetical' study based on what might be useful for doctoral supervision, as it was conducted mostly prior to 2006; it seems the supervision model successfully represented similar factors found to be of importance in later studies like Hill et al. (2015) and Mills and Swift (2015). The study drew on problem-solving, progression of skills and knowledge, and maintained the importance of relational aspects in supervision, hence supporting the sense of *"peerness*" and safety discussed by Mills & Swift (2015, p.113).

Peer supervision was also discussed by Murray and Leadbetter (2018) in the context of VERP. However, the research focused more on TEPs using VERP to reflect on their peer supervision skills, rather than on these skills more widely. Moreover, although Murray and Leadbetter (2018) did not explicitly refer to VERP as a form of TEP supervision in their paper, it is argued by the researcher that within the reviewed study, the use of VERP mirrored that of a supervision, as TEPs were reviewing their own skills and reflecting on these with the support of a video interactive guidance (VIG) supervisor.

Also, VERP focuses on the strengths of one's practice and searches for attunement in relational dynamics (Murray & Leadbetter, 2018). It also emphasises a *"no blame culture",* thus one may anticipate VERP to feel somewhat safe (Murray and Leadbetter,

2018 cited Strathie, Strathie & Kennedy, 2011), which again, is argued to share some commonalities to that of a positive supervision space.

Although generally, VERP had positive reviews in its use, TEPs reported to finding it somewhat threatening to their competence, given they also were reviewing their less desirable practice on video (Murray & Leadbetter, 2018). It is argued by the researcher that for some TEPs, this aspect of watching their less desirable practice with peers could be counterproductive in developing their confidence, as Murray and Leadbetter (2018) explained some TEPs shared their apprehension about being filmed.

Similarly, Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) discussed supervision in the context of CBT. Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) highlighted the need for TEP supervision to be flexible and offer safety, especially when TEPs were faced with dilemmas. Overall, within the presented studies (Atkinson & Woods, 2007; Hill et al., 2015; Mills & Swift, 2015; Squires & Dunsmuir, 2011; Woods et al., 2015), it is suggested there was an implicit tone of nurture woven into *how* each study described the function, importance and experiences of supervision. This was illustrated in the language used and with reference to the importance of the supervisory relationship.

2.4.4 Implications for Training and Practice

Each of the 10 papers suggested their research held implications for the training of EPs in the future and for LAs' offering placements to TEPs. Atkinson and Woods (2007) suggested their model of effective supervision should be considered by those supporting TEPs in doctoral training. They also suggested that training providers should work on extending their university-based provision for placement supervisors, for example, by sharing research methodologies taken up by the university and its students as a way of creating consistency and transparency within the TEPs support network.

The more recent study by Woods et al. (2015) highlighted various implications for practice. The key suggestions were for broader activities between universities and LAs as these may help to counteract the limitations of stand-alone training, this was similarly suggested by Atkinson and Woods (2007). Also, a greater willingness on the part of the supervisor to review the supervisory relationship in response to the changing needs of TEPs was also suggested by Woods et al. (2015). In addition, Atkinson and Woods (2007) argued that faculty staff and supervisors should consider *how* TEPs develop competence during training through the relationship of their learning opportunities and learning outcomes.

As mentioned in section 2.4.3, the research by Hill et al. (2015) was linked to the study by Woods et al. (2015). Hill et al. (2015) shared that the learning theories adopted in IDM (Stolenberg & McNeill, 2010) and the DEPSM (Simon et al., 2014) addressed aspects of TEP supervision, that were felt to be absent in practice at that time. Hill et al. (2015) suggested these models would be beneficial for TEP supervisors to trial in future practice.

Mills and Swift (2015) suggested that peer supervision should be considered by TEPs as an additional way to embed learning given the additional reflection time, difficult to find outside of the one-to one supervision space. Evans et al. (2012) also found implications for the practice of supervision, as RQEPs highlighted the need for professional supervision to allow for reflection and further learning. What is more, it is the duty of both the supervisee and supervisor to ensure this is facilitated in the supervisory space.

Evans et al. (2012) suggested that LAs taking on RQEPs should be mindful that each RQEP comes with variations in their competency profiles, and these profiles are not 'completed' once training has ended, but rather needs to be developed further and refined. In the same vein, Evans et al. (2012) found a disparity between the confidence levels of RQEPs in their view of practice and PEPs perceived confidence in RQEPs practice. Thus, they argued more consideration needed to be given to the next phase with facilitation for further learning once TEPs have finished training and move into their new roles.

Hill et al. (2015) promoted the use of DEPSM in supervision which encompasses the consideration of cultural and societal factors. Similarly, Atkinson et al. (2015) explained that for TEPs being aware of similar aspects, such as the socio-political climate in which they work, will be central for TEPs working within a post-16 setting. Moreover, Atkinson et al. (2015) expressed that with the use of their competency framework for working with 16-25 year -olds, much could be learned in this remit not just by TEPs but by whole EPS services across the country.

Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) suggested several implications for training and practice, the main one being the timing at which training providers choose to introduce CBT training to TEPs. Moreover, it could be helpful if courses promoted virtual learning environments for CBT casework discussions and encouraged TEPs to use CBT principles to problem-solve potential barriers to practice (Squires & Dunsmuir, 2011). In addition, Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) maintained EPs should support TEPs by allowing them time for practice and reflection on the embedment of skills and knowledge within CBT.

To summarise, these papers have shown the use of technology in supporting learning within EP training courses is increasing. VERP (Murray & Leadbetter, 2018), online PBL and EBL (Bozic & Williams, 2011) and OSPAs for assessment (Dunsmuir et al. 2017) were all shown to have positive contributions towards TEP training, and each study suggested their findings be taken into consideration by training courses. Furthermore, each of these studies maintained their research findings were transferable to other fields of study that share similarities with EPs such as clinical psychology.

Overall, the 10 studies have offered some insight into their chosen area of research within training. However, it is argued by the researcher that by investigating specific elements of TEP training in isolation, important factors which may have influenced the chosen areas of study may have been missed. Therefore, it is suggested that taking a broader approach to understanding the training experience and its influence on the TEP, may be more beneficial in developing a deeper understanding of specific training elements.

Also, it is proposed that taking an inductive research approach to inform the area of study, considering the TEPs' views of what is important to them in training, rather than researching what is of interest to the researchers, who are often course tutors, may be a more helpful way of supporting the development of TEPs.

2.5 Question 2: *To What Extent Does this Available Literature Share TEPs' Views?*

This question reviewed how each paper encapsulated the views of TEPs. This was done by examining the papers and investigating the degree to which data and direct data (quotes) of participant views were shared. It is argued by the researcher that this method of review was appropriate as it could provide a helpful sense of *how* views were presented but also the extent to which they were included in the papers. Subsequently, the papers were split into categories varying in the extent to which they included the views of TEPs in their research.

2.5.1 TEPs' Views Not Shared

Atkinson and Woods (2007) developed a model of effective supervision for TEPs and recruited qualified EPs as participants. These qualified EPs were split into categories of experience, 'less experienced' and 'more experienced', and categories of supervision, 'supervisor EPs' and 'non-supervisor EPs'. These participants shared their views on what they felt were the facilitators and barriers to effective TEP supervision,

and informed by this, Atkinson and Woods (2007) developed a supervision framework for EPs supervising both EPs and TEPs.

However, a significant criticism of this study was that it did not include the views of the TEPs themselves. It seems the model was developed for the benefit of TEPs yet was not inclusive of them in the development. It is acknowledged that the expertise shared amongst the study's participant group was substantial, however, there seems an implied expert approach; which may play into the unequal power dynamics discussed of TEP supervision (Mills & Swift, 2015). It is argued by the researcher the issue of power dynamics in supervision is well documented and known to cause tension in the supervisor- supervisee relationship, and although Atkinson and Woods (2007) acknowledged the importance of some relational factors in supervision, for example, effective communication, power dynamics are not discussed within the research.

Some years later, Atkinson et al. (2015) developed a competency framework for the initial training of TEPs working with 16-25-year olds. The approach by Atkinson et al. (2015) was to offer a framework on a recently new topic for TEPs and EPs. This research sought to gain the views of 'expert' EPs on the subject of 16-25-year olds in order to create the competency framework, rather than to collect the views of those TEPs using the model. This approach is similar to Atkinson and Woods (2007), as they chose not to include TEPs in their study for whom their model was intended.

The rationale for recruiting 'expert' EPs is strong given the aim to develop a competency framework. However, this may leave Atkinson et al. (2015) open to scrutiny from TEPs and training providers themselves, as the accessibility of the

framework to TEPs and its use by them has not been documented in the paper. Thus, one might suggest that there is scope for a follow-up study to determine the effectiveness of this framework with TEPs.

Also, Evans et al. (2012) have previously mentioned in section 2.4.2, that there is a level of discrepancy between some content of the training and the TEPs practice experiences, therefore it would be worth considering how the 16-25-year-olds competency framework sits within this. It is also argued that when research is conducted into TEP training, and the findings may have an influence on the TEP learning experience, TEPs should be included to some extent within the research.

2.5.2 TEPs' Views Shared to Some Extent

Dunsmuir et al. (2017) recruited thirty-one second year TEPs across three courses and twelve course tutors as their research participants, to offer feedback on the use of OSPA as an assessment tool for TEPs. The views were collated over six weeks from an online questionnaire, collecting quantitative data from Likert-based rating scales and qualitative data from open ended questions. Dunsmuir et al. (2017) found 70% of TEPs agreed or strongly agreed that OSPA was an effective way of assessing communication skills, but only 16% agreed it was a useful way of assessing case management skills, 45% of TEPs remained neutral while 38% disagreed.

The TEPs' qualitative views were reported to have matched the rating scales that the OSPA was a worthwhile assessment, however, some areas needed further developing (Dunsmuir et al., 2017). For example, TEPs commented that they did not feel the OSPA

was particularly helpful within the subject area of working with 16-25-year olds. TEPs also commented on the benefits and barriers of the feedback they received and how worthwhile they found the assessment in general. Dunsmuir et al. (2017) showed that while most TEPs found it worthwhile for learning purposes, like developing communication and information gathering skills, a few did not and one TEP commented *"I did not learn anything from the OSPAs"* (p.429). Dunsmuir et al. (2017) linked this back to the sense of validity or realism of the OSPA scenarios.

In comparison to the TEPs, 84% of tutors rated the use of OSPA positively, with 17% having no strong view, which is somewhat similar to the TEPs ratings mentioned above. For Dunsmuir et al. (2017) having views from tutors and TEPs strengthens their findings and provides helpful information to further develop the use of OSPAs. Dunsmuir et al. (2017) presented the TEPs' views in the results section of the paper and offered a quote for each finding presented. In addition, the TEPs' views were content analysed and were offered in a table (Dunsmuir et al., 2017, p.428), this helped to develop a richer sense of the experience of taking part in an OSPA.

Similar to Dunsmuir et al. (2017), Bozic and Williams (2011) used questionnaires to gather quantitative and qualitative data from TEPs. They also collected system usage statistics to track online activity. The questionnaires designed by Bozic and Williams (2011) allowed for anonymity, thus TEPs were able to give their views freely about the use of online PBL and EBL activities. The quantitative data gathered from TEPs showed that 70-80% enjoyed the online PBL and EBL tasks, however, the number of TEPs that completed the questionnaires is not disclosed in the paper. Thirty-three TEPs took part in the three different online activities within the research thus, it is estimated

that approximately the same number of TEPs may have also completed the questionnaire.

Bozic and Williams (2011) explained a small number of TEPs who completed the questionnaire also reported to having learned something from the PBL and EBL activities, although this number was not disclosed. It is suggested this nondisclosure of participant numbers detracts from some of the transparency of this study's methodological approach, as participant sample size may inform the generalisability of the findings as well as possible limitations, it may also be needed to inform replicated studies in the future.

Similar to the approach of Dunsmuir et al. (2017), Bozic and Williams (2011) used TEP quotes to evidence their findings from the research. Through thematic analysis, they found three main themes within the TEPs' narratives about the online tasks, these were: the flexibility of the task, the benefit of having time to consider one's own views, tasks can be less convenient than email. Although the quotes offered by Bozic and Williams (2011) are minimal within the results section, they are again presented in the discussion section with more context, and the authors supplement the TEPs' quotes with their own explanations and supporting literature, which shows the TEPs views were deemed important.

Murray and Leadbetter (2018) took a different approach to gathering the views of TEPs using VERP for reviewing skills, by conducting interviews. This research involved just three TEPs, the researcher and a VIG supervisor. Although this research was similar to Boziz and Williams (2011) as data was analysed through thematic analysis, the research

took a deductive- inductive approach. It is argued by the researcher deductive approaches are more theoretically driven than exploratory and this may have influenced why Murray and Leadbetter (2018) did not offer direct data (quotes) of TEP experiences in their paper.

Instead, from the inductive element of analysis, Murray and Leadbetter (2018) offered a summary of key points that TEPs discussed, including their apprehension about being filmed and the importance of their relationship with the VIG supervisor. Murray and Leadbetter (2018) found TEPs also felt VERP offered a helpful reflective space to examine their professional practice. Although, the views of TEPs were present to some extent within this study, it seems the study was more led by theoretical underpinning, rather than the TEP experience. It is argued by the researcher that the deductive approach taken in the analysis may have restricted the presentation of TEP views in the findings.

Overall, all three papers (Bozic and Williams, 2011; Dunsmuir et al., 2017 & Murray and Leadbetter, 2018) gave acknowledgement to the views and experiences of TEPs within their study. However, it is contended that these papers could have offered more breadth in their findings, by offering the reader more appreciation of the diverse range of experiences the TEPs had of the researched tools.

2.5.3 TEPs' Views Shared to Considerable Extent

In this section, papers that were felt to offer a breadth of data sharing TEP views were included. These included Woods et al. (2015) whom recruited one hundred and eleven TEPs as participants and these were split into twelve focus groups, this data was also shared with Hill et al. (2015) for their research. Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) also collected data through TEP focus groups, although on a smaller scale of twenty-four TEPs, across four groups.

However, Evans et al. (2012) took an alternative approach, and recruited sixty-four RQEP participants, asking them to reflect on their learning experiences as TEPs. Also, taking a different approach, Mills and Swift (2015) included themselves as participants in their study, and detailed their personal views as TEPs taking part in peer supervision.

Through a fully qualitative piece of research, Woods et al. (2015) analysed the data from 12 focus groups through thematic analysis and generated seven themes (discussed in 2.4.3), these themes were described through the quotes from participants. In addition, these themes and the quotes chosen for the paper showed how the TEPs' experiences of placement and supervision changed over time (Woods et al., 2015, p.91).

However, although the research was felt to offer a valuable amount of detail into the experiences of the TEPs, there was a large amount of data left out in the published paper, given there were one hundred and eleven participants. Therefore, it is suggested a table (similar to that used by Dunsmuir et al., 2017) detailing more of the narratives within the themes could have added more variety to the experiences shared by the TEPs.

Building on Woods et al. (2015), Hill et al. (2015) also shared a variety of quotes within their representation of themes generated from the research of Woods et al. (2015) (see 2.4.3). Although sharing data, Hill et al. (2015) chose to include some different quotes to Woods et al. (2015). However, given the content of the participants narrative, Hill et al. (2015) mirrored the same trajectory as Woods et al. (2015) and showed the progression of TEPs through their supervisory experiences. It seems the two studies together covered a breadth of TEPs' experiences across the same data set which helped to highlight some of the individual views that would potentially have been lost.

Reflecting a similar approach to Woods et al. (2015), Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) explored the use of CBT by TEPs and analysed the data from the focus groups with the tool Atlas.it (a coding software). Like Woods et al. (2015) and Hill et al. (2015), Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) generated key themes from the TEPs' experiences: dilemmas when working with schools; issues related to the training provided; supervision; professional territory and boundaries and the nature of multi-systemic working. Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) also did a validity check and checked their codes with TEPs to ensure their findings were accurate to their shared experiences, this was also done by Woods et al. (2015), showing that sharing the TEPs' views accurately was important in these studies.

In addition, Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) shared the difference of TEPs' experiences by offering a variety of quotes within each theme and offered a summary of key points discussed. This helped to build up the reader's awareness of how each TEP's CBT experience was different depending on factors such as their placement and supervision. It is argued by the researcher that the paper offers a richer overview of

CBT experiences, sharing the positive experiences TEPs have encountered, but also highlighted the various pragmatic challenges faced by TEPs in running their CBT cases, such as time pressure.

It is suggested by the researcher that Evans et al. (2012) could have followed a similar methodology to Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) or Woods et al. (2015) by taking a fully qualitative approach, as Evans et al. (2012) was interested in learning about training experiences. However instead, Evans et al. (2012) gained a sense of training and learning through a mixed-methods questionnaire, offering closed and open questions. Evans et al. (2012) first used descriptive statistics to show the various topics in which RQEPs felt they had enough or insufficient training (detailed in section 2.4.2). This showed a clear consensus across many of the RQEPs' views on training and EP practice.

However, it is argued by the researcher that it was the qualitative aspect of the research that established the context around the RQEPs' teaching and learning experiences as TEPs. Evans et al. (2012) also used a thematic analysis to generate themes, fifty-two organised themes were generated from this including tools/ interventions, service, empowering others, etc. (see Evans et al., 2012, p.382). Evans et al. (2012) acknowledged in their paper the limited scope they had to present the qualitative data in full, and this limitation was also shared by Woods et al. (2015) and Hill et al. (2015). However, Evans et al. (2012) still offered a detailed table of quotes in relation to almost all the themes. From this, a mixture of views showed the variety of teaching and learning experienced across the RQEPs as TEPs on their training.

Moreover, in the study of Evans et al. (2012), the RQEPs were also able to offer insight into how their learning as TEPs transferred across into the reality of being an EP. The views on training and the TEP experience is richly shared within this research, however, there it is open to some criticism as the participants did not include TEPs currently in training. Mills and Swift (2015), Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) and Woods et al. (2015) all included participant TEPs, thus it is unclear as to why Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) could not or chose not to include TEP participants. It would have been interesting to see if TEPs in training shared the same views on aspects of their learning as RQEPs looking back on their experiences as TEPs.

Similar to Evans et al. (2012), Mills and Swift (2015) also shared in their paper the participants' reflections of TEP training, with a focus on peer supervision. However, unlike the other papers, Mills and Swift (2015) wrote their paper in the first person, with TEPs' views weaved throughout rather than restricted to specific sections. It is argued the other papers included in this section, may have benefited from a similar approach, weaving TEPs views throughout more sections as a way of keeping the TEP voice present and 'alive' in their papers.

Mills and Swift (2015) offered their views of peer supervision by using EBL as a reflective tool, supported by modified writings of Kahn and O'Rourke (2005), and linked their experiences to theories. However, similar to other papers in this review, there are criticisms of the Mills and Swift (2015) methodological approach, see section 2.6. Despite this, Mills and Swift (2015) offered a unique style of paper to the literature base which broke from more traditionally structured formats and offered their views as TEPs first-hand.

Overall, each paper in this systematic review has offered a conducive insight into TEP views of different mechanisms and frameworks within training. However, it seems as these studies focused on these elements, the overall experience of training was a secondary concern.

2.6 Critique of the Methodologies

It is apparent with each research proposal, comes the decision of research methodology to inform the function and process of the study. The methodologies included within this literature review vary in range and approaches. The data analysis strategy, thematic analysis was used by Hill et al. (2015), Murray and Leadbetter (2018) Woods et al. (2015) and as part of a mixed method study by Evans et al. (2012). The thematic analysis strategy (detailed in chapter 3) allows the researcher to make sense of collective experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

Thematic analysis is similar to content analysis used by Dunsmuir et al. (2017) and Squires &Dunsmuir (2011), both strategies are classified under the qualitative descriptive design, used to analyse textual data and elucidate themes (Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen & Snelgrove, 2016). However, Vaismoradi et al. (2016) cautioned that given the flexibility of both content analysis and thematic analysis, there is potential for the reader to misinterpret or discredit the research findings.

Moreover, Vaismoradi et al. (2016) suggested there is a possibility with both methods of researcher bias when choosing the themes, thus evidenced practice of researcher

reflexivity is central for these studies. Although, Murray and Leadbetter (2018) discussed the importance of self-reflection, it was the only study that undertook this type of method and did not discuss checking their themes or codes with others.

A similar criticism can be made of a Delphi study conducted by Atkinson et al. (2015). Loo (2002) explained the Delphi design can emphasis the selection of a relatively small sample size of non-random experts, and this can restrict diversity of opinion and responses, thus, it is argued by the researcher that the reader may choose to discredit the research findings given its small non-random sample (Loo, 2002). However, Atkinson et al. (2015) make a 'good' attempt to explain each phase of their Delphi process which seemed to add coherence to their analysis stage.

Differing from Atkinson et al. (2015), descriptive statistics was used by Evans et al. (2012) for analysing their survey data, and system usage statistics was used by Bozic and Williams (2011) as part of recording data. Statistical analysis was also used by Atkinson and Woods (2007) to generate findings from their focus groups. Statistic types of analysis offer meaning to the otherwise meaningless numbers, thereby bringing data to life (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016).

However, one could also argue that using such numerically driven approaches in human science research is somewhat restricted in what it can depict from one's stories and experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Nonetheless if used alongside qualitative methods as done by Bozic and Williams (2011) and Evans et al. (2012), it seems statistical methods can add further context to findings, by offering the opportunity to find consensus and allow for some generalisability.

Mills and Swift (2015) took an alternative method to their research, and although it seemed to offer a rich insight into the TEPs' experiences, it is also argued that the methodological approach of following steps based on experiences of EBL, alongside modified writings from Kahn and O'Rourke (2005) was a vague method of analysis. It is argued by the researcher this method does not hold the same transparency and coherence as some of the other methods undertaken in the reviewed literature such as a Delphi or thematic analysis.

Moreover, it is suggested that for the research of Mills and Swift (2015), other methodological approaches such as thematic analysis or an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) could have been suitable. Braun and Clarke (2006) explained how thematic analysis, and Smith, Flower and Larkin (2009) explained how IPA, can offer detail as the methods can delve deep into the narratives of the participants to produce themes, offer interpretation and a thorough explanation into the process of generating the findings. It is contended these details that can be offered by IPA and thematic analysis were not clear in the method described by Mills and Swift (2015).

2.7 Rationale for Current Study

This literature review has shown that EP doctoral training has been explored through the evaluation of specific areas of learning and teaching within training, for example, the subject area of 16- 25-year olds and the use of CBT. Moreover, some studies such as Mills and Swift (2015) and Hill et al. (2015) lightly addressed the social influences

of one's surroundings on the psyche when considering aspects of training, through the discussion of peer supervision and placement supervision. A handful of the papers (Hill et al., 2015; Mills & Swift., 2015; Woods et al., 2015) discussed TEPs' learning journeys, and their experiences of self-change and growth seemed implied through the description of these journeys.

It is suggested the literature review shows that psychosocial experiences were present within these studies findings, yet, seemed diluted and insufficiently emphasised. It is argued by the researcher this psychosocial perspective is important, as Hollway and Jefferson (2013) explained it can develop an understanding of the connection between the social world and the psyche, making a rich contribution to the understanding of human experiences.

Consequently, it is contended that a psychosocial approach to understanding the TEPs' experiences may add depth and context to the pre-existing research on TEPs and their experiences of training. Therefore, the apparent literature gap informed the rationale for this study. This study chose to acknowledge the psychosocial training experience, and how the training may change oneself both personally and professionally.

2.8 Summary

Mulrow (1994) maintained a sound systematic literature review offers a critical exploration, evaluation, and amalgamation of findings across the reviewed literature, and can evidence an area where literature is yet to be established. This review aimed to incorporate these considerations of Mulrow (1994) and offered a detailed appraisal and

critique of the aims, range of methods, findings, commonalities and implications of the studies included, which subsequently highlighted the need for further research of a psychosocial nature into TEPs' experiences of training. The next chapter will now discuss the methodology of this study.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Chapter Overview

This chapter aims to:

1. define the aims, purpose of this research and question;
2. describe the ontological and epistemological position;
3. describe methods of qualitative research;
4. discuss psychosocial research;
5. discuss researcher reflexivity;
6. describe the research design;
7. discuss the data analysis;
8. discuss ethical considerations;
9. offer a chapter summary.

3.1 Research Aims, Purpose & Question

The aims of this research were to:

- provide an insight into TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctorate training programme;
- enable training providers with a greater knowledge of TEPs' personal and professional change experiences whilst training, which may influence how they support TEPs;

- add knowledge of TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctoral training to the EP literature base;
- inform those who wish to apply for the doctoral training by offering an insight into TEPs' experiences over their training;
- offer insight to TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change by applying a psychosocial lens.

3.1.1 Purpose

This study is exploratory and aims to explore the TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change whilst training and offer insight to their stories. In EP practice within the UK, learning of experiences and applying psychological theory is thought of as good practice by the BPS (2017; 2019). As mentioned in chapter 1, the BPS (2019) encourage EPs to take a position of lifelong learning; EPs are trained to be curious, to reflect and review experiences with whom they work. Therefore, it seemed appropriate that EPs should apply these skills within their profession, especially with those in training at the beginning of their EP career.

Moreover, it is suggested the doctorate training is fundamental to how one develops as a practising psychologist, therefore, it seemed necessary to gain a sense of this experience and the impact it has on the self. At the time of conducting this study, it was apparent that the available literature on TEPs did not appropriately address these points raised. Through searching the literature, the most relevant papers found were on topics like supervision for TEPs, little was found on 'TEP experiences' more broadly.

Subsequently, this research intended to offer insight into TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change while training, which may provide greater knowledge to training providers of TEPs' experiences, and thus, potentially influence how they support TEPs in the future. Having said this, it is important to highlight that this research does not propose to critique the doctorate training programmes as this is outside of the scope of this study.

This research proposes to add new knowledge to the EP literature base on TEPs' personal and professional change experiences in doctorate training, which *may* through discussion of experiences inform aspects of the training course. It is also hoped that the findings of this research can inform those who wish to join the profession or find out more about the training. The discussion above and the exploratory aims of this study has supported the development of this study's research question.

3.1.2 Research Question

How do TEPs' describe their experiences of personal and professional change over the doctorate training programme?

The researcher carefully considered the wording of this question in relation to the aims of this research and the ontological and epistemological position taken, discussed in 3.2. For example, it was considered that the question of "*How"* allows for the experience to be explored, whereas the question of "*What"* focuses on a more direct and theoretical understanding of experience (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000, p.27). Furthermore, to provide an opportunity for all potential aspects to be voiced, which may have contributed to the trainees' experiences, the word 'change' was chosen over

words such as ‘development’ or ‘growth’ as these allude to experiences of positivity, thus, potentially making it harder for other experiences to be voiced.

3.2 Ontology & Epistemology

The researcher’s ontological position reflects how the researcher views the position of truth and reality in the world. Creswell (2009) described it as the interest in what is real and the concern with how things *really* are. One’s position of epistemology relates to how the researcher plans to gather knowledge about that reality and how one plans to explain it. Crotty (1998) explained epistemology as a way of interpreting and explaining how one comes to know what one knows. As researchers, we ask epistemological questions of *how* usually once we have taken an ontological position of reality (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013).

3.2.1 Psychosocial Ontology and Epistemology

This research took a psychosocial position. Traditionally, psychosocial research was associated with critical realism (McEvoy & Richards, 2006). However, Hollway (2015) developed the argument that psychosocial as an ontology and epistemology was sufficient by itself and departed from the critical realist view which accepts positivist boundaries. This psychosocial position allows for more emphasis on the relationship between both societal and psychological realities and the intersubjectivity between the researcher and participant (Hollway, 2015).

Hollway and Jefferson (2012) maintained a psychoanalytic epistemology in their psychosocial position, which puts focus on the complex relationship between the researcher and participant. Hollway (2015, p.128) explained that *"the psychoanalytic epistemology originated alongside the concept of countertransference".* The researcher receives *"unsymbolized communications"* (p.129) from the participant and makes sense of these to understand the participant. Therefore, acceptance of the theory of the unconscious is instrumental for explaining knowledge.

3.3 The Rise of Qualitative Research Methods

Traditionally, psychological and social research in the UK has preferred to apply either quantitative or mixed methods designs (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This involved exploring fixed hypotheses relating to variables and taking a positivist or post-positivist approach to investigate the hypotheses in question (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). However, within the psychological and social domains this has been found to be too inflexible, Guba and Lincoln (1994) maintained that quantitative research cannot capture the richness of a conversation and that as researchers we must question *"the very assumptions on which the putative superiority of quantification has been based"* (p.106).

Equally, Toomela (2008) critiqued the use of such methods, arguing that the human mind is hidden from direct observation and suggested that quantitative methods could be misleading in studies aimed at understanding the mind and human experience.

Unlike the almost linear relationships between variables involved in quantitative measures, qualitative measures allow for more dynamic relationships within the

research (Collins, 1992). Collins (1992) cited Heidegger (1966), who made a distinction between calculative and meditative thinking, Heidegger (1966, p.46) said, "*Quantitative thinking can be compared to calculative thinking, which, is not thinking that contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything that is".*

Given this criticism and researchers developing awareness into the importance of language and relationships within human research; qualitative measures have offered appropriate means of study. For example, Guba and Lincoln (1994) discussed the advantages of *"creating a shared meaning"* (p.106) between the researcher and participant, arguing that qualitative measures can challenge many barriers within human research by permitting a deeper level of understanding and allowing the researcher to check if they have understood correctly.

However, qualitative research comes with its criticisms, Mays and Pope (1995) expressed that some view the approach as unscientific, and somewhat mocking within an era where scientific knowledge is viewed as the utmost form of knowing. Mays and Pope (1995) elaborated to say, the most frequently heard disapprovals are that qualitative research is simply an assembly of narratives and personal impressions, strongly subject to bias.

Furthermore, Mays and Pope (1995) suggested that qualitative methods lack reproducibility, for the research can be subjective to the researcher, therefore, offering no assurance that a different researcher would not come to find different conclusions. However, to address these concerns, researcher reflexivity is highly emphasised within qualitative methods (see section 3.5) and Yardley (2008) developed research practice

principles to guide the intention of promoting trustworthiness within qualitative methods (see section 3.8.1).

Given the current political and social climate, Denzin and Lincoln (2011) expressed that qualitative research exists in times of global ambiguity and uncertainty, where internationally governments endeavour to control scientific investigation by defining what represents *good* science and present generalisable known truths as they can offer a false sense of security which is usually found in statistics and linear relationships. For that reason, these governing actions raise central political, pedagogical and philosophical epistemological concerns for research and certain groups within society, impacting on the exploration of views and what is perceived as truth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The opinion of Denzin and Lincoln (2011) raised an interesting perspective and outlined a concern for freedom of voice within research. Furthermore, given that this research sought to explore experiences rather than hold in mind a hypothesis, the arguments of Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Lincoln and Guba (1994) have clearly evidenced that the purpose and aims of this research (discussed in 3.1) are best suited to qualitative research methods.

3.3.1 Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

IPA was acknowledged as a potential methodology for this research, as Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) explained it allows for the exploration of human experiences and offers interpretation. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) maintained that in IPA,

although they can empathise, researchers cannot share the participant's experience as *"their experience belongs to their own embodied position in the world"* (p.19). This contradicts the psychosocial principles of intersubjectivity which assumes a shared meaning is created between the researcher and the participant, of the participant's experience (Hollway & Froggett, 2012). Therefore, IPA does not offer the same level of exploration as psychosocial research.

3.4 Psychosocial Research

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) argued that within the research of human experience, the researcher cannot understand the inner world of the participant without knowledge of their experiences in the social world. Also, those social experiences cannot be understood without knowledge of the way in which the participant's inner world allows them to perceive these experiences (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Thus, the researcher is actively involved in articulating and interpreting the participant's experience throughout the research process (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Frosh (2003) explained psychosocial research takes a critical approach in the interest of articulating a place of connection between principles whose influence in the construction of the subject's experience is typically theorised separately. The origins of these principles of psychosocial studies lie within psychoanalysis, sociology, and critical psychology (Frosh, 2003). Therefore, psychosocial research considers the relationship between the social and psychological aspects of experience. It is concerned with the interactions between what is conservatively assumed as external (social) and internal (psyche) constructs (Frosh, 2003).

Subsequently, this explains why psychosocial research looks to the discipline of psychoanalysis, which is believed to offer explanations of how the external (social) becomes intertwined with the internal (psyche) and vice versa (Frosh, 2003). Moreover, the social element within psychosocial research draws on object relations theory (Klein, 1946), as Hollway (2008) explained within the psychosocial approach there is an emphasis on the significance of the social environment within which the subject's internal phenomena occur.

However, like all forms of research, psychosocial research and particularly the use of psychoanalytic approaches comes with criticism. Hollway (2015) explained a common concern over psychosocial research is that the social element can be neglected. However, Hollway (2015) argued that the province of personal life is socially created, influenced by culture and history thus, it cannot be thought of as entirely separate to the psyche.

Frosh and Baraitser (2008) highlighted that psychoanalysis can be too personalising, that the researcher may take an expert position and thus, make assumptions which are hard to contest about an individual's behaviour. Also, Wetherell (2003) recognised the ethical difficulties of identifying character and the possible imbalance of power in the research relationship when a subject is given an identity by the researcher which they may not recognise nor agree with.

Furthermore, the criticism that psychoanalytic language offers undemocratic dialogue between the researcher and the subject (Hollway and Jefferson, 2013) adds to the

potential imbalance of power between the subject and researcher. However, in light of these criticisms comes the importance of practising with reflexivity, which is being aware of one's own position and experience in research (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013), discussed in section 3.5.

3.4.1 The Psychoanalytic & Psychosocial Relationship

Psychoanalysis started with Freud's establishment of the unconscious and through Freud's work over- time, he developed a multi-lateral model of human functioning and saw the creation of the concepts of the id, ego, and super-ego (Freud, 1920). Freud (1920) explained the id, ego, and super-ego, each play a function within a person's felt experience at the unconscious. The unconscious is a source for painful and intolerable desires and associated experiences (Freud, 1920). Although consciously forgotten, these unconscious matters influence one's behaviours and feelings.

Fundamental to the theory of the unconscious are defence mechanisms. These are unconscious processes by which one part of the mind averts distressing psychological material from entering the conscious state (Vaillant, 1992). Hollway and Jefferson (2013) explained Freud developed the tool of free association as a way of recognising indirectly, the distressing or disturbing emotional matters hindering the individual's wellbeing. Also, the latent material obtained from the uninterrupted flow of free associations could be interpreted as facets of the unconscious preoccupations (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Clarke (2002) explained within research, a psychoanalytic approach can elicit the unconscious factors and psychological mechanisms that underpin the data gathered and interpretation between the participant and the researcher. Hollway and Jefferson (2012) advocated the use of psychoanalytic theory in research as it allows for the study of unconscious processes through a range of techniques, such as the free association narrative interview technique, discussed in section 3.6.6. In this research, the application of theory allowed for further exploration of experiences and underlying emotional states of the TEPs, discussed in chapter 5.

3.4.2 The Defended Subject and Researcher

Within psychosocial research, the term *"defended subject"* is used to refer to the participant within the research and how they are theorised (Hollway & Jefferson, 2012, p.19). The belief is held that the subject is defended against their anxieties, and therefore may use certain unconscious mechanisms to protect themselves (Hollway & Jefferson, 2012). Moreover, Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2003) explained the defended subject's positioning behind their chosen discourse can be explained through their unconscious social anxieties, for there is no such thing as the subject separate to the social.

This links with Klein (1952) who suggested that defended subjects are created through defences against anxiety which are intersubjective, between individuals. Thus, highlighting that the researcher may also become defended or find themselves in a shared defended state with the subject through their own unconscious anxieties. Holloway and Jefferson (2009) explained the defended researcher may wish to avert or

avoid topics brought by the subject that brings about difficult feelings from their own previous experiences. For the researcher, this may be unavoidable given that the subject's experience and what they wish to share is generally unanticipated. However, Hollway and Jefferson (2012) explained that psychosocial supervision can offer a space for reflection and safe discussion if such an experience does arise.

3.5 Researcher Reflexivity

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) explained reflexivity allows for the exploration of the researcher position and cited Finlay (2003, p.108) to explain *"without examining ourselves, we run the risk of letting our unelucidated prejudices dominate our research".* The researcher should be reflective and sensitive to the matter that they are part of the research process, in which both parties are influencing the interview data (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Hollway and Froggett (2012) referred to this influence as the intersubjectivity that occurs between both the participant and the researcher, and the meaning made between them of the subject's spoken experience.

Furthermore, Hollway and Froggett (2012) and Hollway and Jefferson (2013) argued the researcher cannot simply remove their own experience from the research and data attained, or possibly know all their own unconscious predispositions. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) reviewed the notion of bias within psychosocial research and maintained that the researcher's subjectivity can be used as a method for data capture, rather than something that must be controlled like in quantitative methods. Also, if practised thoughtfully and honestly with the use of reflexivity, can counter researcher bias and act as an additional tool of promoting transparency of analysis (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Given the psychosocial lens to the thematic analysis and the level of interpretation required, the researcher continuously reflected on her involvement and underwent a process of continual internal discourse and self-critical evaluation of her position within the research. Pillow (2003) acknowledged this process as important for building one's awareness of their influence within the study and how one may influence the research outcomes.

Berger (2015) explained that it is not enough for the researcher to simply be reflexive, they should be aware of the 'type' of reflexive position they are taking. Berger (2015) suggested three forms of reflexive research positions. Firstly, when the researcher shares the experience of the participant, secondly, when the researcher changes from the position of an outsider to an insider during the study, and thirdly, when the researcher has no personal connection with what is being studied. Within this study, the researcher felt she took the first reflexive position explained by Berger (2015) which required a high level of sensitivity and awareness.

Berger (2015) maintained that if the researcher is familiar with the experience of the participant or comes from a similar position, to practice ethically, the researcher should rigorously review and reflect on one's language within the interview, as to not shape the participants' experiences to match their own. Furthermore, the researcher should remember the principle of learning something new, rather than uncovering similarities between both the researcher and the participant. These concerns raised by Berger (2015) was pertinent in this study, given the researcher's own TEP identity.

Throughout the study, the researcher kept reflexive fieldnotes in a research diary. She used the diary to write down feelings and experiences, not only during the interview, but also during the analysis. The researcher watched for patterns within her notes and whether they appeared to respond in a certain way emotionally or in language to experiences brought by TEPs. The researcher brought her reflexive fieldnotes to psychosocial supervision, where she explored how she felt in relation to the experiences of the TEPs and the theories that were perhaps underpinning the dynamics of the interviews.

3.5.1 Supervision

The researcher's supervisor was a tutor who had experience in the application of psychosocial research and supervision. Through reflecting on extracts from transcripts and the researcher's fieldnotes, supervision helped to further explore the researcher's role within the study and offered alternative interpretations. Garfield, Reavey and Kotecha (2010) emphasised the importance for clear boundaries in the supervisory relationship, given the different interpretations the researcher and her supervisor may have of the data gathered at the interview. Thus, within this research, the boundaries and limits of supervision were discussed and agreed.

Psychosocial supervision draws on the supervisor's psychoanalytic skills whilst upholding a curious and reflective position in consideration of the data. The supervisor then engages in rich conversations with the researcher about how she experiences this data and therefore, supports the researcher in her productive use of reflexivity in the research (Elliot, Ryan & Hollway, 2012).

Psychosocial supervision can also support to protect against far-fetched analysis as the complexity of the dynamic between the researcher and participant can be explored and understood from a different perspective, rather than just the researcher's (Elliot et al., 2012). Within this study, the psychosocial supervision was a central process to help the researcher understand the TEPs' experiences separate from the researcher's own and helped the researcher to reflect on her interpretations.

3.6 Research Design

3.6.1 Selection and Recruitment Process

Initially, the researcher had hoped to open the study up to all TEPs across the UK, however, given the logistics of travel, costs and time frames it was deemed unsuitable for this research project. Therefore, the sample was narrowed to the SEEL consortium for demographic purposes. The researcher recruited participants by advertising the study on EPNET (see appendix 5 for advert), a nationwide online forum used by TEPs and EPs across the UK. EPNET is an 'opt-in' forum, which means professionals and students consent to receive emails about upcoming research projects and events.

An advertisement email was sent via EPNET, detailing the research topic. Once a SEEL TEP got in contact to show interest in the study, the information sheet and consent form (see appendices 6-7) was sent to them. This advert also led to 'word of mouth' amongst TEPs, who contacted the researcher for relevant information.

The researcher did not want to exclude any participants that she may have known, as this was almost impossible given the small population of TEPs in the SEEL consortium. Nor could the researcher anticipate if she would recognise a participant or know them through a TEP mutual friend. The researcher believed that all third year TEPs undertaking a doctorate in SEEL should have had the opportunity to take part if they wished to do so, while recognising that a limited number would ultimately be selected owing to the constraints of the study. TEPs were made aware on the information sheet that they may know or recognise the researcher and would need to consider whether they still wished to take part in the research.

Braun, Clarke, Hayfield and Terry (2018) maintained there is no straightforward rule for sample size in thematic analysis, but it is worth considering the saturation and richness of potential data. Subsequently, for this study, it was felt that five participants would allow for ten interviews and a rich in-depth analysis of each participant experience.

The researcher wanted to handle expectations appropriately and prevent disappointment where possible. Therefore, the recruitment process was shown on the information sheet and sent to the potential participants. Please see the process of recruitment outlined below:

- Participants were chosen depending on the demographic area. For example, if two TEPs apply from the same training provider, the first applicant would be accepted.
- The researcher aimed for a range across the training providers, however, if this was not possible, the participants who applied first, would be chosen.

- If any TEP who did not take part, wished to be informed of the research findings once completed, they could contact the researcher.

During the recruitment phase, participants were made aware on the information sheet that before the first interview, they would have the opportunity to meet with the researcher ten minutes before, to allow for introductions and any questions. On the information sheet, the participants were made aware that for the safety of both the participant and researcher, they would be requested to book a private room for both interviews within their own training provider setting or place of work. These matters were included to make sure the procedure was clear and coherent, and the participants were, therefore, able to give informed consent.

3.6.2 Participants

The participants were third year TEPs studying with one of the training providers of the SEEL consortium. The consortium includes University College London (UCL), Institute of Education (IOE), The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust, University of East London (UEL) and Southampton University. The researcher's rationale for choosing third year TEPs, over years one and two, was owing to their position in training. Third year TEPs are in a unique position of being able to offer insight into the experience in the present but can also look back given they are coming to the end of their three-year training. Subsequently, the researcher felt third years were best placed for answering this study's research question.

Clarke and Hoggett (2009) maintained that psychosocial research explores the connections between discourse, personal biography and how participants live in social constructions. Therefore, each participant's biographic and demographic details were taken (see appendix 8) and they supported the creation of PEN portraits (discussed in 3.7.7.1) which helped to develop a detailed understanding of each participant, as advised by Hollway and Jefferson (2013).

3.6.3 Data Collection

Data for this study was collected from five participants with the use of semi-structured interviews and handwritten field notes. Each participant had two interviews, an initial interview and a follow-up interview within two weeks, each interview allowed up to one hour for discussion. Reflexive field notes allowed for the note of emotions and thoughts that came to mind for the researcher within the interview, these were taken throughout both interviews, after the interviews and during the analysis as another form of data collection. The data collection took place during June and July 2019 when the third year TEPs were in their final months of training.

In preparation of the data collection and to ensure the process went efficiently, the researcher requested that the consent forms were signed and received back from the participants prior to the interview dates being arranged. All participants were sent the information sheet and consent form when they first responded to the advert on EPNET. This process was followed to ensure the participants understood the sequence of the data collection procedure and that by consenting they were expected to take part in a

second follow-up interview for further data collection, no later than two weeks after the first.

3.6.4 Semi-Structured Interviews

Historically, semi-structured interviews are frequently used in qualitative methods as they can produce rich data (Percy, Kostere & Kostere, 2015). Based on the prior knowledge of the researcher, the questions may be pre-structured, although the researcher may often choose to use encouraging kinds of questions, giving the participant permission to speak freely of their experience with minimal direction from the researcher (Percy, Kostere & Kostere, 2015). This point by Percy, Kostere and Kostere (2015) highlighted the argument of Horton, Macve, and Struyven (2004) who maintained semi-structured interviews can be flexible between the participant and researcher and can subsequently build trust and appreciation in the importance of their relationship. Therefore, the advantage of semi-structured interviews lies within its flexibility (Horton, Macve, & Struyven, 2004).

However, this places an emphasis on the interviewer's skills, which are less significant in more structured methods where fixed questions can be followed and directive to the participant. Also, Roulston, De Marrais and Lewis (2003) explained that novice interviewers are open to more challenges using semi-structured interviews, as they lack the experience to know how to contain unanticipated and unexpected experiences brought by the participant. They may also find it hard to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant data (Roulston, De Marrais & Lewis, 2003).

These possible obstacles resonated with the researcher as a novice interviewer, however the researcher felt given the psychosocial approach to this study, all data generated might be relevant data. The researcher also felt confident in her chosen free association narrative interview (FANI) technique (see section 3.6.6) which provided a context for reflection and assisted the process of making sense of such challenges through psychosocial supervision and the application of theory.

3.6.5 The Biographic Narrative Interview Method (BNIM)

Two interview techniques popular within psychosocial research are the FANI and the BNIM. Like the FANI, BNIM complements the psychosocial approach focusing on the internal and external worlds of the participant's story (Wengraf & Chamberlayne, 2006). BNIM involves three sub session interviews, it aims to explore the participant's whole biographical lived experience and facilitates understanding of the *"historically-evolving persons-in-historically-evolving situations"* (Wengraf & Chamberlayne, 2006, p.2). This emphasis was outside of the scope of this study, which aimed to explore TEPs' experiences of change over the course of their training. Though previous life experiences may be relevant, the participant's whole lived experiences are beyond this study's remit.

3.6.6 The FANI

The FANI was chosen as the interview technique as Hollway and Jefferson (2008) maintained no existence can be captured without narratives, that is, narratives are the

primary form by which human experience becomes meaningful. Hollway and Jefferson (2000; 2008) explained the FANI is founded on the concept of free association used in psychoanalysis, which allows participants to say what comes to mind, rather than attempt to answer what they feel is wanted by the researcher (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Gabbs, 2010; Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Therefore, the researcher felt that the FANI interviews would allow her to develop an insight into the TEPs' experiences through how they described their stories. The FANI interviews also allowed for further investigation into other 'unknown' factors and mechanisms influencing the data, such as defence mechanisms and social influences, which complement the psychosocial position (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

By means of open questioning, the participants were encouraged to share their experiences of personal and professional change. Through this the participants were permitted to tell their experiences *how* they wished. When needed, prompting questions were also used as a guide to explore real events in depth and these were adapted from Hollway and Jefferson (2013) (see appendix 9), who maintained that characteristics of the narrative told by the participant reveal more about the latent meanings of the story than is assumed by the subject.

Therefore, Hollway and Jefferson (2013) emphasised the importance of avoiding the use of *why* questions which can produce over-rationalised and over-structured responses. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) explained that one of the important principles of FANI is for participants to be given frequent opportunities to engage in flow, where the researcher shows attentive listening and limits interruptions.

Clarke & Hoggett (2009) explained throughout the FANI interview, the researcher should listen for any sudden changes in tone and incoherencies within the participants' narratives, such as long pauses, avoidances and hesitations. These unconscious dynamics are recognised within the interview and can be linked to the participants' anxieties, central to understanding the participant experience (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009).

3.6.7 The Follow-up FANI Interview

In the second interview, participants may feel more relaxed after knowing what to expect from the first. The participant may also value the time taken by the researcher to return to their story to ensure what was shared was understood (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009). The follow-up interview allows the researcher to check any emergent hunches from the data gathered in the first interview. It also allows both the researcher and participant to reflect and free associate on the first interview and consider what 'stood out' for them and why (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) explained there is usually an unconscious connection between events in the sequence they are told. Thus, in the second interview the researcher returned to the sequence of the data from the first interview to help elicit more data unconscious to the participant. The second interview also helped the researcher to triangulate the data with their reflexive field notes and first interview data, triangulation can assist against *"possible false notes in the analysis"* (Hollway & Jefferson, 2012, p.131).

3.6.8 Data Capture Method

The interview data was captured via audio recorder, to which participants consented to in their consent forms. Before the interviews began, the researcher reminded each participant that the interview was recorded, and the audio recorder and recordings would be safely kept in a securely locked drawer. Each audio recording was transcribed by the researcher as Braun and Clarke (2006) and Hollway and Jefferson (2013) suggested that the researcher should immerse oneself into the data.

Handwritten reflexive fieldnotes were another method for capturing data. Clarke and Hoggett (2009) maintained fieldnotes help the researcher to make sense of what was happening during the interview. Fieldnotes were taken during the interviews when the researcher noticed emotions both in herself and the participant, any thoughts and curiosities that came to the researcher's mind were also written down.

After the interviews, the researcher reflected on her fieldnotes and added to them further by offering more details to specific events she had noted, she would also be curious about some of the feelings she wrote down and reflect on whether she still felt the same. Fieldnotes were also taken in the analysis, this helped the researcher to notice how her feelings and reflections towards the data may have evolved over time. Fieldnotes were also manually entered onto the memo tool on the MAXQDA analysis software, version 18.0.5 (MAXQDA, 2018).

3.7 Data Analysis

Within qualitative types of analysis, the researcher is often described as the research tool, with skills to understand, describe and interpret narratives to uncover meaning (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). However, for this to be most valuable, the researcher requires a robust method of data analysis suitable to their research aims (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Thematic analysis with a psychosocial lens was used to analyse the data of this study. In psychosocial research such as this, Hollway and Jefferson (2013) emphasised the importance of the researcher honouring the individual- social paradox which explores how social commonalities and differences are reflected within the individual, and the importance of appreciating the whole social circumstance to understand a part of an experience. Therefore, the researcher chose to analyse the data to present overarching themes for the participants, to embody the whole social circumstance as suggested by Hollway and Jefferson (2013).

Moreover, an inductive approach to analysis was taken to code the data of the participant narratives because of its exploratory orientation (see appendix 10 for Bianca's coded interview extract) and afterwards a deductive approach was taken allowing for the application of theoretical connections to the narratives within the overall collective themes.

3.7.1 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis first surfaced as a method of data analysis in the 1970s but was frequently unreliably and inconsistently used (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In later years, Boyatzis (1998) laid out descriptive guidelines for researchers to use the method with a key focus around coding and theme development. However, it was not until Braun and Clarke (2006) released their paper *Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology* that thematic analysis as an approach 'took off', developing its credibility within the faculties of social and health sciences.

Braun and Clarke (2006) maintained that within the domain of psychology, thematic analysis can be used as a contextualist method that sits on a continuum between the pillars of constructionism and essentialism. Thematic analysis acknowledges *how* individuals make meaning of their experiences as well as the way social and psychological factors can influence those meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and aligns with the psychosocial approach of this study.

Following Braun and Clarke (2006) thematic analysis principles, six phases of analysis were undertaken within the current study. See Table 2 adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006).

Table 2. *Six Phases of Thematic Analysis*

Phase	Description of the process
1. Become familiar with the data set	This begins with transcribing the data, reading and re-reading the data and reflexive field notes, and writing down any notions that come to mind.

2. Generate initial codes	Code interesting features of the data in a methodical fashion across the entire set, organising data relevant to each code.
3. Search for themes	Organising codes into possible themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Review the themes	Check if the themes work in correspondence to the coded extracts (at phase 1) and the entire set (at phase 2), to generate a thematic map of the analysis.
5. Define and name themes	Continue analysis to refine the specifics of each theme and the complete story the analysis reveals to generate clear definitions and labels for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final chance for analysis. This is the selection of vivid, captivating extract examples, and final analysis of selected extracts, relating to the literature and research question, producing a report of the analysis.

Note. Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p.35).

The six stages of thematic analysis permit for the development of semantic (explicit) and latent (interpretative) layers. The semantic layer arises from the words of the narrative; however, the latent layer goes beyond this and allows for underlining assumptions to be made (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Therefore, allowing unconscious meaning to the participant to be explored and links with the view of the participant as the defended subject (Clarke & Hoggett, 2009; Hollway & Jefferson, 2009; 2013). In practice, thematic analysis allowed the researcher to keep in mind the psychosocial lens of this study and explore both the semantic and latent layers together.

Given there were two interviews per individual, the five participants produced a lot of data. Thus, as this research had 10 interviews, to promote efficiency of analysis, the researcher analysed each of the two participant interviews separately, then later combined them to create the participant's PEN portrait, discussed in 3.7.7.1.

Considering the volume of data, the researcher used the MAXQDA coding software, version 18.0.5 (MAXQDA, 2018) to support with the analysis. Robson (2011) suggested one must not assume the data has been comprehensively analysed simply because specialist software was used. The researcher may run the risk of focusing on the quantity of data rather than its quality and meaningfulness (Braun & Clarke, 2011; Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, & Terry, 2019). Subsequently, with these cautions in mind, in this study the researcher also used their living room wall to work with the codes in a physical way.

3.7.2. Become Familiar with the Data

In line with the Braun and Clarke (2006) recommendations, the researcher transcribed the interviews and became more familiar with the data by reading over the transcriptions and relistening to the audio interviews. Listening to the audio again was particularly helpful for the psychosocial element of this research as it allowed the researcher to hear any changes in tone and helped the researcher to reflect on the interview experience. The researcher also reviewed her fieldnotes to reflect on what the interview experience had been like and added any further thoughts or emotions that arose.

3.7.3 Generate Initial Codes

Within this step, Braun and Clarke (2006) recommend that the researcher should code a feature of the data which catches their interest. Thus, within this research the researcher coded extracts which felt relevant, this step was particularly important for

the researcher in attuning to the latent features of the data sets. When it was felt the researcher was generating a lot of codes for a small extract of the data, this extract was noted as potentially very meaningful. At this step, the researcher continued to add to her fieldnotes of reflections and feelings that were coming to mind about the data and remained curious to see if any reflections changed with time, these fieldnotes were also discussed in psychosocial supervision. See appendix 11 for screenshot example of initial coding.

3.7.4 Searching for Themes

Once initial codes were established, the researcher wanted to create provisional overarching themes and subthemes for the participant group. Therefore, themes and subthemes were created on MAXQDA as a 'first draft' attempt, see appendix 12 for screenshot example. Braun and Clarke (2006) maintained the need for accurate reflection, thus, the themes, subthemes and codes were carefully thought about and changed during this phase.

The researcher began to colour code the codes into potential themes and also created a theme called 'outliers' for codes that did not seem to fit into the main provisional themes, see appendix 13 for screenshot example. The researcher also used the space on their living room wall to recreate with post-its the provisional themes on MAXQDA. This helped to visualise the themes and codes together and to recognise if codes fitted better elsewhere.

What is more, to ensure these themes were reflective of the experiences in the psychosocial interviews, the researcher used her psychosocial fieldnotes to inform the search for themes and subthemes, thus highlighting the subjectivity of psychosocial analysis. Subsequently, research supervision was a pertinent part of this process as it supported the researcher in feeling more confident in the intricate and complex process of analysis and generating themes.

3.7.5 Reviewing the Themes

Braun and Clarke (2006) maintained at step 4 the researcher should refine the themes and subthemes, which may involve them being broken down further or else collapsing into each other. At this step, the codes belonging to the 'outliers' theme became dissolved into the other themes. Then themes, subthemes and codes were revised again, and appropriate changes were made. See appendix 14 for example of theme developments between stage 3 to 5.

Homogeneity is the uniformity and similarities of characteristics amongst a given sample (Cohen, 1977). Braun and Clarke (2006) maintained that internal homogeneity and external homogeneity are central for defining themes. Therefore, they should be reviewed on two levels. Firstly, at the level of coding, for example, reread the extracts contained in the theme and decide whether they form a clear pattern. If the themes do not seem clear, the researcher needs to establish whether the themes are valid in relation to the data set.

To support this step, through MAXQDA the researcher created an excel spreadsheet of coded segments for each theme, its subthemes and codes. This allowed the researcher to review the extracts from the interviews against the theme to check for flow and consistency between the coded segments in relation to the theme. Appendix 15 shows coded segments for the theme navigating course impact on personal relationships and appendix 16 shows all codes with coded segments.

The second level requires a similar process in relation to the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This level requires the researcher to reflect on the generation of individual themes but also, whether the collective themes accurately represent the participant narratives and the psychosocial reflexive notes and data. Thus, to consider this, the researcher re-read the entire data set and searched for any reasonable adjustments that were required in the coding phase. This step is influenced by the researcher's analytical and theoretical approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006), thus the subjective psychosocial lens influenced the researcher's decision of what was felt to a justifiable representation of the narratives.

3.7.6 Defining the Themes

It is important at this phase to define and refine the meaning of each theme and how it relates to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Once satisfied with step 4, the researcher enlisted the support of two peers to reflect on the generation of the themes and subthemes. One of these peers was a final-year TEP and the other was not within the psychology profession. This additional support helped the researcher to remain reflexive and curious to the findings, it also helped her to consider *why* she generated

the themes in the way, the story behind each theme and how it linked to the research question.

3.7.7 Producing the Report

Following the identification of themes, reflexive fieldnotes taken over the course of the interviews and analysis were entered onto MAXQDA (see appendix 17 for screenshot of fieldnotes on MAXQDA) and the data set was then reviewed again. This helped the researcher to reflect on the psychosocial interpretations of the data by reviewing their significance with the identified themes. This process of analysis also helped the researcher to consider interesting and compelling extracts to be considered for the findings section, the final report.

By reviewing the themes with the reflexive fieldnotes, this helped capture an overall sense of how each participant described their experiences within the overarching themes. Document portraits were also created on MAXQDA, these presented illustrations with coloured pixels to represent the different themes the participants discussed throughout the interviews.

3.7.7.1 PEN Portraits

The participant details (see appendix 8) and the document portraits supported the development of a psychosocial PEN portrait for each participant, see appendices 18-22. Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p.65) described a PEN portrait as a descriptive piece which can make the participant *"come alive for the reader"* and "*can serve as a*

substitute 'whole' for a reader who will not have access to the raw data". This can support the reader to develop a sense of the participant as a person (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). These PEN portraits also helped the researcher to keep in mind the experiences of the interviews, when considering the final report and application of theory.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for this research was granted by the Tavistock Research Ethics Committee (TREC) in March 2019, see appendix 23 for ethics approval and application documents. No further approval was required from the researcher's placement setting. The researcher practised within her professional boundaries and abided by the BPS (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics,* the BPS (2018) *Code of Conduct and Ethics* and familiarised herself with the GDPR (2018) regulations for holding sensitive data before undertaking the research.

Researching fellow TEPs required careful consideration of several ethical issues, therefore, the TEPs who participated were clearly informed about the two-stage interview process prior to taking part. Each participant was provided with an information sheet and consent form at the point at which they originally showed interest in taking part in the research. The information sheet was created to be informative, as well as to clearly outline the aims of the study and the requirements of the participants. Furthermore, all participants were made aware that the study was of a psychosocial nature and that the interviews would be audio recorded. Each participant was reminded their name would not be used, and a pseudonym would be given.

The information and consent form highlighted that although the researcher would take all actions necessary to support anonymity, this could not be guaranteed given the small sample size of five. Furthermore, all participants were made aware that the interviews were confidential and would only be breached if the participant was in danger or posed a danger to others, in line with the BPS (2014) *Code of Human Research Ethics*. In the forms, participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the research, without reason until the point of data analysis.

The information sheet also explained what would happen to the data if the participant only took part in the initial interview and not the follow-up. It detailed how the data, audio recordings and all written information would be handled and kept securely in line with the expectations of GDPR (2018) and TREC ethics approval guidelines.

Moreover, in the information sheet and again in person, the researcher established that the participants understood their participation was entirely voluntary and would hold no impact on the outcome of their EP training, nor would their training provider be made aware of their participation. All the interviews took place in secure and private settings within training provider facilities or the TEP place of work. Each participant was debriefed after both interviews and given a debrief document (see appendix 24) in case they required any support after the interviews.

3.8.1 Ethical Principles

Within the remit of social sciences and psychological studies, there is a pressure amongst researchers to produce findings that are both objective and generalisable to the wider context (Yardley, 2008). However, this is restrictive to the exploration of human experiences as only specific methods of research can offer this guarantee (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Hollway and Jefferson (2012) cited Brink (1991) who explained reliability in research involves consistency, stability and repeatability of results. However, this definition assumes meaning can be controlled and replicated in following applications, and this does not agree with the assumptions taken in psychosocial research, where it is the intersubjectivity between participant and researcher which informs meaning (Hollway and Jefferson, 2012).

This psychosocial research focused on the uniqueness of the data set rather than the reliability or generalisability of it, therefore, the researcher cannot make claims to guarantee these components within the research. However, to promote justification and transparency of this research, the researcher used the Yardley (2008) principles of trustworthiness to guide her practice within this study.

3.8.1.1 Commitment and Rigour

Yardley (2008) outlined the importance of a detailed and systematic approach to data collection, it is not enough to present what a participant has said, the researcher must approach the participants and their data with thoughtfulness. The FANI was developed and critiqued by Hollway and Jefferson (2000; 2008) who offered and frequently

updated their guide for the researcher to consider before and during the interview with a participant (Hollway and Jefferson, 2012; 2013). In line with the guidance from Hollway and Jefferson (2012; 2013), the researcher maintained a thoughtful and curious position and was committed to the importance of the participants and their experiences.

Prior to meeting the participating TEPs, it was expected their narratives would be sensitive, complex, full of emotions and rich with information. As anticipated, this was confirmed during the interviews and then again when reviewing and analysing the data. Therefore, the researcher needed to preserve and uphold integrity, respect, and compassion towards the participant experiences captured and the data being interpreted (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013). Moreover, to add rigour to the process of data analysis, the researcher used supervision to gain another perspective on the themes that were generated from the data.

The aims of this study were to provide insight into TEPs' experiences of training and to add further literature to the slim body of existing research on TEPs. Thus, it was felt that the FANI technique would be in service of these aims, particularly given that it allows the researcher to delve deep into the narrative of a story. Also, adding rigour to this research, were the two levels of analysis: semantic and latent, of which both encapsulated and respected the experience of the participant.

3.8.1.2 Coherence and Transparency

Yardley (2008) upheld the importance of coherency and transparency throughout the research process to ensure clarity and power to the researcher's argument. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that authentic psychology considers the reflexivity of the researcher, that is, how the researcher positions one's self in the research and with the gathered data. Within this study, the researcher has previously discussed the importance of reflexive practice, and how she used psychosocial supervision as a way of reviewing her position within the research. Moreover, psychosocial supervision helped to promote the coherency of this study through a supportive and critical exploration of forming hypotheses. It also became a helpful way to triangulate data and develop a sense of transparency between the reflexive fieldnotes, audio extracts and the discussions in supervision (Hollway & Jefferson, 2013).

Before the interviews, it was confirmed that the participants knew the layout of the interview and that there would be a second interview within two weeks. This was done to limit any potential surprises and as a way of developing transparency between the participant and the researcher. Lincoln and Guba (1985) maintained transparency within the interview process can help strengthen the relationship between the participant and researcher, by building trust and act as a stabilising factor within the power imbalance.

3.8.1.3 Impact and Importance

Yardley (2008, p.268) suggested researchers should prepare themselves for the *"So what?"* question from critics of their studies. Some research may have a socio-cultural influence and change the way we perceive a group of people in society, other pieces of

research might have direct practical implications which may inform practice guidelines. The purpose of this research was to offer further insight into the experiences of TEPs which could potentially influence how training providers offer support to their students, therefore the potential impact of this study is substantial.

In addition, the information gathered can also inform those who are considering applying to the doctorate. This study wishes to strengthen the TEP voice within the EP literature base, an under-researched yet important population within the field of psychology. Thus, the potential impact of this research is argued to be worthwhile and could take many different avenues.

During the recruitment phase of this study, the researcher was surprised by the level of interest received from the advert and volume of received emails from TEPs. One individual felt the topic was particularly relevant to a notion that was being discussed within the AEP organisation on TEPs' satisfaction of placement. Thus, the response to this research showed its potential importance to those within the TEP population.

3.8.1.4 Sensitivity to Context

Sensitivity to context is valued and entrenched within the ethical principles described by Yardley (2008). Hollway and Jefferson (2013) maintained the need for honesty, sympathy, and respect in the interviewing space to establish ethical interviewing. This was pertinent to this study as the researcher was interviewing TEPs while at their training provider facilities or place of work. Therefore, given the environment could

potentially have been a place of discomfort, the researcher attempted to make the space feel safe.

Hollway and Jefferson (2000) suggested that part of offering containment is to respect and recognise professional duties and boundaries within the interview. Therefore, prior to the interviews, it was clearly explained to the participant the parameters of confidentiality, and this would only be breached if the participant or another individual were at risk of harm. Furthermore, the researcher was transparent and clear that if this were to happen, it would be discussed whom to tell and, where possible, the participant would be involved in this decision-making process.

3.9 Summary

This chapter has offered a detailed description of the aims and purpose of this research. It has also explained the ontological and epistemological position, described qualitative research, psychosocial research and researcher reflexivity. In addition, this chapter also described the research design and the required ethical considerations. The next chapter will now detail the findings of this study.

Chapter 4

Findings

Chapter Overview

This chapter aims to:

1. explain the researcher's considerations;
2. introduce the participants;
3. provide an overview figure to present the themes, the subthemes and codes;
4. describe each of the themes, subthemes and codes interwoven with the psychosocial element of this research supported by extracts from the TEPs' accounts and researcher field notes;
5. offer a brief summary of the chapter.

4.1 The Researcher's Considerations

Several considerations informed the structure of this findings chapter. Given the psychosocial and reflexive element to this study's analysis, the researcher chose to refer to herself in the first person in this chapter. In addition, the psychosocial principles of Hollway and Jefferson (2013) also informed the structure of this chapter. Hollway and Jefferson (2013) suggested that interpretation should be created by the individual's subjective experiences to the data findings. Thus, the findings in this chapter are open to interpretation for the reader to make their own theoretical connections.

To support this, extracts from the researcher's fieldnotes have been included and appendices 18-22 details the psychosocial PEN portraits for each participant. It is hoped by allowing the reader to make their own connections to the data, it will promote the reader's curiosity and interest into the participants' experiences before the researcher's own theory links are offered in chapter 5. Note, appendix 25 contains the definitions of codes.

Finally, the researcher also considered the research question and aims when distributing the findings. The research question was:

How do TEPs' describe their experiences of personal and professional change over their doctorate training?

The aims of this research were to:

- provide an insight into TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctorate training programme;
- enable training providers with a greater knowledge of TEPs' personal and professional change experiences whilst training, which may influence how they support TEPs;
- add knowledge of TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctoral training to the EP literature base;
- inform those who wish to apply for the doctoral training by offering an insight into TEPs' experiences over their training;
- offer insight to TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change by applying a psychosocial lens.

4.2 The Participants

This section will offer an introduction to each of the participants in this study. Please also see appendices 18- 22 for the participants PEN portraits, which offer further descriptive accounts.

Alex

Alex was in his early thirties and lived in London with his girlfriend. Alex presented as a light-hearted and chatty individual, who offered *very* positive descriptions of his experiences of training, including his supervision and cohort. Alex shared that the training had as much an impact on his personal life as it did on his professional life; and described his gratefulness for his new psychologist identity and the richness he felt this added to his life overall.

Sam

Sam was in her late twenties and lived in London with her husband. Sam portrayed herself as a confident and outspoken individual, who seemed to have to 'battle' her way through her training. Sam described her challenging experiences in training, including her difficult relationship with her supervisor and her sense of belonging within her cohort. Although, Sam was faced with several obstacles, she still appeared to have developed a strong EP identity and knew the 'type' of EP she wanted to be.

Elle

Elle was in her early thirties and lived in London with her boyfriend. Elle presented as a compassionate and thoughtful individual, who self-proclaimed to 'wearing her heart on her sleeve'. Elle spoke honestly about the challenges she felt the EP training had caused in some of her personal relationships. However, despite this, Elle seemed to feel grateful overall for her learning experiences and had developed her confidence in being 'good enough' as a TEP. Elle also shared that she would miss some of the aspects of being a TEP, once qualified.

Leila

Leila was in her late twenties and lived with her boyfriend in London. Leila portrayed herself as a calm and gentle individual, who took a very balanced view of the training and her experiences of change. Leila could draw from both challenging and rewarding experiences and felt that the rewarding elements were largely contributed to by her cohort and the young people she worked with. Leila also talked about her attempts of separating her personal and professional self, as a way of managing some of the difficulties the training could sometimes present.

Bianca

Bianca was in her late twenties and lived with her boyfriend in a London house share. Bianca presented as a friendly and honest character, who described many positive but also emotionally painful experiences while training. Bianca highly valued relationships, she spoke about the course impact on her personal relationships and the guilt she felt because of this. Bianca also talked about her professional relationships,

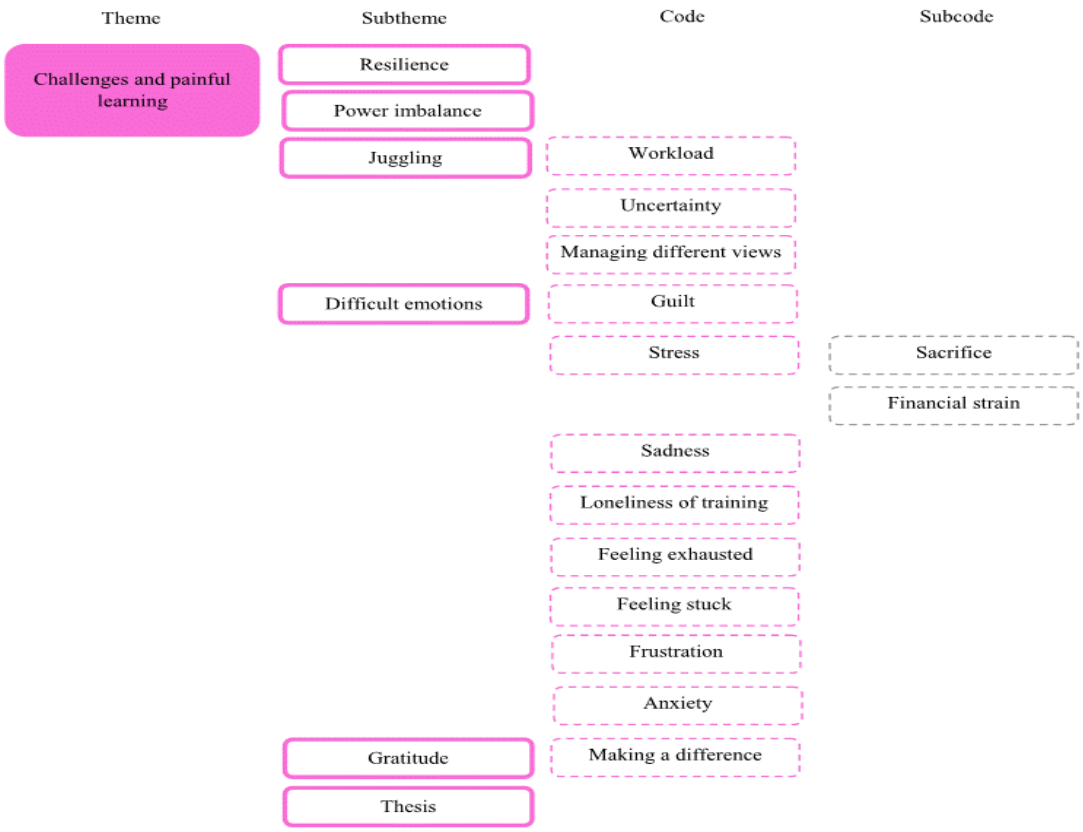
and with great admiration described her relationship with a member of her cohort and with her supervisor, both relationships seemed to offer Bianca a sense of safety.

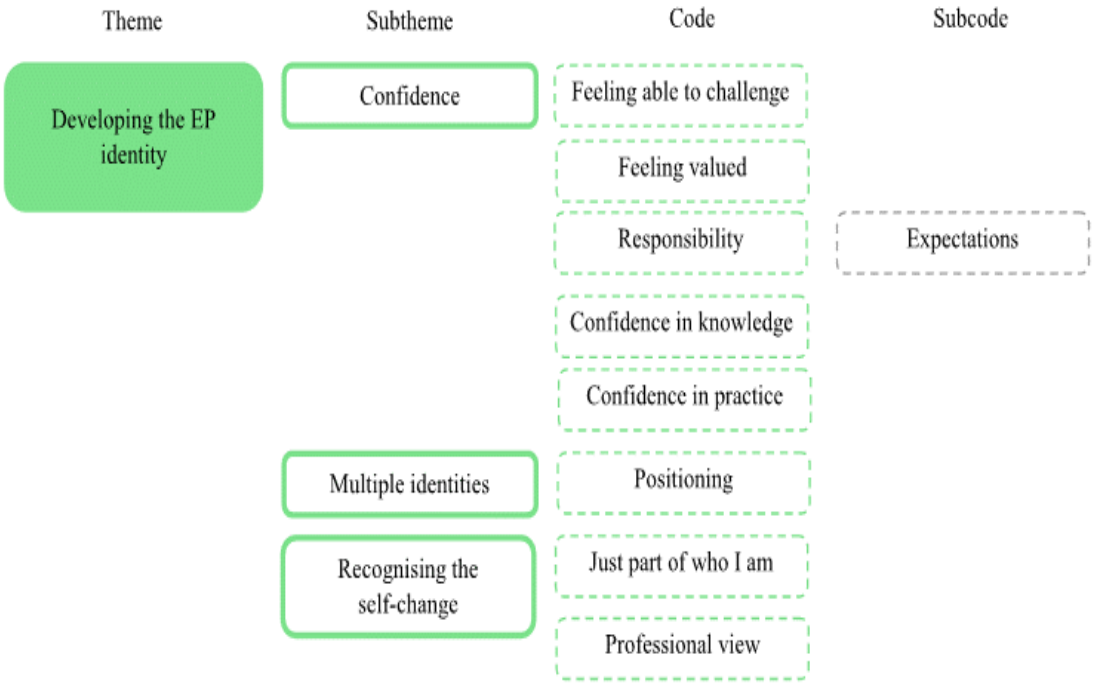
4.3 Overview of the Identified Themes

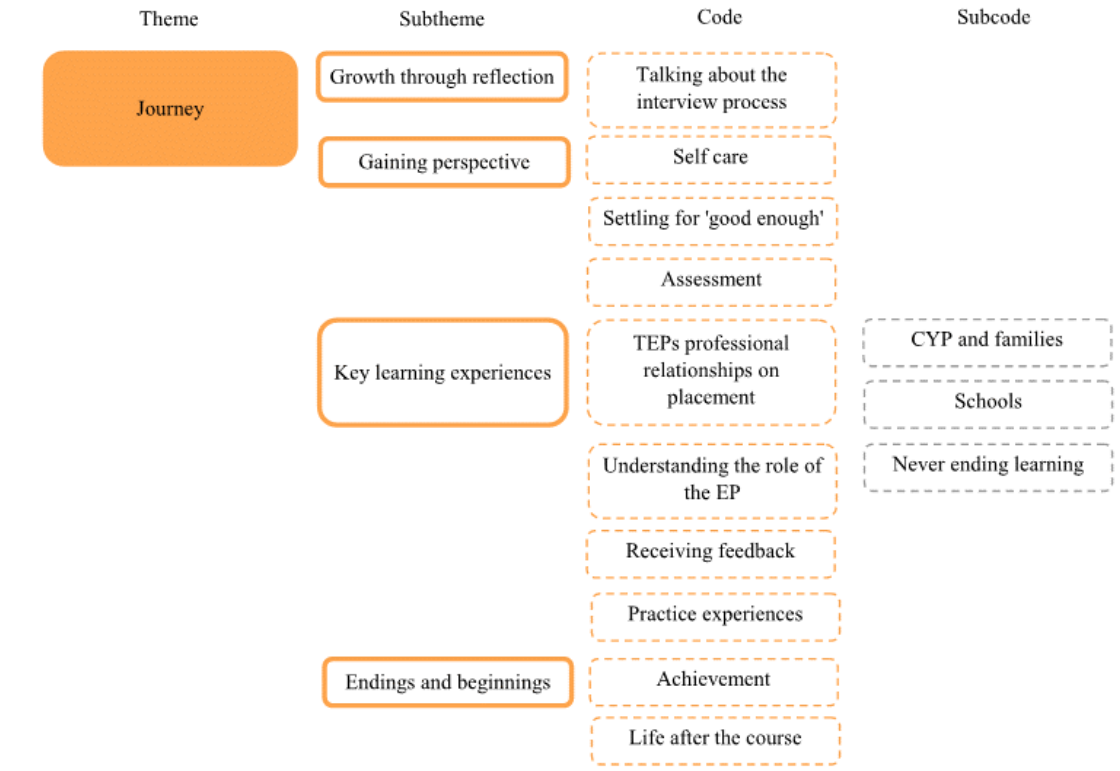
Five connected themes were generated through a psychosocial thematic analysis: nurture and containment; challenges and painful learning; developing EP identity; journey and navigating course impact on personal relationships. The relationships between the connected themes are discussed in appendix 26. Table 3 provides an overview of the themes, subthemes and codes.

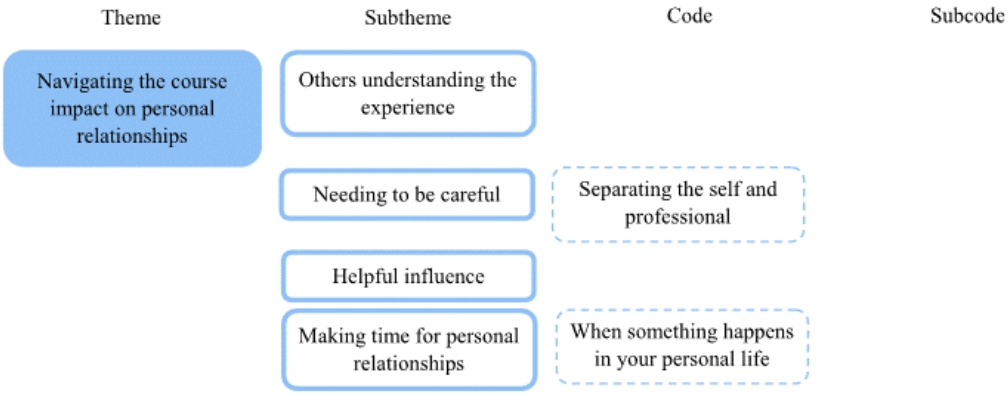
Table 3. *Overview of Themes, Subthemes, Codes and Subcodes.*

Theme	Subtheme	Code	Subcode
Nurture and containment	Supervision	The relational aspect	
		The practice of the supervisor	
	Safety of being a TEP		
	Course structure	Course tutors	
	The Cohort	Sharing experiences	Close bond and support
		Experiences of having difference	


Theme
Subtheme
Code
Subcode
Challenges and painful learning
Resilience
Power imbalance
Juggling
Workload
Uncertainty
Managing different views
Difficult emotions
Guilt
Stress
Sacrifice
Financial strain
Sadness
Loneliness of training
Feeling exhausted
Feeling stuck
Frustration
Anxiety
Gratitude
Making a difference
Thesis


Theme
Subtheme
Code
Subcode
Developing the EP identity
Confidence
Feeling able to challenge
Feeling valued
Responsibility
Expectations
Confidence in knowledge
Confidence in practice
Multiple identities
Positioning
Recognising the self-change
Just part of who I am
Professional view





4.4 Description of the Five Overarching Themes

Theme 1: Nurture and Containment

Nurture and containment was a key theme which influenced TEP development and experiences of change. In this study, containment is conceptualised by Bion (1961), who suggested an individual takes up the role of the container, representing the

maternal figure, who can contain the feelings of anxiety and fear for the infant. This theme encapsulates TEPs' sense of safety through capturing TEPs' experiences of nurture and containment while training, in particular within the cohort, supervision and within the course structure. This theme excludes personal relationships outside of the TEPs' training.

Theme 2: Challenges and Painful Learning

This theme captures TEPs' experiences of challenging and painful learning that influenced them both personally and professionally. Experiences of difficult emotions and juggling different demands are all included in this theme. Power imbalance, the thesis and experiences of gratitude and resilience are also encapsulated. Given its depth of emotional content, this theme was felt to be the most multifaceted generated from the analysis which influenced the TEPs' experiences of change.

Theme 3: Developing EP Identity

Within this theme, TEPs described their experiences of holding multiple identities, recognising the self- change that had taken place on a professional and personal level, and how their identity influenced their confidence in a range of ways and vice versa. TEPs also discussed the importance of feeling valued, and how responsibilities and expectations influenced their sense of confidence.

Theme 4: Navigating the Course Impact on Personal Relationships

In this theme, TEPs discuss the course impact on personal relationships. This theme felt important to the research question as TEPs described how their developing knowledge and skills impacted how they interpreted relational dynamics in their personal lives. This theme also includes TEPs' accounts of making time for personal relationships, and how their family and friends understood the training experience.

Theme 5: Journey

This theme considers how TEPs described their journeys of change and development. The term ‘journey’ was frequently used by the TEPs and was an important descriptive word in explaining their stories of change. Subsequently, it felt important to hold journey as its own theme given *how* the TEPs described their journeys and that they identified the term themselves as something they had undergone.

This theme contains key learning experiences, including practice and influential relationships on placement. It also includes the TEPs’ journeys to understanding the breadth of the EP role. TEPs also discussed experiences of gaining perspective and their accounts of endings and beginnings, and experiences of growth through reflection.

4.4.1 Theme 1: Nurture and Containment

The thematic map shown in Figure 1 illustrates the relationship between the theme nurture and containment and its subthemes and codes.

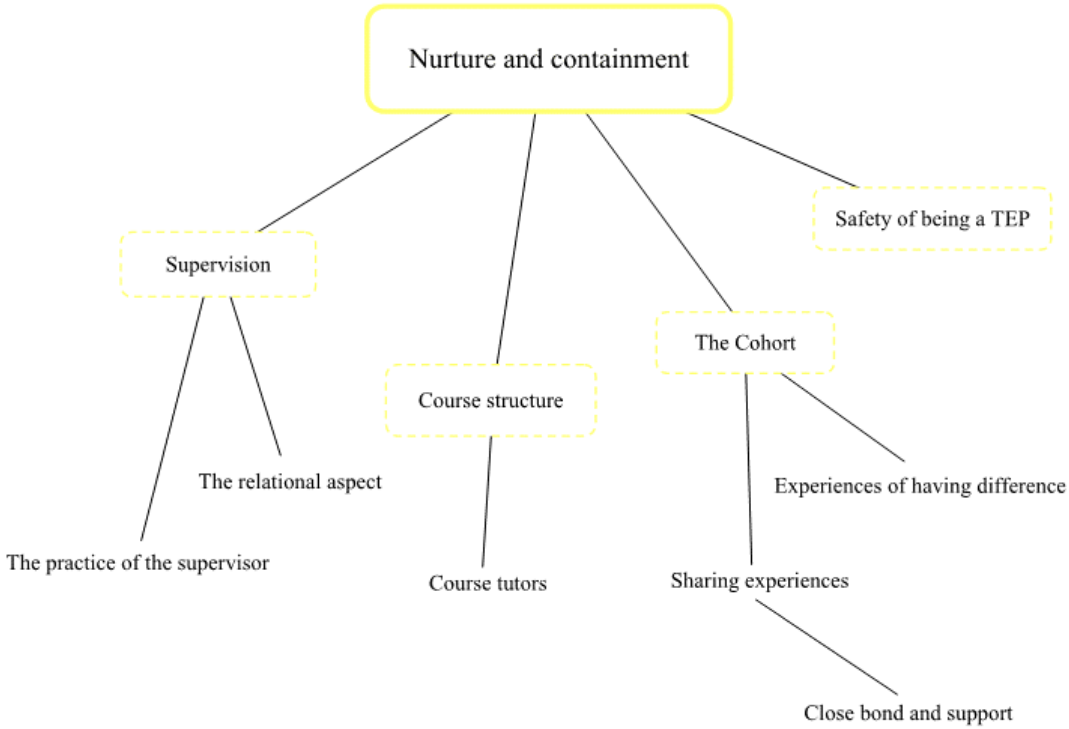


Figure 1. Thematic map for theme nurture and containment

When describing their experiences of nurture and containment, TEPs mainly linked this to the subthemes: supervision, safety of being a TEP, course structure and the cohort. TEPs offered a mixture of examples, sharing comforting experiences but also accounts where nurture and containment was perhaps felt to be lacking.

4.4.1.1 Supervision

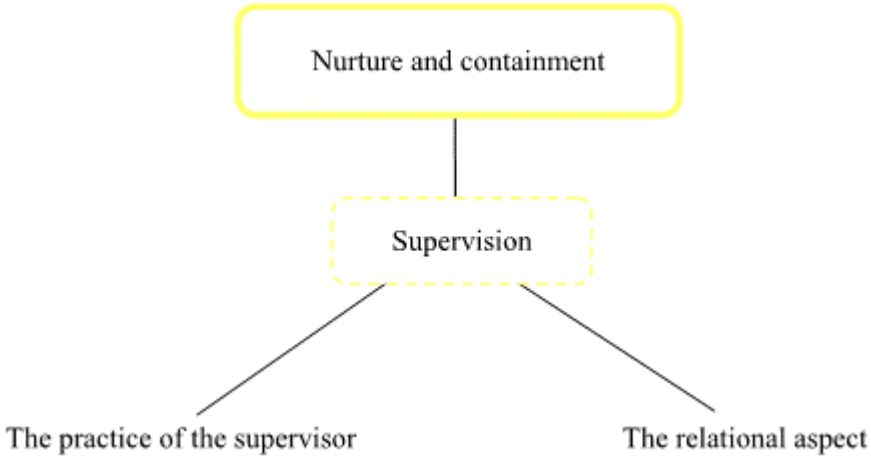


Figure 2. Thematic map for supervision

All participating TEPs discussed nurture in reference to supervision. Most TEPs were satisfied with their supervisory space and emphasised its value, not just for the pragmatic purpose of checking work, but for ensuring they had space to reflect and feel supported. The codes relational aspect and the practice of the supervisor were generated, as participants appeared to view these two aspects as influential to successful supervision.

Alex discussed the 'refreshing' relational aspect of his supervisory relationship with his course tutor:

> *"And I think it's quite refreshing to have a dynamic with your supervisor where you are kind of first able to talk about things that are not related to the course, and are able to you know, meet each other on equal terms and talk about things that are, you know, important for your lives and are just fun or interesting…" (Alex, interview 2, line 43)*

Elle spoke about having Maria as a supervisor and valued her approach. As Elle spoke about Maria there was a real sense of appreciation:

> *"I also had Maria supervise me in first year who had quite a psychodynamic lens to her supervisory space, which was really helpful to be able to reflect and think about the learning that we were doing on the course and then what fitted with me or what maybe felt a bit different…" (Elle, interview 1, line 25)*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote:

As Elle mentions that she appreciates the psychodynamic perspective, I feel myself smile.

Noted after interview:

I recognised that I too enjoy this perspective but also that this psychodynamic lens has a role in my research, and I felt reassured in my approach.

Figure 3. Extract from fieldnotes

For Sam, she and her supervisor held different views on practice which influenced how Sam felt about supervision. Sam seemed to be juggling the 'nice' element of the supervisor's caring nature with the uncontaining element of the supervisor's practice:

> *"Yeah, it's very much practice-based learning, rather than, like, modelling or being nurtured. Well, I say that my supervisor, whilst we have categorically different views on psychology, as a person, she's lovely, and she's very motherly. So, I do think the nurture is there and actually, even though she probably disagrees with the way I practice, to be honest, I don't even know that she does disagree with the way I practice, I think, actually, she's just anxious and couldn't consider changing (her way of practising) ..." (Sam, interview 2, line 86).*

4.4.1.2 Course Structure

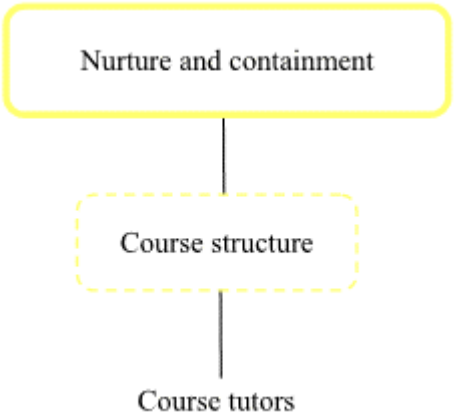


Figure 4. Thematic map for course structure

TEPs described how aspects of the course structure influenced their learning and sense of development. The support offered by course tutors and their acknowledgement of the experience of training also influenced this. For Bianca, it appeared elements of the course structure were perhaps uncontaining and at times possibly even felt harmful:

> *"I think that's one of the big downfalls of the course and the doctorate in general, is that here we are being taught and the courses are designed by experts in the field of learning, teaching and mental health. Yet this learning experience, although there are so many positives and I feel like I made so much progress, and so much growth and everything we spoken about, but it's really hard and it is really demanding on your life…*
>
> *…And actually, if we think about the messages we're trying to get to schools about kids and what we need to be doing and making sure that it's not all about their school work, and you know, we have to be holistically developing them blah, blah, blah. Sometimes it makes me laugh on a good day and angry on a bad day, that the courses aren't designed with that same philosophy in mind, and there's sometimes this sense of this is just how it is." (Bianca, interview 1, line 106-107)*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote:

I feel an undertone of frustration and a need for empathy and compassion.

Taken after the interview:

This was quite a powerful and emotionally charged moment. As Bianca said, "this is just how it is" my initial thought was "that's not good enough" and I felt myself become irritated on her behalf. On reflection, I wonder if I was taking up these emotions as a way of offering comfort to Bianca.

Figure 5. Extract from fieldnotes

Alex seemed satisfied with his experience of the course structure and described it in a nurturing manner. However, I noticed the hesitation and quick change in words in how he described this, which left me wondering about what other experiences he was perhaps not discussing:

> *"And also, the university has mostly provided very…mmm...(pause) often provided clear instructions on the activities to complete. They've been very flexible, kind, understanding supportive, and given a push in the right direction when needed…" (Alex, interview 1, line 26)*

4.4.1.3 The Cohort

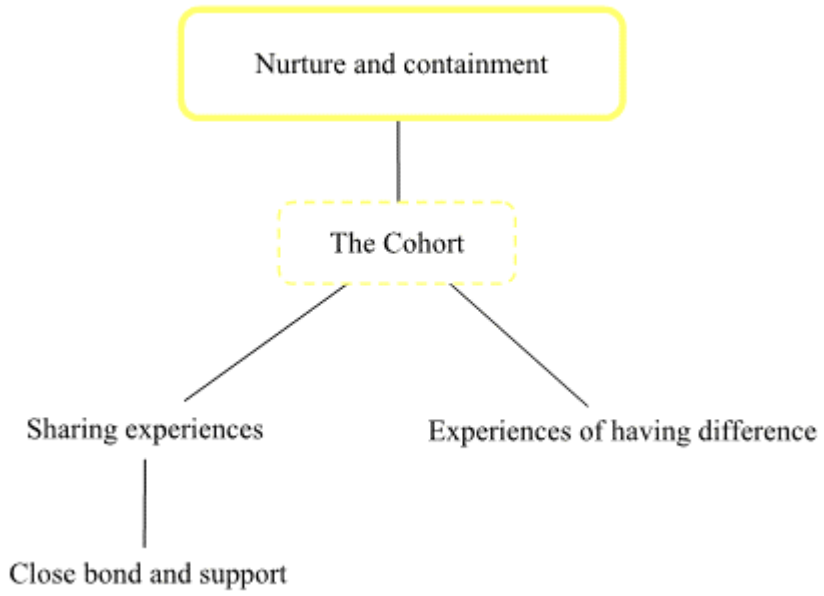


Figure 6. Thematic map for the cohort

Each participant discussed their experiences of being part of a cohort. Elle and Bianca described how being part of the cohort can influence the 'self' and how different roles and behaviours can be taken up within the group:

> *"And also, like, the pressures to take up different roles. So, so knowing what's yours and what's, like, 'group-think'." (Elle, interview 2, line 79)*

> *"...I think especially, you know, some days you go into uni and if a few people are feeling rubbish, you can go in feeling fine and you come out, you're like, 'Oh god, I'm so anxious or so drained or so this or so that'. So, the cohort do have a big impact on how you feel, very positively, but also on a more negative side as well. I know tutors have said particular cohorts, you know, can fall into particular patterns, and they say, 'don't be…don't be a cohort that falls into that'. Yeah, and we've been lucky that we haven't, generally, but there's still always a bit of an impact people always rub off on you of course." (Bianca, interview 2, line 163)*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote taken in interview:

I notice how Bianca touches off possible difficulties shared by the cohort but then defends against it to say "we've been lucky that we haven't generally…"

Figure 7. Extract from fieldnotes

It seemed at times; Sam found it challenging in her cohort. Sam discussed 'the self' and her experiences of having difference to the group, by wanting to engage and interact about matters that her peers did not:

> *"…We're just not the group that can discuss things. So, as somebody that really likes to discuss things, I'm just like, 'Why is everyone always silent? It's very frustrating.' And but then learning to deal with that, and thinking about why that's happening, and how to facilitate conversation. It's been a helpful learning point" (Sam, interview 1, line 184)*

TEPs also described sharing experiences with their cohort. When Bianca and Alex spoke about their cohorts, they described them as individuals who seemed to *really* understand their experience, and this emphasised the underlining message of 'close bond and support':

> *"There's one particular friend and we'd have a 'hands free' conversation for the whole hour. Just for like some peer supervision and kind of thinking about what didn't go well and why and…and just having some time to kind of vent and I think that's important before you get home… because people not on the course don't understand it." (Bianca, interview 1, line 39)*

> *"Em…I think it's having a cohort that's extremely supportive, kind and friendly, and is able to share good ideas at university and also go for a few beers*

afterwards (laughter). You know having the peer support is very valuable at university…" (Alex, interview 1, line 23)

4.4.1.4 Safety of Being a TEP

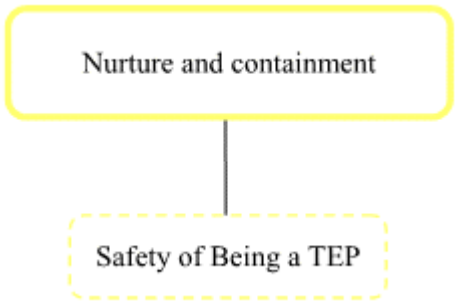


Figure 8. Thematic map for safety of being a TEP

Elle and Alex described their experiences of feeling safe and nurtured under the trainee title; there was a sense of both comfort and loss when they discussed their experience of being a TEP:

"...so, I think, actually, as a trainee, there are lots of little luxuries that are important not to forget. So, things like having ...well in my training service, we had time that was TEP time protected, that we were able to use for different training experiences" (Elle, interview 2, line 83)

"...But it kind of just feels very comfortable and familiar being a trainee. And having that removed, where now you can go to university and discuss the ideas with your cohort and having that kind of 'otherness', I think that's a really nice thing to be able to have. So that's the thing that I will miss the most" (Alex, interview 1, line 62)

Bianca gave an example which suggested a time of perhaps feeling unsafe under the trainee title. She described her example as removed from herself and spoke about the importance of having expectations for training providers to follow:

"… as a trainee I've never had to pull up any problems but something you could almost refer to and say, 'well hang on a minute, this seems like we're being asked to do something that doesn't quite fit within what we're supposed to be doing'. Yeah, maybe that would be something that would be helpful. You know what your course expects of you, I think they're very good at giving you handbooks and all this, and you're judged on all that. I know what my course expects of me. But that kind of wider thing across courses, I've got no idea." (Bianca, interview 1, line 130)

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote during interview:

Strong sense of people should take responsibility and be held accountable.

Noted during final report write up:

My first note and the use of the word 'people' with no names or professionals identified shows just how far removed from the 'self' the threatening example was being placed…

Figure 9. Extract from fieldnotes.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Challenges and Painful Learning

The thematic map shown in Figure 2.1 illustrates the relationship between the theme challenges and painful learning and its subthemes and codes.

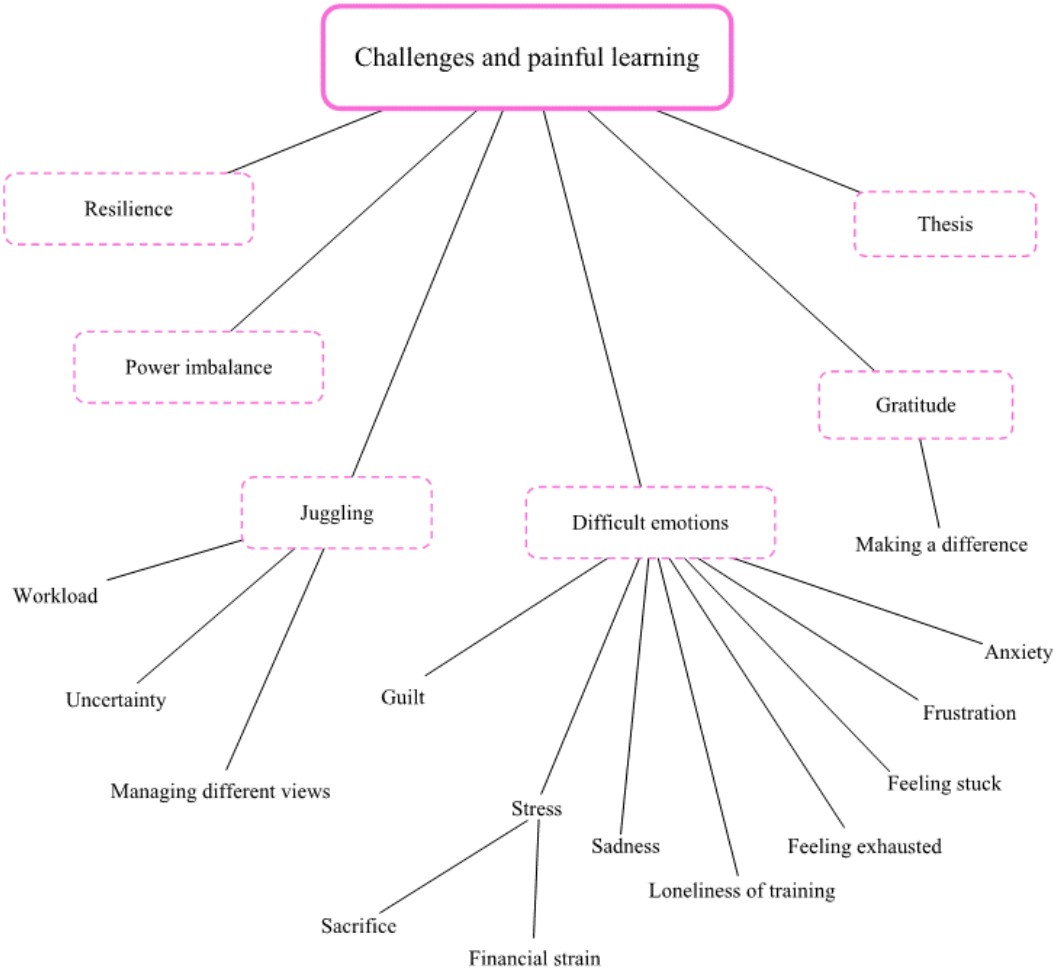


Figure 10. Thematic map for challenges and painful learning.

Within this theme, the TEPs described experiences that were difficult, challenging and emotionally painful. These seemed to influence their learning, development and overall sense of change. However, despite the challenges, TEPs also described experiences of gratitude over the course of their training.

4.4.2.1 Resilience

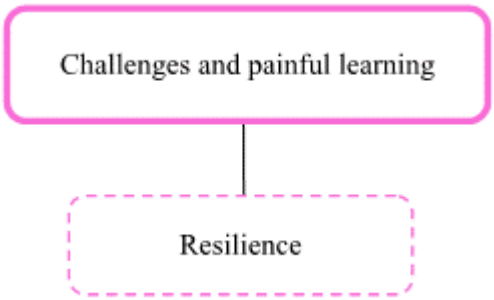


Figure 11. Thematic map for resilience.

Resilience was present in all participants' stories. This resiliency was either explicitly talked about or else underpinned how experiences were described. Elle described the need to be resilient in her personal life as a result of the course and described her fear of losing her relationship with her partner. She also used the metaphor of a moth to describe her experiences of change and her resiliency throughout her training, for Elle the moth seemed to symbolise the acceptance of 'being good enough':

> *"What would I tell myself? Hmm. You'll get through it (laughter). You and Finn will still be together, that's my partner, I feel like that's been something at times that I've been like 'oh my goodness is my relationship going to sustain this?' ...Em, you'll change but in a way, almost, yeah, to use a metaphor, it feels like you are a caterpillar, you'll like being a caterpillar, you'll go through a stage of like loads of change, and then like, yeah, I don't feel like I'm a butterfly so that maybe that's not so great. Maybe like a moth (laughter), you'll be a moth at the end and there'll be different adventures to go on. Yeah, so it's a period of change. It will be painful at times. But there's joy and happiness along the way..." (Elle, interview 1, line 68)*

Leila talked about becoming resilient in terms of managing uncertainty and developing her self-confidence:

"I think very much resilience, in terms of being okay with maybe not knowing. I guess actually reflecting now, even about cases that maybe I have never worked with that kind of context or age of a child or particular concerns or worries. I'm definitely feeling much more okay with not knowing. So, I think much more okay, with like, uncertainty, things changing…" (Leila, interview 1, line 14)

4.4.2.2 Power Imbalance

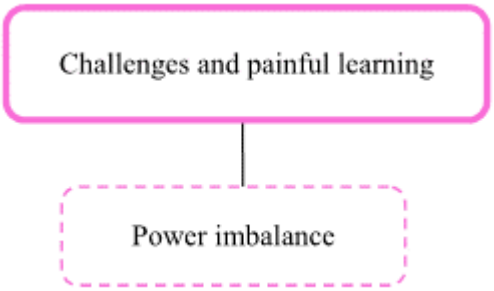


Figure 12. Thematic map for power imbalance

Each participant described events that were underpinned by power imbalance within the dynamics of relationships. The complexity of power was felt to be particularly important to Elle, who throughout the interviews seemed to portray a strong position against it:

"…there are certain people that I've come across on my journey that… (pause) …. I don't know if 'enjoyed' is the right word, but there's something in being ahead in the race, and being able to give advice, be that good or bad, or say, you know, 'my opinion's more valid than yours, because I'm thirteen kilometres into the marathon and you're right at the beginning'. But actually everybody's got a different skill set and just because you're earlier on in your career journey doesn't mean that someone who's further along or in a higher position of power necessarily knows better than you and certainly doesn't know you better than you know you...." (Elle, interview 2, line 39)

"... And yeah, so don't lose yourself to power imbalance, it's a tricky one to navigate I think it's something that's always there..." (Elle, interview 2, line 41)

Bianca shared her experience alluding to power imbalance, she seemed to be unsure about how she felt about this and in the end rationalised that it was ok:

> *"…But sometimes there can be an element of, you know, this is, this is 'my student'. But you know, then that kind of… that undermines this professional status you're working towards, but then you're not there yet. So, you are still a student, but maybe… I don't think it bothers me that much." (Bianca, interview 1, line 137).*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote taken after the interview:

I felt an ambivalence here...there is a top layer of rationality and 'surface level' thinking, however, she seems to outwardly contemplate how she feels about this power imbalance and questions her status and identity and in the end decides to go with the safer option of being in the position of a student.

Figure 13. Extract from fieldnotes

4.4.2.3 Juggling

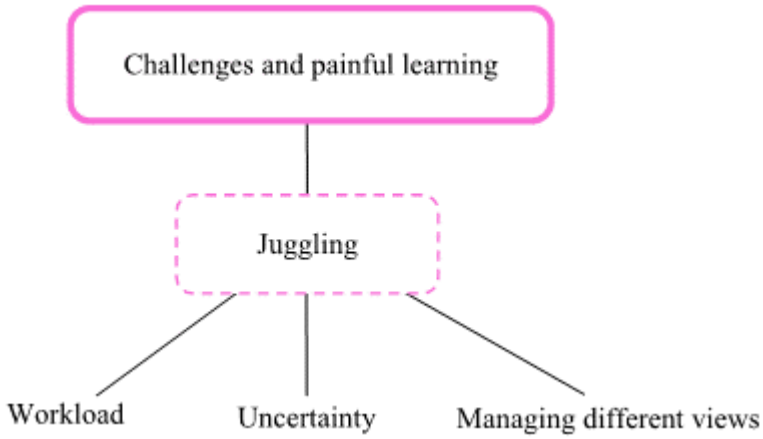


Figure 14. Thematic map for juggling

TEPs described continuous ‘juggling’ meaning the balancing of competing demands. Each TEP portrayed a feeling of tiredness and stress concerning these experiences. The juggling described by the TEPs included three main codes: managing different views, workload, and uncertainty.

Sam was felt to juggle a lot, at times during the interview there was a strong sense of exhaustion and having to ‘battle’ for what she felt was important and to make it through her placement. I wondered how these experiences perhaps changed her, reading back over parts of Sam's transcripts the word ‘warrior’ came to mind several times as she described her challenges and management of opposing views:

> *"...then when I brought the idea of not doing assessments to my supervisor that was like, for them [the group the supervisor belongs to], ‘what, what's the point of an EP?’ She just didn't even get it. So, I think from then I had to be ... at every decision I made, I had to be very, I would say...maybe as confident as you have to be when you qualify because I had to defend it. You know, I had to defend why I didn't do a BAS, I had to defend why a dynamic assessment. We*

> *had so many debates about why, like, you know, her opinion was like…'a teacher needs to know that they're on the first percentile', And I was like, 'why, like, how is that going to be helpful?'"(Sam, interview 1, line 123)*

In addition to managing opposing views, Sam was also trying to manage her workload. The word 'overwhelming' was recorded as Sam described the following:

> *"…And it's... it's just holding all of it in mind and trying to finish. Yeah, as I said, it's the holding everything in mind. You've got all those things in mind. And then you've got your thesis in mind or your assignments in mind. It's just all a bit much." (Sam, interview 2, line 43)*

During the interviews, Alex described most of his experiences with positivity and rarely gave much detail to emotionally challenging experiences. It felt that painful or more challenging experiences could not be discussed. I shared with Alex, my curiosity about his 'very positive' experiences. This curiosity seemed to offer Alex 'permission' to share a different type of experience, which felt quite 'raw' and showed his challenge of managing his workload:

> *"…And, and then my supervisor just sent me an email with a report that was just…. and that was, you know, not, not the right time for it. I was, yeah, I was, I had very little capacity to do anything else. So, I just pushed it away because I knew that's what I needed to do and so that was an extremely frustrating moment." (Alex, interview 1, line 85)*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote:

I can feel the rawness and vulnerability as he describes this experience.

Taken after the interview:

Alex touched off this quickly as if it were too painful to touch.
I remember feeling intrusive, I could see this was an example that brought Alex discomfort... I wondered if I had pushed him to go deeper than he would have hoped.

Figure 15. Extract from fieldnotes

Leila also spoke about juggling the workload of being a TEP and seemed to hint at the barrier it can create for being able to learn and immerse oneself into the EP role:

> *"I guess just so much juggling and so much balancing, which I understand the EP role will still be. But it's, I guess it's more focused on the actual EP role. Rather than having ... having to balance research, alongside placement, alongside essays and alongside portfolios and everything else. I find that really difficult in terms of trying to like, manage all of those different competing demands…" (Leila, interview 1, line 98)*

However, Leila offered a further point which seemed to offer her comfort and it addressed how she felt about managing uncertainty in her future as an EP:

> *"Our course director said, 'We give you the training so that you know what you don't know'. You know enough but you still know there's so much that you don't know and that is true. I'm very aware now of what I do know and I don't know. There's so much I still want to learn and develop. But I feel like that ending of*

kind of balancing all of those different plates will be good so you can have more focus." (Leila, interview 1, line 98)

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote after the interview:

Although Leila highlights a potential anxiety-provoking point there is a sense of calmness and self-trust...

Figure 16. Extract from fieldnotes

4.4.2.4 Difficult Emotions

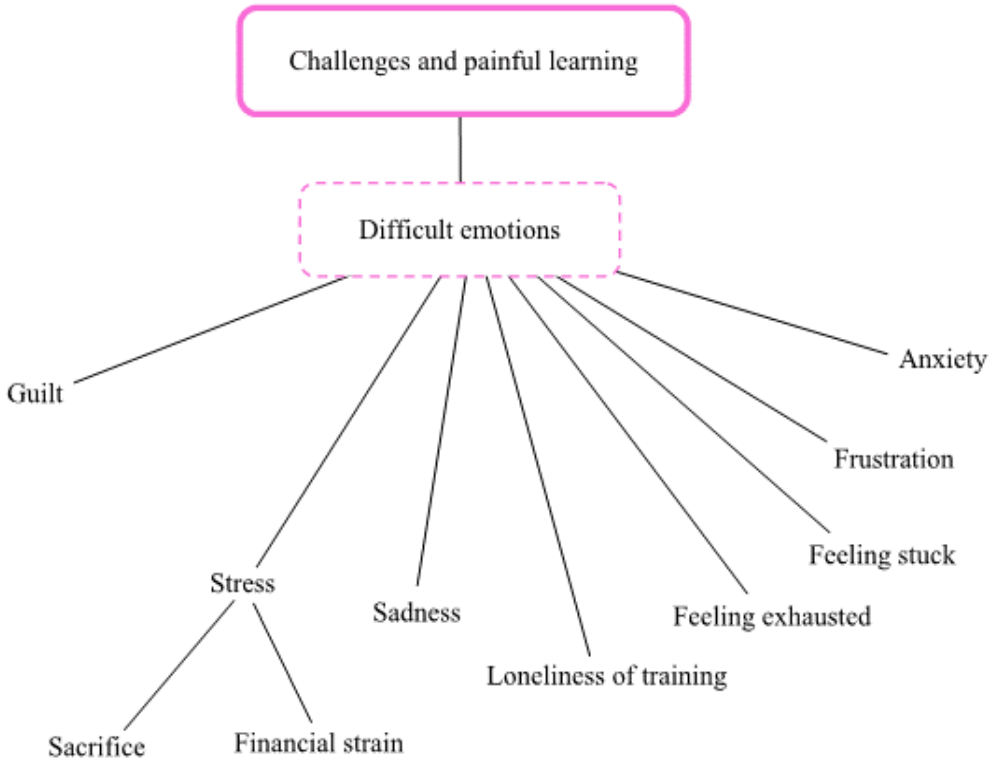


Figure 17. Thematic map for difficult emotions

This subtheme was intertwined with the other themes, however, it felt important to allow for difficult emotions to hold its own subtheme. TEPs shared a lot about the difficult emotions they experienced over their training; how they dealt with these emotions and how these feelings influenced their lives and who they had become.

Elle described her experiences of learning and spoke about experiencing pain as an emotion, it also perhaps felt to be a physical pain too:

> *"So, I think I remember reading somewhere that learning is painful and initially it made me …. ER!! It's quite hard but it's never really been, like, painful in my conscious mind. Em, whereas the academic side of learning on this course, and the like practical side of it has definitely been, what I would equate to as painful … at times." (Elle, interview 2, line 63)*

Both Bianca and Sam described their increase of anxiety over their training and how they tried to cope and manage this. As both spoke of their anxiety there was a sense of fragility in the interview spaces:

> *"I think a big part has been learning to manage my anxiety and not that I have had anxiety before (laughter). I just suddenly became very anxious on this course. And that only really happened this year that I've been able to put things properly in place and…(hesitation) that's really been a bit of a big focus that started when I spent the whole tutorial crying..." (Bianca, interview 1, line 62-63).*

> *"I'm not very good at managing anxiety, because I don't like...you know everyone expresses a bit of nerves. But I would say that proper anxiety, which is like, impacting every part of your daily life is not something I've had before. So, I guess you know, the experience of having things that can calm you with that... I did a lot of Pilates that helped." (laughter) (Sam, interview 2, line 27)*

TEPs discussed the impact of the financial limitations of the course, and this was felt to be a strong source of stress. This strain seemed to impact many areas of their personal lives:

> *"Something that did stand out for me that I think has been a theme throughout has been the financial side of things, I think it just affects so much and on so many different layers, both with kind of the role; of the changes in your personal life, and I think, for me, that's probably the theme throughout that's been the hardest. Having to struggle financially, and then do all the other million things alongside that. I think if the course were better financially supported for the training, it would make a lot of the emotionally difficult experiences feel more bearable. And, yeah .... it's really hard to juggle that alongside all of the learning." (Elle, interview 2, line 35)*

> *"Em…and then it has quite a bit of impact on your loved ones and those around you. So… my boyfriend's life has had to be on hold for three years in terms of what we might want to do next, or he hasn't been able to go on holidays with me or we're living in a shared house because we can't afford a flat of our own because I'm not bringing in enough money." (Bianca, interview 1, line 8)*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Noted after interview:

I felt in the moment very aware of myself...there was something 'raw' about what Bianca was sharing and I was this stranger asking her questions which elicited these raw experiences.

Figure 18. Extract from fieldnotes

4.4.2.5 Thesis

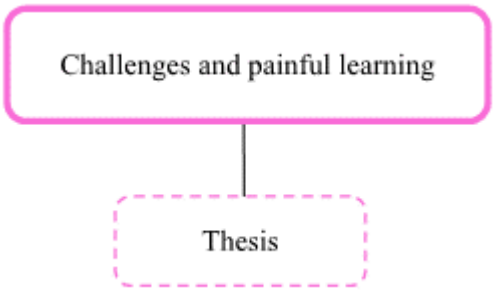


Figure 19. Thematic map for thesis

All TEPs described their experiences of the thesis, most felt although it was hard it was worthwhile. However, Bianca was unsure if doing such a substantial piece of work was *really* necessary to becoming a good EP.

> *"Yeah, I've loved doing my thesis. I'm just not always sure on whether I needed to do such a big thesis to be a good educational psychologist. Could I have done a research project that was smaller and not quite so encompassing?" (Bianca, interview 1, line 116)*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

> *Noted after interview:*
>
> *It feels that Bianca is in a love/hate relationship with her thesis. I wonder if there was an attempt to weigh up if the difficulties and challenges were really worth it.*

Figure 20. Extract from fieldnotes

Bianca also described loneliness in relation to the thesis experience:

> *"So I think my thesis is the loneliest part of this course because it's only you… (pause) and you've only got your supervisors, but in terms of knowing …you're…you are the only one who knows everything about that particular thing you're doing and working on at the time." (Bianca, interview 1, line 45)*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Noted after the interview:

As Bianca said this, I felt the emotion in the room. There was an air of vulnerability and indeed loneliness- almost as if no one could understand the journey she has been on with her thesis and what it stirred in her.

Figure 21. Extract from fieldnotes

Like Bianca, Elle described her difficult feelings towards her thesis, yet drew on a very different experience and discussed a sense of loss:

> *"And, and I'd say for my journey with the thesis, those losses, those initial losses were the hardest part for me, kind of shaking off my hopes and dreams for what my thesis research might look like. Erm, and settling for something again that felt good enough." (Elle, interview 1, line 64)*

4.4.2.6 Gratitude

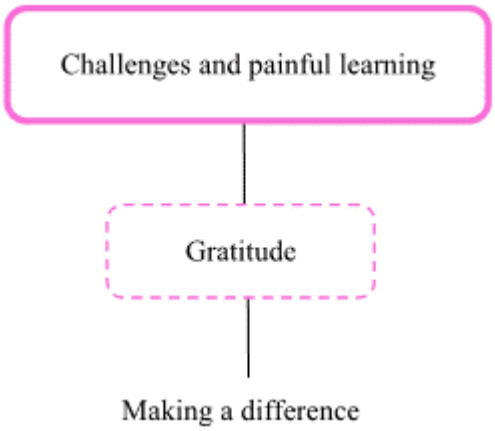


Figure 22. Thematic map for gratitude

Although experiences of training were challenging and painful, most TEPs shared how grateful they felt for their training, learning, and their support network around them. For some TEPs like Alex and Leila, when they described their gratitude, they also discussed experiences of enjoyment and this was linked to feeling they could make a difference:

> *"I feel quite lucky that I get to do this work. I mean, you know, there's maybe a bit too much admin from time to time and no job is perfect. But generally, it's very cool to be able to have a meeting with teachers or staff, and if they're trying to find out how to support a young person, and they're not sure, then, you know, being able to use psychology and kind of give a space for thinking and just reflect together about what's going on…." (Alex, interview 2, line 63)*

> *"I guess you kind of appreciate what you've had when you come to the end and you have a lot of reflection" (Leila interview 1, line 106)*

> *"I think, yeah, throughout the course, there's definitely been times like, 'Why am I doing this?' But I think so, for example, I had like a really nice day in schools yesterday. I had quite a lot of consultations and then like a whole school inset and like, I really enjoy that aspect of things, being in schools and actually kind of feeling like you're making a difference…." (Leila, interview 2, line 149)*

4.4.3 Theme 3: Developing the EP Identity

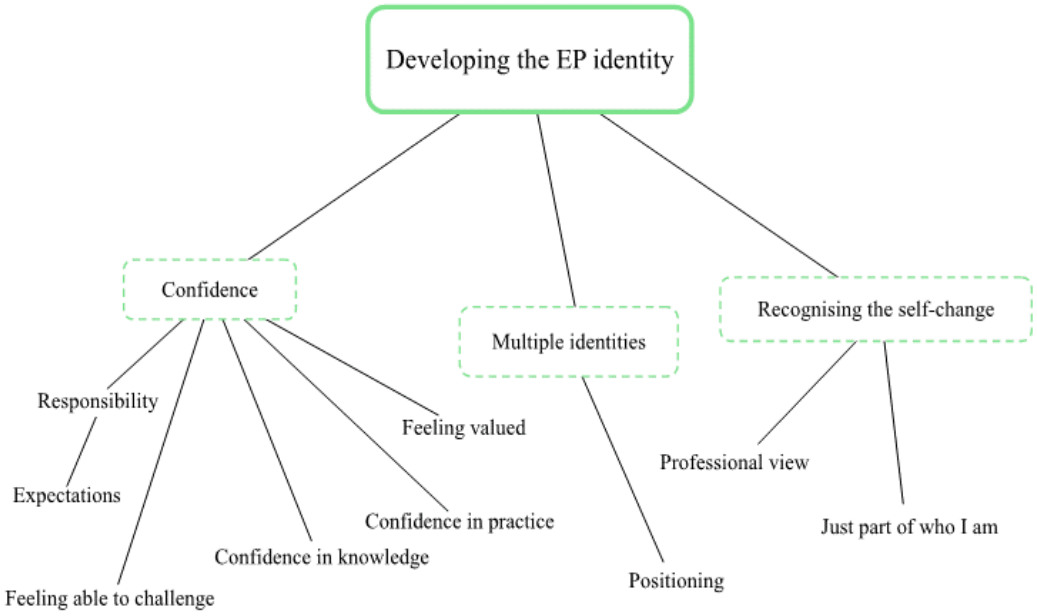


Figure 23. Thematic map for developing the EP identity

All TEPs described how their identity changed and transformed over their training experience. The TEPs' experiences revealed how at times they were holding multiple identities at once. Confidence was also significant to the theme and seemed largely influenced by knowledge, practice and feeling valued. This theme encompasses the TEPs' changes in identity, it is a key theme for understanding the psyche transition into the EP role.

4.4.3.1 Multiple Identities

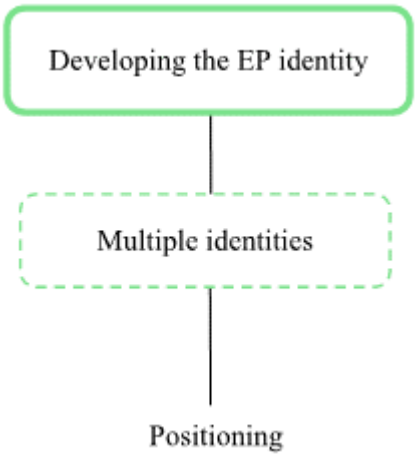


Figure 24. Thematic map for multiple identities

The TEPs spoke about experiences of managing multiple identities. Alex used a metaphor of different hats to describe how he viewed his continuous shifting between identities:

> *"You wear different hats, I guess, depending on the circumstances…." (Alex, interview 1, line 22)*

> *"… I used that term different hats before and you kind of are wearing different hats. When you're a trainee and you're on placement, and then when you're doing research, as well..." (Alex, interview 1, line 66)*

These different identities seemed to influence the TEPs positioning in different training contexts. Bianca raised her experience of holding different identities and attempted to navigate the differences between them by putting in 'boundaries' where one ended and one began. It seemed this may have added confusion to where Bianca should position herself:

"I think what's the difference between student, trainee and professional? I almost associate the student side of it more with the research and the coming into uni and that sort of thing, because that's the student you've been in your undergrad. Then there's the trainee which is like your professional student life and then there's when you're qualified professional life, and so maybe the trainee is that kind of the bridge between the two?…" (Bianca, interview 1, line 143)

4.4.3.2 Confidence

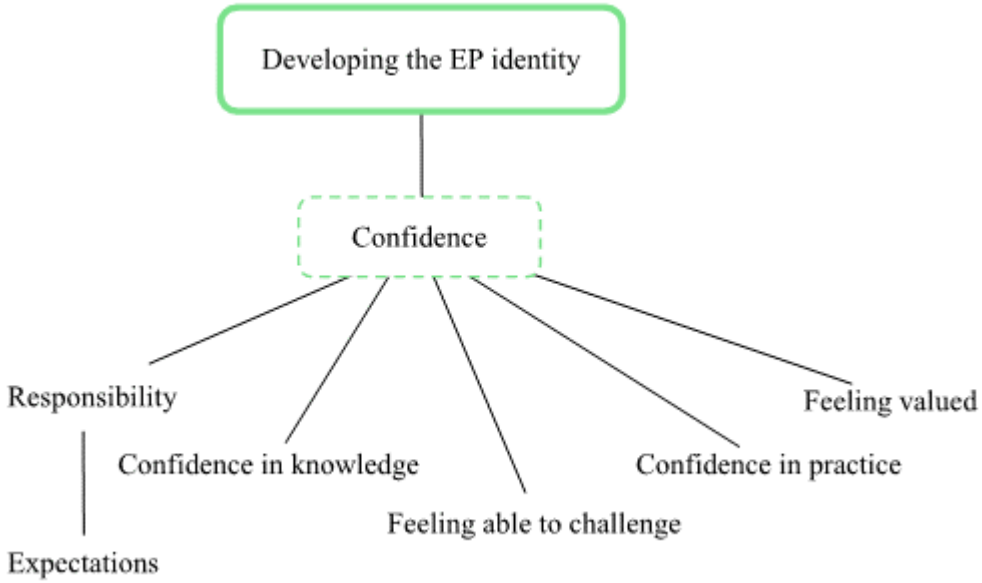


Figure 25. Thematic map for confidence

Each TEP described a relationship between confidence and their identity as an EP. Some TEPs described developing confidence as a long and complex process, for others, it came more naturally. The confidence that TEPs described was influenced by the feedback they received, their experiences and relationships on placement, the teaching from their training providers and supervision. TEPs also described the importance of feeling valued, their confidence in taking up responsibility and in their ability to challenge.

Alex discussed ‘imposter syndrome’ which he described as not believing you are good enough to be a TEP or EP. Although he explained that he himself did not experience this on the course, it was something that others in his cohort had experienced at the beginning of their training:

> *"I think that a lot of people at the beginning have ‘imposter syndrome' and feel kind of nervous and worried, like ‘what the hell are you doing on this course?’" (Alex, interview 1, line 53)*

> *“Other people seemingly were a little bit more self-conscious or expressed ‘imposter syndrome’ more readily. Yeah. So, I think in relative terms, I didn't feel that so much. But I still acknowledge that I've learned a lot along this way. I just, I think maybe that was my way of dealing with the overwhelming nature of thinking that there's so much to learn. Thinking actually, maybe I don't, maybe I, you know, I'm not an imposter I passed the interview I can do this.” (Alex, interview 1, line 57)*

Leila reflected on her experiences from year one where she felt much more impressionable. Since then, having opportunities to work with a range of EPs has helped her develop her own sense of EP identity and confidence:

> *“Whereas now, if someone told me what assessment to do, I would have a much stronger argument in terms of ‘well, actually, these are my hypotheses, these are key things I want to explore. I think this assessment will be appropriate because of x, y & z’ and sort of the context in which they’re in and the childhood factors because of well I’d kind of have a lot more confidence and experience. Your own kind of, I guess, your professional identity as well and now knowing that EPs do practice in completely different ways. But I think when you're in year one you're a lot more naïve and think there must be a certain way of doing things and that's so not true." (Leila, interview 1, line 80)*

Throughout the interviews, Sam often portrayed herself as a confident character. She explained how she had to develop her confidence quickly after being thrown in the

'deep end' of what felt to be a difficult placement. However, in the following extract she shares a more vulnerable side where it seems she felt undervalued and lacked confidence, linking with the school feedback and lack of implementation of her recommendations:

> *"I think it's really easy to get stuck in the 'Ugh my consultations rubbish'. You know, and particularly when you don't always get feedback straight away, or like, I've been in a few schools this week, and it's like a review meeting, and then they've not actually put anything in place. Then they're just going on about the child being exactly the same and...and then it's just easy to think 'I'm doing a rubbish job' or 'This is really crap'..." (Sam, interview 2, line 7)*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote taken in interview:

The confidence that I saw last week is not as visible here.

Taken after interview:

I felt sadness for Sam, I found something empowering about how confident Sam portrayed herself previously and admired this. What happened?

Figure 26. Extract from fieldnotes

4.4.3.3 Recognising the Self- Change

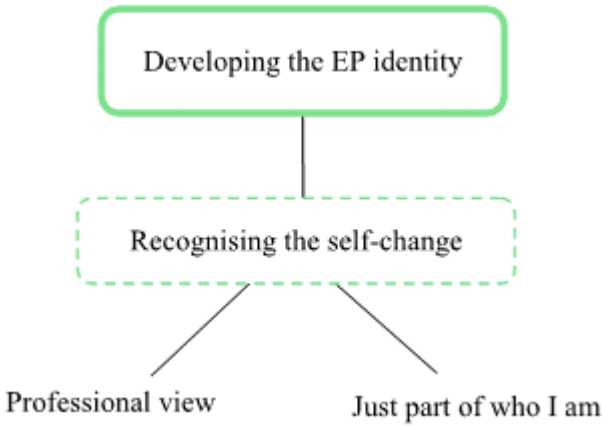


Figure 27. Thematic map for recognising the self-change

All TEPs spoke about recognising their personal and professional change. Overall TEPs felt their changes had developed them as individuals and influenced how they felt about themselves.

Bianca described her experiences of change and how she tried to manage both her positive and negative emotions about this at the same time. Bianca seemed to decide the positive emotions and experiences outweighed the negative. Bianca also seemed surprised by how much change she experienced:

> *"I guess in terms of kind of change and in terms of the actual doctorate- it has as much of an impact on your professional life as it does your personal life and in more positive ways in your professional life (laughter)… and perhaps more negatively on your personal life. But then also, that's probably not very fair, because a lot of the things you learn professionally, you suddenly find taking into your personal life. So, it does add things in terms of richness…." (Bianca, interview 1, line 5)*

> *"I don't think I expected it to be such a personal developmental journey as well as professional, and that was maybe naïve because its psychology. But I think*

> *you can't develop professionally without growing personally and so it has to be a big part of the whole course. And you can't separate them....” (Bianca, interview 1, line 157)*

For Leila, being an empathetic person was always just part of who she was, but she felt she had developed this characteristic further and queried what had supported this:

> *“I think I've definitely developed this skill in terms of like… well actually I've always maybe thought that I was empathetic, hopefully (laughter) and listened to people, but I think, definitely more so now. But I don’t know if that’s because of the course or but just because of generally, like maturing….” (Leila, interview 1 line 36)*

Alex described change in terms of developing his thinking and understanding of the world, Alex also felt he changed to become more confident as a person:

> *“I’m thinking about this journey to becoming an EP and thinking about myself and my own…thoughts, the way that I've seen the world has been different through developing in my training and learning more about psychology. I think it has helped me in my own development as a person as well.” (Alex, interview 1, line 11)*

> *“I guess maybe… I feel...I feel different, I feel more kind of confident and comfortable within myself, as a result of doing this.” (Alex, interview 1, line 45)*

4.4.4 Theme 4: Journey

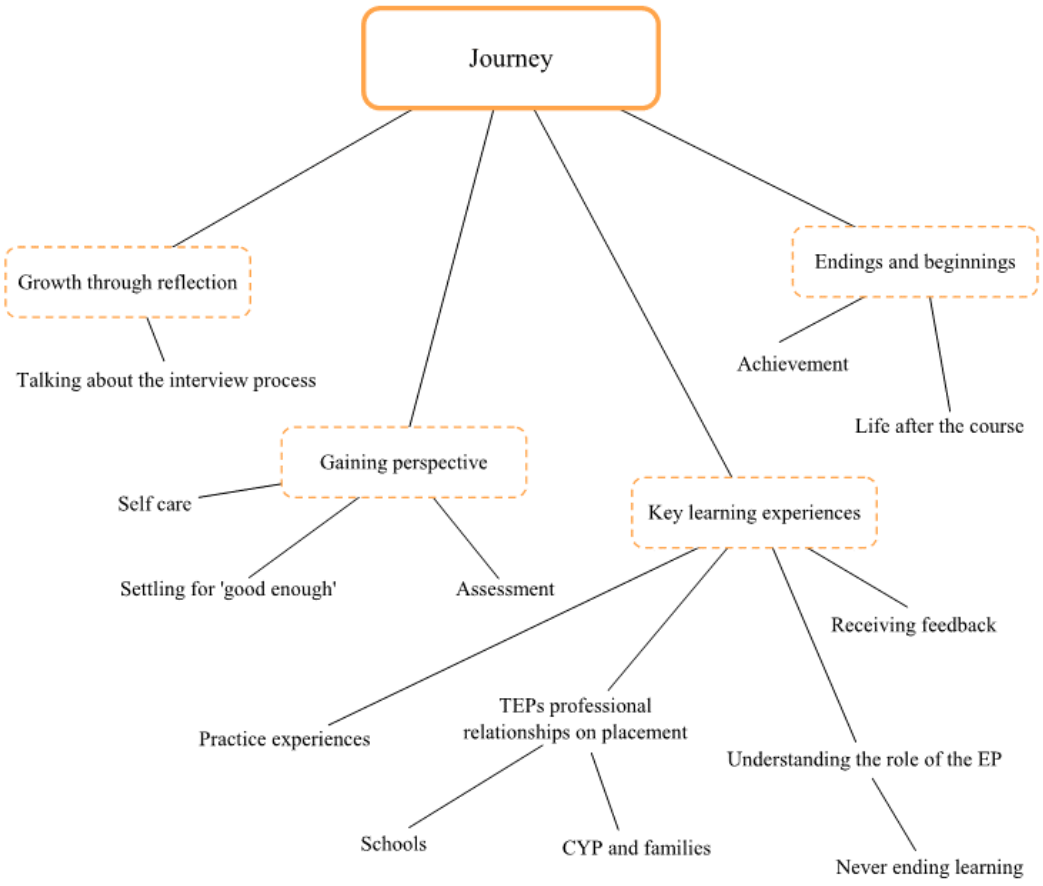


Figure 28. Thematic map for journey

TEPs described their training experience as a journey and shared experiences where they had grown through reflection. TEPs discussed how gaining perspective from times of challenge helped them to manage and cope with the demands of their training. They also spoke about endings and beginnings with a sense of achievement but also loss for what they were leaving behind. Given the time of year the interviews were conducted, most TEPs were preoccupied with what life would be like after training. TEPs also described key learning experiences that felt integral to their learning and development.

4.4.4.1 Growth through Reflection

Figure 29. Thematic map for growth and reflection

TEPs described accounts of having time to reflect and this felt important to their sense of growth. Interestingly, in the TEPs' second interviews, they all discussed the research interview as an example of growth through reflection and appreciated having the space and time to reflect on their journey so far.

These interviews seemed to help the TEPs take notice of their changes and there was a sense that they identified the interview space as part of their training and learning journey. For Leila, Bianca and Alex this came about when asked to discuss what came to mind (free associate) when they reflected on the first interview:

> *"I guess reflect on how much I've learned and kind of like thinking about … I guess it makes you think about where you were when you were in year one when you started. It's quite refreshing to kind of think about… I don't know …. how much you've learned; how much you have developed over the past three years. Because you don't have kind of a lot of time, you're really busy with the next deadline you need to like … do this, do this, do this. You don't really … I don't*

know …… step back and think this is how much I've learned. I've managed to do all of this!" (Leila, interview 2, line 7)

"It was quite a nice process. I think last time looking back and thinking about the growth and development at a time when things feel quite overwhelming, and you may be feeling a bit more negative about the course……to actually just take stock of it be like… 'well it has been a good, you know, a really good journey'. And so how far you've come on…" (Bianca, interview 2, line 5)

"It's nice to be able to reflect back and consider how things have changed me throughout the three years and kind of putting that in the context of my own personal relationships and professional ones as well. So, yeah, especially at this particular point, it feels like a nice thing…" (Alex, interview 2, line 14)

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote during analysis:

Reading back over the interview comments from the TEPs, I feel an unease. I read back over the transcripts to see if I was perhaps 'fishing' for feedback unknowingly.

Fieldnote during final report write up:

It seems the TEPs see the interview as perhaps part of their training experience. There seems to have been an exchange between us, what we 'both' got out of the research, for me perhaps their rich experiences and for them possibly a sense of marking the end or their achievements?

Figure 30. *Extract from fieldnotes*

4.4.4.2 Gaining Perspective

Figure 31. Thematic map for gaining perspective

TEPs described the importance of practising self-care and remembering the doctorate is just ‘a course’ which implied for some TEPs that the training experience perhaps needed to be minimised as it took up too much of their lives:

> *“I don't know if this would be possible with the demands of it [the doctorate] but not to let it get so on top of everything, and to keep perspective of this course is part of your life, and there are lots of other bits of your life and to keep that in mind the whole way through." (Bianca, interview 1, line 105)*

> *“I was doing an inset yesterday at a school kind of around staff wellbeing, coping with stress, and we were talking about balance, like their kind of healthy mind clutter. And yeah, that's definitely something I found quite helpful. Kind of looking at and thinking about… ‘Okay, I need to kind of bring all of these aspects to my day or a week or whatever, rather than just focusing on work’…” (Leila, interview 2, line 38)*

TEPs also spoke about learning to settle for 'good enough' in areas of assessment and practice. As TEPs spoke about this, there was a sense that this had been a difficult process:

> *"I think the contentious perfection side in me always wanted to be like working at distinction level or like high merit level but then actually getting to the point where over time, I've got much better at just saying it just needs to be a pass and be good enough…" (Elle, interview 1, line 17*)

4.4.4.3 Key Learning Experiences

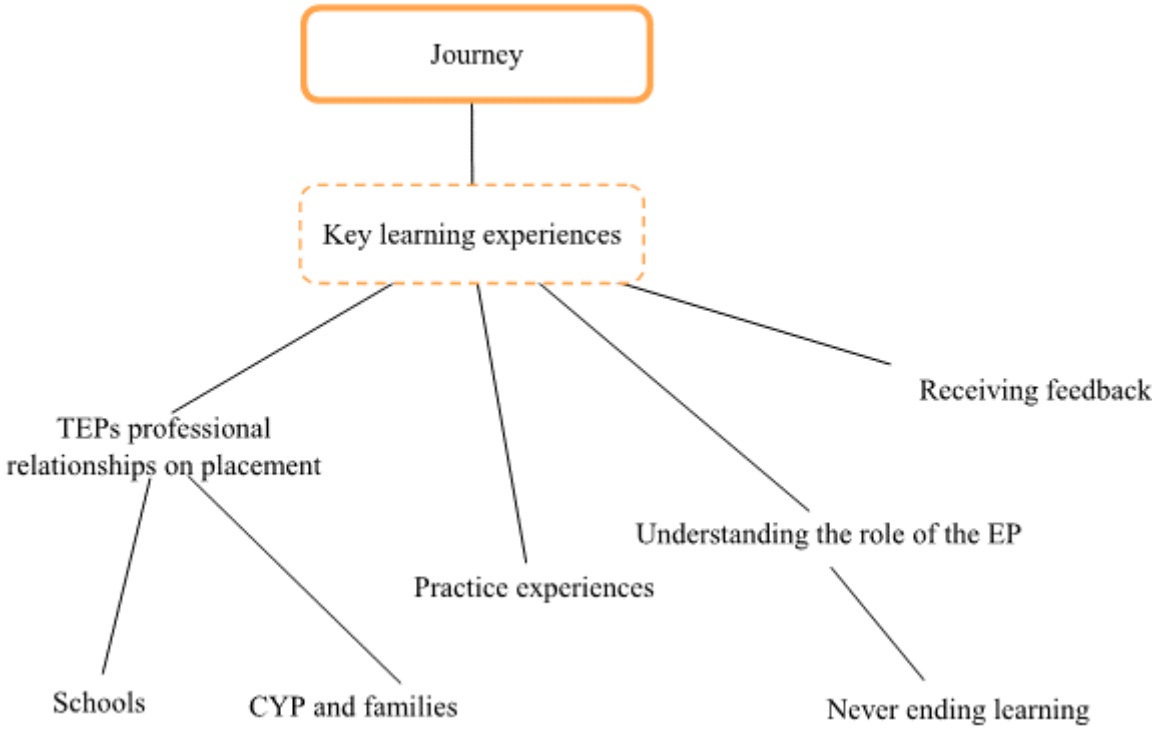


Figure 32. Thematic map for key learning experiences

Experiences and relationships on placement with other EPs, schools, CYPs and families provided integral learning opportunities for TEPs, and receiving feedback from these individuals was important for learning and developing confidence.

Sam seemed to heavily rely on feedback from schools:

> *"...I guess, after every piece of work I did I always asked for feedback. 'Was this helpful? What would you like to be different?' So, I think being led by that and I think that, that gives you more, more confidence, and more and more." (Sam, interview 1, line 99)*

Leila also felt feedback from schools was essential for learning and described experiences of when she felt most helpful:

> *"...when you've had like a really good consultation or you feel it's going really well, or you got feedback from families or schools, that's really helped. Or review consultations, I think, are really nice when you're seeing the difference that your work has on the schools and your consultations have really helped..." (Leila, interview 1, line 94)*

TEPs discussed developing their understanding of what the role of the EP *really* is. For some like Leila and Bianca, there was a sense that it needed to be 'demystified':

> *"...there's a quote from somewhere isn't there that the EP is always navel gazing about what the hell we do and ...and I think that's a bit unfair. I think it's more people don't always understand what we do. But you spend... so I think sometimes you go into especially very complex cases, and you think what, 'what do I add here?' they've, they've got speech and language difficulties, they've got the speech and language therapist, they've got sensory needs, they've got an OT involved and actually, you start to realise that you've got the people skills and the interaction skills and the ability to bring the psychology to move them along." (Bianca, interview 1, line 86)*

> *"...there's been lots of different surprises. Like, I guess, first of all, just what the hell an EP role is? It's like, it's so varied but not, it's not kind of what you think it is. The core role is I guess, in terms of promoting positive outcomes to children and young people. But the whole wealth and range has been so surprising and the different levels and just everything." (Leila, interview 1, line 90).*

4.4.4.4 Endings and Beginnings

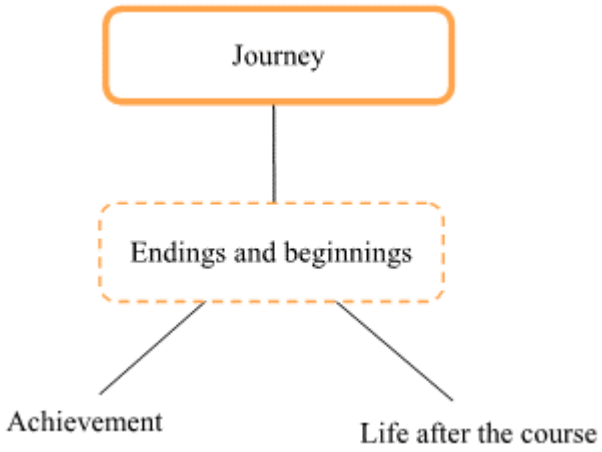


Figure 33. Thematic map for endings and beginnings

Endings and beginnings underpinned how TEPs talked about their training experience, this felt natural given that the interviews took place in the TEPs final weeks of training. There was a sense of achievement, relief, ambivalence and loss when TEPs discussed the impending ending of their training:

> *"…the movement on to the next step and people talking about anxiety about you know…. although everyone's desperate for it to be finished, that anxiety about …'Oh God, you know, we've only got three lectures left, I'm three lectures away from being a qualified EP!' Am I… am I quite ready for that?" (Bianca, interview 2, line 17)*

Sam was excited for her new beginning as a qualified EP, although was aware of the additional responsibilities this new beginning would bring:

> *"I'm quite excited for September I think, but you know, there is that kind of sense of responsibility like that. Yeah, you know, no one's going to come sign*

> *your reports, no one's going to check your grammar…" (Sam, interview 1, line 121)*

Like Sam although excited to finish, Alex and Bianca seemed apprehensive towards the new responsibility they would now hold as a qualified EP. It was apparent that the safety of being a TEP was now coming to an end, and there seemed to be an underpinning question of who will protect them?

> *"…at least while I'm a trainee, I'm still learning, and other people may adjust for that because I'm a trainee but now that is something that's being taken away and I have to, therefore, confront being a qualified psychologist." (Alex, interview 2, line 31)*

> *"I can't go 'Oh I'm a trainee', I think I'll be going off 'Just qualified'. Or your reports you know, being checked. The first statutory report you send off without their [supervisor] signature on and that's, you know, that's you that can be brought back to- literally in court at you!" (Bianca, interview 1, line 75)*

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote during interview:

Feeling of stress and a sense of panic!
Taken after the interview:
The sense of panic felt strong when Bianca spoke about the possibility of court. It felt severe.

Figure 34. Extract from fieldnotes

Elle was staying on in her placement as a qualified EP after her training and felt relieved she did not have to have an ending in that sense, although she still seemed to feel the loss of her trainee title:

> *"…now I'm at the end, it's totally meant that I can avoid having an ending with them (laughter). So, although they're now talking to me like I'm fully qualified and there full-time, which is a bit annoying. I'm like 'Let me be a trainee a bit longer!' And I kind of want it to slow down a little bit now…" (Elle, interview 2, line 81)*

TEPs also spoke about the ending with their cohort, for Elle this seemed to be a painful ending and described a useful tactic to defend herself against this:

> *"Yeah, I was actually … I just had my last group discussion session before I came here. We were talking about endings, and how people feel things at different times, and the different ways that people cope with endings, and like, bear the difficulty of ending. I know, I'm someone who, who does things up-front, so I call it 'front-loading'. So, I'll like, feel the feeling really early on, like, say my goodbyes; do those bits early on, so that when I'm actually saying goodbye, I feel like I've given or said or... like it feels tied up…" (Elle, interview 2, line 77)*

TEPs hoped to continue their relationships with their cohort after the training, for some the loss of the cohort seemed to feel almost unsettling. For Leila and her cohort, towards the end of the training they wanted to organise more social events, this seemed to imply that the TEPs wanted to hold on to what felt safe:

> *"...yeah, you kind of have this bond, this kind of all thinking, all knowing and how many more times we get to see each other. We need to book in like, more events, or we can kind of go out for dinner or whatever, more like opportunities to like see each other." (Leila, interview 1, line 102)*

4.4.5 Theme 5: Navigating the Course Impact on Personal Relationships

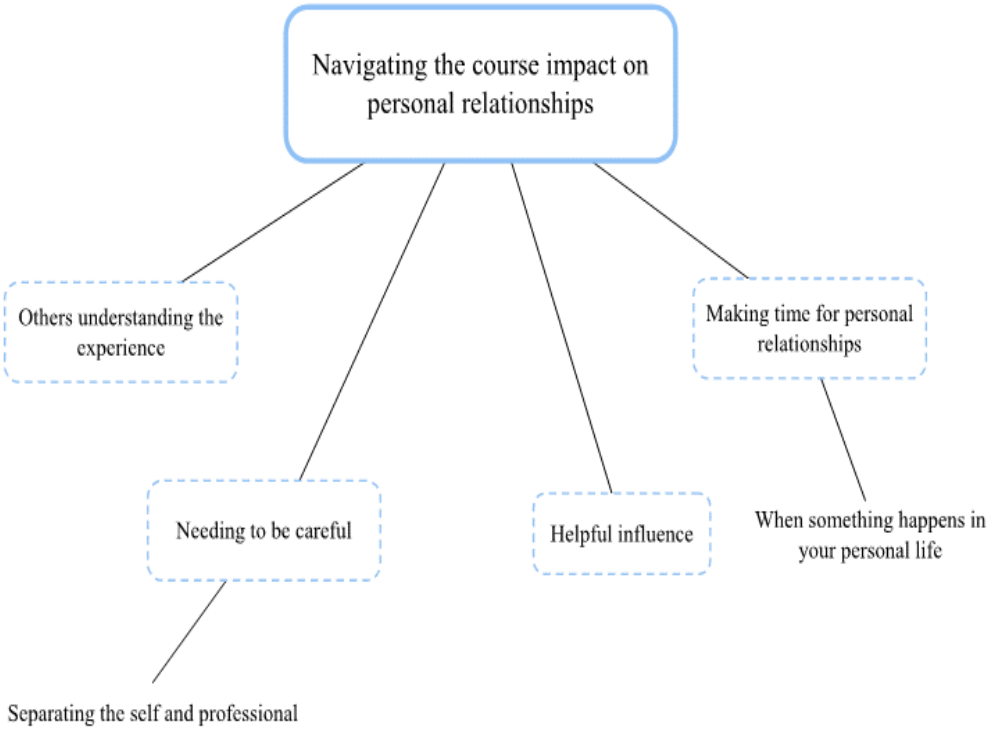


Figure 35. Thematic map for navigating the course impact on personal relationships

All TEPs described how the course impacted their relationships with their partners, friends and family. Most TEPs brought this up within the first few minutes of the first interview, which suggested that the course impact on personal relationships felt significant.

4.4.5.1 Others Understanding the Experience

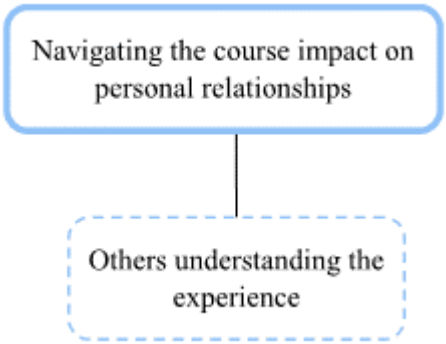


Figure 36. Thematic map for others understanding the experience

Bianca and Elle described how their loved ones understood and empathised with the emotional experience of the course: these experiences seemed to highlight the possible 'gains and losses' along the way. Bianca reflected on the first interview and expressed how this helped her to realise how much she felt thankful for her friends' support, Bianca seemed to gain a great deal from these relationships:

> *"People… that have helped get you through the course and that kind of sense of gratitude. I came home and my three housemates were sitting in here, and I had to thank them all. I said, 'I've just been talking about, like, how much you've helped me' and that kind of sense of how great it is to realise how much people have got you through the course" (Bianca, interview 2, line 7)*

Like Bianca, Elle shared an appreciation for her friends and experienced gains and strengthening in her relationships. However, Elle also spoke about friends who have not understood the experience, and in the interview, there was a sense that perhaps this may have caused some distance between Elle and these friends:

> *"I think the friendship side I've got really strong, stable relationships. But I think there's definitely been people who have stepped up in being supportive and people who maybe… you know, like, kind of... haven't really got it! Like their jobs, for example, are so different that actually they can't empathise with my experience of studying…" (Elle, interview 2, line 59)*

Elle also spoke about her family's understanding of the training in relation to her EP role, there was a feeling of pride as she spoke about becoming a doctor, however, a hint of loneliness developed as she continued to speak:

> *"I still don't feel that my family fully know what I'm doing! (laughter) … Yeah, so they know I'm doing a doctorate; they'll know I'll be a doctor; they'll know it's something to do with child psychology, but …. If, if I asked them to give me a description of what my job will be then they still wouldn't really know. And so, I think it's hard for people to relate to it, it's a very unique experience…" (Elle, interview 2, line 61)*

4.4.5.2 Needing to be Careful

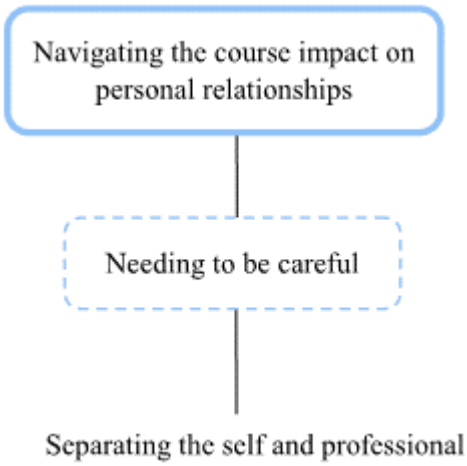


Figure 37. Thematic map for needing to be careful

Each TEP spoke about needing to be careful with their psychological knowledge and training within the context of their personal relationships. There was a real sense

throughout the interviews that at times, their psychological insight could perhaps be threatening and unwelcomed within these relationships. Leila and Sam spoke about their attempts to separate this part of themselves in fear of it influencing their relationships with their loved ones. Both TEPs later described how this failed, thus perhaps showing how much their psychological knowledge and training had embedded in their psyche, which felt at times to be unwanted:

> *"I think maybe having to try and compartmentalise but I then...I think they do seep through completely because I feel like from the course and working with so many different kinds of families, professionals, you've learned so much which you do take into your personal life. I feel like I understand much more about how people kind of think, how they behave, kind of motivations and you have to try and shut yourself off for like when friends are saying stuff or like, there's something going on in your life. You kind of find, like sometimes you can be analysing everything like kind of ... my boyfriend always tells me off for like over thinking stuff or being like, 'oh, do you maybe think they are doing that because ...' And he's like, 'no!'" (Leila, interview 1, line 32)*

> *"I don't want my job to take over my life and I know that it isn't. But like, obviously, psychology is very applicable to all situations. So, it can really preoccupy your thoughts and you can be thinking about, you know, splitting and projection amongst your friendship group, which to me, I know, some people might love that, great, and really want to think about that, and how that influences the way they interact...*
>
> *...For me, I'd quite like to separate and just, you know…" (Sam, interview 1, lines 24-26)*

For Bianca, she seemed to share the same challenge as Sam and Leila. Bianca described her concern of her friends crossing a boundary and positioning her as 'the professional'. This undesired positioning seemed to feel threatening:

> *"Whether it's that you don't want to overstep the mark of being, kind of, stepping into the role of EP with your friends. But also, you don't want them to overstep the mark and expect you to 'Can you come and assess my child?'*

entitlement and 'fix my child and tell me everything that's wrong with my child' or, you know, whatever!" (Bianca, interview 2, line 95)

4.4.5.3 Helpful Influence

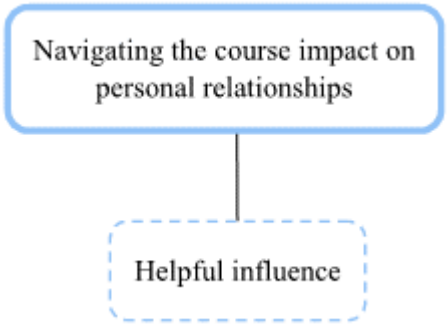


Figure 38. *Thematic map for helpful influence*

As much as most TEPs were cautious of the influence of their psychological training on personal relationships, they were also aware of the positives it brought. In the interviews, Alex portrayed a strong sense of the training being a privilege which provided a rich and positive influence on his personal life. For Alex, it seemed the positive influences bettered him within his personal relationships:

"It's helpful to do that kind of work in your own relationship, because it makes you think about the way that you communicate and makes you think about other people and how they're feeling. So yeah, it has kind of helped in my life" (Alex, interview 1, line 13)

"… you know, it affects the type of conversations that you have in your own relationships with either partners or friends, family in a positive way." (Alex, interview 1, line 36)

"But it's, it's a… it's a great thing and I feel like it has a positive effect on my life outside of work" (Alex, interview 1, line 41).

Taken from reflective fieldnotes:

Fieldnote during interview:

I feel a sense of shame, almost as if I cannot dare to think of the training in any unhelpful way.

Taken after the interview:

I'm curious about just how much Alex appreciates his training and its influence on his life, he described it as if offered him something much richer than a qualification and speaks about it in such a 'wonderful' way.

Figure 39. Extract from fieldnotes

4.4.5.4 Making Time for Personal Relationships

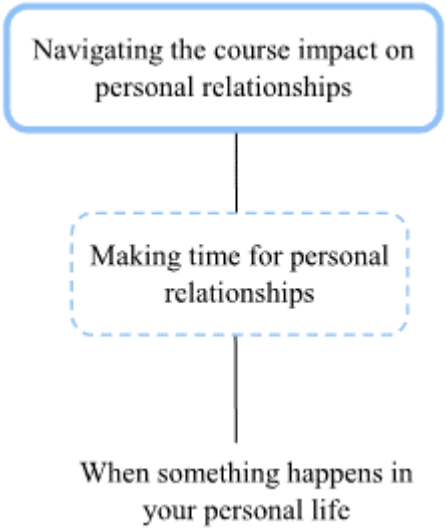


Figure 40. Thematic map for making time for personal relationships

TEPs described what it was like trying to make time for their personal relationships during their training, for Bianca, these felt like emotionally difficult experiences. Bianca described a continuous battle with guilt when trying to make time for her loved ones, and there was a feeling of exhaustion as Bianca spoke:

> *"My parents were really happy to have me home and then I was thinking I can either feel really guilty that I'm not doing work on Monday, I'll probably be a lot more stressed for the rest of the week because I've missed the day of working. Or, I feel really guilty because I haven't spent time with mom and dad, and I'm only home for the first time this year. So, kind of navigating, which… which side do you let fall…do you go on the side of 'I need to spend time with my family' or 'I need to spend time doing this work?'." (Bianca, interview 1, line 54)*

Bianca linked these experiences with the importance of gaining perspective of what's important. It seemed important for Bianca to have a 'rationale' for taking time out to be with her loved ones:

> *"…you have to get to a point where you take time to permit yourself to take time for you and that actually this course is very important, but it's not everything and life does continue. I think when things happen in your life, or in other people's life on the course, big things, you realise this is a tiny part of your life…" (Bianca, interview 1, line 55)*

Elle linked making time for her relationships with the financial pressures of the course and alluded to that even if she did have time, she did not necessarily have the money for travelling to see her loved ones. This financial strain was also mentioned by Elle in the subtheme difficult emotions within challenges and painful learning. Elle spoke about this challenge in detail within the interviews, perhaps showing the extent of its impact on her. There seemed to be an undertone sense of sacrifice in this account:

> *"Juggling time and different demands…*
>
> *…Kind of struggling to manage financially and then some of the challenges that come with that, both in terms of relationships with my friends, but also things like my family live far away, so being able to go home like, was harder. And doing things with my boyfriend became harder, that shifted the dynamic between us as well." (Elle, interview 1, line 11)*

Leila described her efforts to still make time for friends, however, there was a sense of feeling defeated by the course in these attempts:

> *"I've still tried really hard to kind of still do stuff, like occasionally, on weeknights it's nice to see friends and keep up … and have a tipple and stuff and trying to like, have that time. Yeah, it has completely engrossed some aspects." (Leila, interview 1, line 20).*

However, it seems there were times when Leila was able to 'take back control' of the course influence on her personal life. Leila discussed a personal experience of a family member becoming ill, this event helped to shift her thinking about the training and its impact on her personal relationships:

> *"…So that was kind of like a life-threatening disease and that really kind of put into perspective… Yeah, this is a course, this is family. These are like separate things." (Leila, interview 1, line 22).*

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented data accumulated through interviews with TEPs and reflexive fieldnotes, analysed through a psychosocial thematic analysis which generated five connected themes. The support of participant PEN portraits helped the researcher to keep in mind each participant within the large data set and consider which extracts and

reflexive fieldnotes to include in this section. Chapter 5 will now discuss the themes in further detail.

Chapter 5

Discussion

Chapter Overview

This final chapter aims to:

1. give an overview of the findings;
2. discuss the findings in relation to theory;
3. discuss the findings in relation to the literature review;
4. detail the strengths and limitations of this study;
5. detail the dissemination of findings;
6. discuss the implications of this study;
7. discuss the potential prospects for future research;
8. offer a conclusion to this study.

5.1 Overview of Findings

This research sought to answer the following question:

How do TEPs' describe their experiences of personal and professional change over their doctorate training?

and aimed to:

- provide an insight into TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctorate training programme;

- enable training providers with a greater knowledge of TEPs' personal and professional change experiences whilst training, which may influence how they support TEPs;
- add knowledge of TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctoral training to the EP literature base;
- inform those who wish to apply for the doctoral training by offering an insight into TEPs' experiences over their training;
- offer insight to TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change by applying a psychosocial lens.

With the research question and aims in mind, five connected themes were generated through a psychosocial thematic analysis. These themes: nurture and containment; challenges and painful learning; developing EP identity; navigating the course impact on personal relationships and journey interlink, as they encompass important components that facilitated experiences of change described by the TEPs. It is important to note that these themes are not intended to be generalisable to all TEPs, rather, this research is offering a collection of TEPs' experiences which share some commonalities. See appendix 26 for discussion of these themes' relationships and appendix 27 for the researcher's reflections of this study.

5.2 Findings and Theory Links

Within psychosocial research, the researcher aims to explore the relationship between the psyche and the social, the researcher also seeks to engage with *"a space that is neither 'psycho' nor 'social', and is definitely not both, but is something else again"*

(Frosh and Baraitser, 2008, p.350). Psychoanalytic theory can assist in conceptualising this third space through exploring the role of unconscious defences which are intersubjective in their creation (Frosh & Baraitster, 2008).

The central importance of the intersubjectivity between the researcher and participant to the generated research data was also highlighted by Hollway and Jefferson (2012). Therefore, in this research, keeping this intersubjective third space in mind, supported the researcher to adopt a reflexive lens to the role of the unconscious in both the researcher (the defended researcher) and the participant (the defended subject).

To conceptualise how this dynamic manifested within the research and to keep with the aims of this study of providing insight to the TEPs' experiences of change, the researcher decided to create an original visual interpretation of the meaning created in this third space of intersubjectivity and the generated themes, supported by reflexive fieldnotes.

Berthold and Renkl (2009) explained that visual representations can foster theoretical and conceptual understanding by producing illustrations directed to domain principles. Therefore, in this study, the researcher felt this visual illustration could foster as a helpful tool to assist the reader's understanding of how the researcher interpreted the psychosocial experience.

5.2.1 Visual Representation: TEPs Trajectory of Change

The illustration shows the researcher's visual understanding of the TEPs' experiences through symbolic representations, objects that present mental processes and beliefs based on one's personal constructs (Pam, 2013). The themes which influence the TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change are represented by symbols the researcher felt best captured their essence. Please see Figure 41 for the researcher's visual representation.

For example, challenges and painful learning is represented by a thunder cloud which may infer dark and turbulent times, yet a cloud can also disappear and is non-static. The mirror was chosen for developing EP identity as it signifies how the TEPs view themselves. Open hands were chosen for nurture and containment as this was felt to represent warmth and openness.

The tree was chosen for navigating the course impact on personal relationships as it seemed to capture how experiences with loved ones may be at the roots and core of one's experience. The sun was chosen to represent journey as the researcher believed that both the theme journey and the sun are at the crux of an experience to which other things evolve. The world needs the sun to grow and survive, as do TEPs need their journeys to develop and become an EP.

The representation also shows the researcher and participant within their own circles to signify their own individual views of the world; their intersubjectivity is created when their worlds meet (represented by joining circles). This intersubjective space is influenced by the unconscious and unseen defence mechanisms under the surface, these influence the 'seen' and experienced social world, which contain the themes.

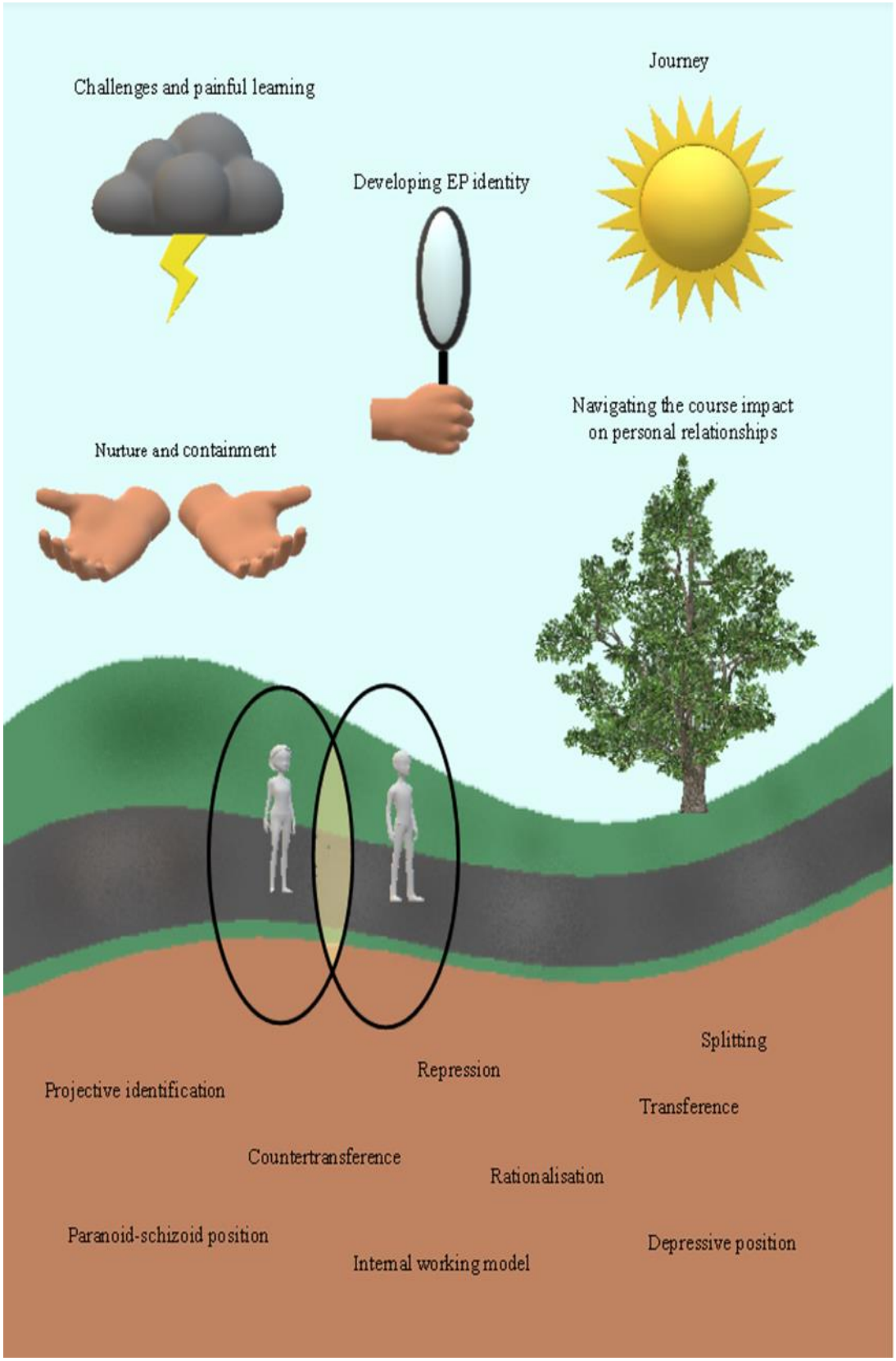


Figure 41. The researcher's visual representation

5.2.1.1 Developmental Trajectory

The researcher suggests the visual representation shows the TEP on a path of change and development. These experiences may be similar to those of adolescents. Youell (2006) explained that in adolescent development, pain can be experienced in the face of change, yet these are essential experiences for growth. Similarly, it felt apparent in this research, the TEPs underwent a journey of discovery and development like that of an adolescent. This developmental trajectory was sensed with each participant, and with the application of theory the researcher was able to conceptualise the TEPs' path of learning. The findings will now be discussed through relevant theory.

5.2.2 A Kleinian Perspective

Within psychosocial research, Holloway and Jefferson (2000) draws upon Melanie Klein's theories of psychoanalysis to support the understanding of individuals as defended against their anxieties. Thus, Kleinian concepts of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions and mechanisms of projection and splitting, were felt to influence this study's data and are linked where relevant in this theory section.

5.2.2.1 The Paranoid-schizoid and Depressive Positions

Klein (1975) explained the paranoid-schizoid position is a state of mind whereby one finds themselves in an unconscious defence against anxiety and will adopt defence

mechanisms to protect oneself against pain. Youell (2006) explained in secondary school, when adolescents are in this paranoid- schizoid position, they require the teachers support to manage their difficult and unsolicited emotions, to become more tolerable.

Like adolescents, in this study TEPs seemed reliant on those more experienced, be it supervisors or course tutors, to offer them protection and to help them tolerate their difficult emotions. This support can help the movement to a more depressive state of mind, whereby one can take the *bad object*, the difficult and unsolicited emotions that are experienced in the paranoid-schizoid position, to become more tolerable, holding these bad objects with the *good* simultaneously (Klein, 1975).

The TEPs apparent desire for protection was also linked to the course structure of the training. It seemed for Bianca, in particular, making sure that the course providers knew what was expected of them was important for her to feel safe. Bianca seemed to feel frustrated by the caring aspect of the course structure when she was discussing the topics of learning, teaching and mental health and explained "*Sometimes it makes me laugh on a good day and angry on a bad day, that the courses aren't designed with that same philosophy in mind".* She also seemed frustrated in her description of the course's apparent position of *"this is just how it is"* towards TEP workload and wellbeing.

It seemed Bianca, in her paranoid-schizoid state, felt the course approach to these aspects were sometimes 'bad' or 'not good enough' and was perhaps at times even hypocritical and lacking in nurture. This perceived hypocrisy and lack of nurture was felt to cause Bianca anxiety within the interview. The researcher noticed she herself

became frustrated, feeling almost angry for Bianca and concerned that she may not have received the safety she felt she needed.

Within the paranoid-schizoid position a mechanism of defence is projection, which involves parts of the threat seen as bad, split off and located in or identified as belonging to another person (Klein, 1975). These feelings experienced by the researcher may be perceived as counter-transference to Bianca's projections of undesired pain. Salzberger-Wittenberg (1970) explained counter-transference as a mechanism which occurs through the process of projective identification, whereby the recipient of the projection begins to experience the feelings projected *as if* they belonged to them. In this experience with Bianca, the researcher felt she too, may have moved briefly into this paranoid-schizoid state.

5.2.2.2 Splitting

It is argued by the researcher that Bianca's perceived hypocrisy could be linked with object relations theory (Klein, 1975), whereby the splitting of objects is undertaken in the paranoid-schizoid position, adopted in times of threat to the self. This position permits us to believe in a good object, in its purest sense and untouched by the bad threats, split off from the object and located elsewhere (Klein, 1975). Curtis (2015) explained that as adults, when we feel pain such as anxiety or stress, we often feel helpless and need another to take the blame, this serves as a way of separating or splitting off this bad object.

Curtis (2015) maintained like children and adolescents, we can have anxiety or pain that we feel others cannot fully understand unless they feel it too. However, this is not a desire for others to suffer, rather it is a desire for the individual to understand the pain so that the adult does not feel isolated and alone. It is hoped that the recipient of this pain may be able to manage it and potentially make it disappear (Curtis, 2015). It is suggested that Curtis' (2015) explanation of adult experiences of splitting may explain Bianca's experience and the researcher's seeming experience of counter-transference from Bianca of the 'bad course'.

5.2.3 Theory Links: Nurture and Containment

The theory, container-contained (Bion, 1961) influenced the theme of nurture and containment. Bion (1961) suggests the container represents the maternal figure, who can contain the feelings of anxiety and fear for the infant and offer security. Bion (1961) explained that feelings are projected onto the container and taken in (introjected), processed and then returned to the subject in a more tolerable form. The importance and need for containment were felt to underpin many of the TEPs' descriptions of the changes they had experienced.

For example, Alex described how refreshing and important it was for his learning to be able to speak to his supervisor about his life outside of his training and to feel like they were equals. This seemed to help Alex develop a sense of trust within the supervisory relationship. Bion's theory may suggest this way of acknowledging Alex as 'the whole' person not just 'the trainee' within the relationship, helped Alex to feel more held in mind and contained by his supervisor. This may show how for Alex, his container (the

supervisor) was able to attune himself to Alex's needs and therefore, created a safe space for Alex.

5.2.3.1 Groups Dynamics

TEPs also described the relational dynamics with peers in their cohort and this seemed to be an important influence on their experience of training and on their identity. Bianca and Alex described the positives of having shared experiences within their cohort and the close bond and support they felt within it. Also, Leila, when discussing the closeness of her cohort and their upcoming ending as a trainee group, described how the group can take on a role of becoming *"all knowing"* and *"all thinking"*, which seemed to suggest a sense of dependency on the group.

Bion (1959) explained that basic assumption groups are focused on responding to a shared phantasy; unconscious needs and desires that emerge from the collective anxieties of the group, rather than focusing on their primary task. Within the basic assumptions, the group can unconsciously position themselves in a place of disempowerment, thus manifesting the need to create a strong defence against anxieties and prevent reality from intruding into their phantasy (Bion, 1959). It seems for Leila and her cohort, the threat of their group ending needed to be defended against and thus, required them to book additional social events.

Within the basic assumption of groups (Bion, 1959), group members take up or are given different roles which may require them to hold painful emotions for the group that may not necessarily be the individual's own emotional experience. This may have been described by Bianca, as she spoke about an experience of suddenly feeling

anxious and drained within her cohort, and the caution her cohort received from the course tutors of being aware of *"rubbing off"* on each other. Armstrong (2018) also warned of this group dynamic and maintained that individuals within groups can develop 'group thinking' and can become at risk of losing their individual identity by forgetting their individual strengths and differences and adopt the uniform collective narrative of the group.

This may also have been experienced by Elle and Sam, who shared their experiences of trying to find and hold 'the self' in mind within their own cohorts. For example, Sam described her frustrations and seemed to feel silenced by her cohort for wanting to discuss things the group did not. These experiences of being part of a group and how it can influence one's identity may be connected to those experienced in adolescence. Youell (2006) suggested that within adolescent groups, the sameness of its members allows them to create a group identity which offers perceived safety and a place of belonging. However, within this group, significant differences are not tolerated and therefore those who do not comply can be expelled from the group (Youell, 2006).

5.2.4 Theory Links: Challenges and Painful Learning

TEPs described feeling overwhelmed by juggling different demands and feeling heavy emotions such as guilt, stress, frustration and many others, which all impacted how they experienced and coped with their personal and professional change. Thus, it seemed understandable to the researcher, that TEPs sought support and safety from those perceived as more senior; who may have represented a maternal figure or container (Bion, 1961).

5.2.4.1 Repression

The TEPs discussed the positive and joyful moments they experienced which impacted their personal and professional change and development. Alex, in particular, was *very* positive about his training and seemed to depict an amazing training experience which led to many positive changes. As Alex described these experiences, the researcher began to feel a sense of shame and felt somewhat ungrateful and embarrassed that she had not shared the extent of Alex's positivity in her own TEP experiences. The researcher felt the need to silence her negative or painful experiences of training and adopt a more grateful perspective.

As Alex's interview progressed, the researcher highlighted to Alex that he seemed to be *very* positive about the experiences which influenced him, and she wondered if this was *really* always the case. Interestingly, Alex seemed to take this as an opportunity to discuss a more painful experience of feeling overworked. However, his comment on this experience was brief as if it were perhaps too difficult to speak about, and the researcher experienced a lingering feeling of stress and anxiety in the room. In hindsight, one wonders if the researcher's emotional experience of shame and embarrassment was in fact counter-transference to Alex's repressed feelings that were perhaps too painful to recall.

Curtis (2015) explained that repression is the formulation of which defence mechanisms were first conceptualised: one shuts away from awareness the conscious aspect of the mind they did not wish to know about or cannot tolerate the emotional

pain of remembering. Thus, for Alex, perhaps by retelling the experiences which influenced his personal and professional change through a seemingly *very* positive and 'privileged' description, acted as a defence and soothed him against the more painful experiences he chose not to recall.

` **5.2.4.2 Resilience**

However, despite the difficult emotional experiences and the obstacles faced along the way, all five TEPs portrayed a sense of resilience through their trajectories of change. Elle used the metaphor of a moth to portray her resilience and acceptance that she may not yet be a butterfly but was 'good enough' in relation to her practice and as a professional. Gerber (2006) explained through an attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1964; Bowlby, 1969) lens, having a strong attachment figure supports the development of resilience and management of conflict. Furthermore, the individual, environmental and social factors most linked to one's resilience can also inform and promote secure attachment relationships (Gerber, 2006).

Moreover, Bretherton and Munholland (2008) explained the Bion (1969) concept of the internal working model, an internal representation system formed from previous experiences of relationships which allows one to imagine and predict interactions with others. If positive, one's internal working model can build a confident self-image and optimistic perception of one's surrounding environment which may help to form resilience in times of adversity and change (Bretherton & Munholland, 1999).

The writings of Gerber (2006) and Bretherton and Munholland (1999; 2008) felt relevant to the experiences of the TEPs who seemed to seek out a representation of an 'attachment figure' and used relationships with their supervisors, their cohorts and personal relationships in helping them to manage in times of challenge and painful learning over their development.

In addition, Bretherton & Munholland (2008) explained that internal working models change as children and adolescents develop, depending on their interactions with others, and is a crucial learning process for development and change. Again, this seems to mirror the experiences of the TEPs, who learned to manage situations of uncertainty and become more confident in their relationships with other EPs, schools and children and families.

This resilience may have also influenced the TEPs' ability to tolerate difficult power dynamics within their professional relationships. Each TEP discussed power imbalance in relation to those with whom they worked. Bianca seemed to accept this power imbalance given her perceived lower student status. However other TEPs, like Elle, opposed power imbalance and advocated for equality within the dynamic of her professional relationships. Elle highlighted that power imbalance can create a barrier to learning, which the researcher argues can hinder positive professional change.

From the same perspective, Schein (2009) explained that power imbalance within the supervisory relationship can create a sense of powerlessness and inferiority within the supervisee. In a sense, the relationship can become polarised as the supervisor may be

positioned as the expert, the knowledge holder, in comparison to the supervisee, seeking the knowledge held by the expert (Schein, 2009).

For some supervisees this can create a sense of inadequacy as it may highlight an area of themselves, they dislike or feel is not yet to a certain standard (Schein, 2009). This can lead the supervisee to taking a defended position within the supervisory space, which in turn may prevent learning and cause damage to the relationship (Schein, 2009). For Sam, it seems this dynamic may have been present in her own supervisory relationship. It was apparent that by having different views on practice to her supervisor created a barrier, and she seemed to find difficulty in trusting in their professional relationship.

5.2.5 Theory Links: Developing the EP Identity

Each TEP described their experiences of developing their EP identity. These changes encompassed the need to juggle multiple identities at once, including their personal, student and professional identity, all of which were continuously changing and interconnected. For Bianca, she spent some time considering where the boundary of one identity ended and another began and concluded that the trainee identity is a fusion of your student and professional self.

Alex described his juggling of multiple identities as wearing different hats, he also highlighted the anxiety this can cause and used the term ‘imposter syndrome’. Alex explained some TEPs on his course did not feel they were yet ‘good enough’ to be a

TEP or an EP, and thus seemed to feel their identities were fraudulent and they were imposters on the course.

This experience again reminded the researcher of adolescents as Priest (2016) explained that during adolescence, a young person will undergo attempts of developing their personal agency. New roles must be tried and rehearsed, however this can highlight an area of impotence and therefore, the adolescent may choose to reject this role or find themselves doubting their ability (Priest, 2016).

5.2.5.1 Relational Bonds

Di Stefano, Ruvolo, and Lo Mauro (2019) studied how psychology students developed their professional identity through group experiential learning. Like the view of Youell (2006) in section 5.2.3.1, Di Stefano et al. (2019) explained that students unconsciously submerge themselves into the emotional task of understanding their own membership and identity within a group. For TEPs, these groups may include placement teams and their cohort. Di Stefano et al. (2019) maintained students develop an awareness of the required criteria and skills to be part of a group and this influences the construction of one's identity and membership within it.

Moreover, Di Stefano et al. (2019) argued that a central factor to the development of this identity is one's relational bonds to groups. One may develop a relational bond to a group and wish to take on this group identity, thus they may change their thinking and behaviours in order to belong. Di Stefano et al. (2019) suggested that students can hold multiple identities across different groups, this may include in university, with

family, friends and in their training group. However, it is up to the student to manage how these different identities communicate, co-exist, or conflict with each other.

Like adolescents within their own social groups, how the students manage these different group memberships and identities may link back to their earlier life foundations of managing emotional attachments within relationships, one's internal working model (Di Stefano et al., 2019). Therefore, given these co-existing identities, the students may have to undertake emotional and complex task of understanding their own membership within each group and how or if they can co-exist together (Di Stefano et al., 2019). Alex's analogy of wearing different hats in training seems to highlight the complexity of holding different identities and changing memberships explained by Di Stefano et al. (2019).

5.2.6 Theory Links: Journey

It seemed TEPs explored their unique journeys of personal and professional change by discussing key learning experiences, endings and beginnings, gaining perspective and growth through reflection. TEPs explained having time to reflect on what they would do differently in practice helped them develop their knowledge and skills. Kennedy, Keaney, Shaldon and Canagaratnam (2018) explained that some of our best learning takes place after the task is complete and one has the space to discuss and reflect on the experience. Interestingly, all TEPs felt that through reflection of their journeys within the research interviews, they had grown to recognise how much they had changed, how much they learned and how far they had come.

Subsequently, the researcher came to realise that for the TEPs, having the space created within the interview replicated similarities to a containing supervisory space and this appeared to offer the TEPs an additional sense of security. The TEPs appeared to feel safe enough to delve deep into their experiences which contributed to their personal and professional change and could consider themselves as learners with vulnerabilities and difficulties, as well as strengths. As discussed in section 5.2.2, Klein (1975) would explain this as the movement between the paranoid-schizoid position to the depressive position, marked by the capacity to perceive and hold both the 'good' and 'bad' objects together, and tolerate unwanted feelings.

Other examples of this movement between the paranoid-schizoid to the depressive position may be seen in the subtheme of gaining perspective. For TEPs like Leila, Elle and Bianca, the process of gaining perspective seemed to link with challenging experiences. These events enabled the TEPs to change their perception and for some, encouraged them to look after their wellbeing by being kinder to oneself. Leila explained her experience of delivering training to teachers on staff wellbeing and coping with stress, this made her think about her own wellbeing and the need and desire to preserve it. Leila's example also seemed to evidence her wish to become her own container, who can soothe and manage intolerable emotions (Bion, 1961).

5.2.6.1 Endings

What is more, although the TEPs were clearly excited for their training to end, there was also a sense of ambivalence to this significant change. TEPs in their depressive position seemed to hold both good and bad views of their impending end of training

and their emerging unknown beginning. They were eager for the study and juggling of demands to end but there was also an apparent sense of loss.

For Elle, Alex and Bianca it was apparent that the additional responsibility and accountability that would be inherited as a qualified EP caused them some unease, and there seemed to be an underlying phantasy of holding onto the safety of being a TEP for just a while longer. For Bianca, this seemed to move her back into the position of the paranoid-schizoid when she brought up the possibility of being brought to court, and there was a sense of splitting between the TEP role (the safe and known) and the EP role (the frightening and unknown). Segal (2018) maintained that the depressive position never fully surpasses the paranoid-schizoid position and individuals at any time may oscillate between the two.

The TEPs' experiences of endings and beginnings may be explained by Salzberger-Wittenberg (2018), who maintained that endings and beginnings are closely related, as every new circumstance often requires one to let go of some of the benefits of one's previous situation. Salzberger-Wittenberg (2018) explained losing what is familiar and facing fear of the unknown can be unsettling; like the TEPs' anxiety of leaving behind their perceived TEP 'safety net' and moving on.

Salzberger-Wittenberg (2018) added these aspects of change and transition can evoke primitive anxieties that originate from our earliest experiences of entering into the world as an infant. Salzberger-Wittenberg (2018) explained that while beginning life outside of what is familiar holds potential promise of a more elevating existence, it is at the cost of the known and thus losing a sense of relative safety.

Overall, TEPs seemed excited about this change and what their 'new life' after training would offer them. There was a sense of entering into adulthood or 'leaving home', suggesting they may perhaps go through another transition of identity, similar to that of an adolescent when they begin to work or set off for university in their next phase of development.

Salzberger- Wittenberg (2018) explained that going to university or endeavouring in adult learning with like-minded people offers rich opportunities for developing relationships, knowledge and enjoying oneself, as well as being intellectually and emotionally challenged. This period of life is, at the same time, exciting and disturbing (Salzberger- Wittenberg, 2018). It can pose a threat to one's identity, both in developing it and becoming a member of a group (as discussed by Di Stefano et al., 2019) but also a threat of losing it again when the experience has come to an end.

5.2.7 Theory Links: Navigating the Course Impact on Personal Relationships

TEPs' experiences of change and sense of developing a new identity, whilst simultaneously holding onto one's pre-existing identity, was felt to influence the TEPs' personal relationships. The TEPs in this research shared both positive and challenging experiences of this. Alex felt that his training and development of knowledge had helped him to perceive situations differently and he valued his new-found psychologist identity and its influence on his relationship.

However, Sam, at times seemed to find her psychologist identity and knowledge intrusive within how she viewed the dynamics of her friendship groups and it was something from which she could not 'switch off'. Sam's experience may link with what was already mentioned by Salzberger- Wittenberg (2018), that being intellectually and emotionally challenged can be both exciting and disturbing and can pose a threat to one's identity and may influence one's relationships.

At times throughout the interviews, the researcher felt that the TEPs split the course into having either a 'good' impact or 'bad' impact on their personal relationships owing to various factors, such as having limited time, psychological knowledge and financial strain. Although most TEPs could rationalise both sides - the 'good and bad' influence on personal relationships, the examples felt emotional and at times sensitive. For example, Elle's account of how the financial strain influenced the dynamic between her boyfriend and her, which evoked a sense of sadness and sacrifice in the interview space.

Cilliers (2003) explained that rationalisation and intellectualisation can serve as a defence to protect against anxiety and pain by attempting to gain a sense of security, understanding and acceptance, which subsequently can help to distance oneself emotionally from a difficult situation. For Bianca, she tried to rationalise and articulate when it is acceptable and not acceptable to step into her EP role with her friends' children, and vice versa when her friends can overstep the boundary of asking her to 'assess' their child. Although Bianca attempted to rationalise this situation in a reasonable way, her description held a tone of irritation, suggesting this rationalisation

was not to her satisfaction and the professional change to her identity was perhaps unwelcomed in a personal setting.

5.2.8 Adolescent and TEP Development

It was suggested that both TEPs and adolescents undergo a similar trajectory of change. Both periods of growth hold experiences of confusion, development of identity, influence from groups and the need for containment. Both paths also seem to include the internalising and externalising of 'good' and 'bad' objects about the self and others and move the individual between the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position. It is apparent that both paths of development can offer pivotal learning experiences important for establishing a new career.

5.3 The Literature Review in Relation to the Findings

Boote and Beile (2005) explained that a thorough literature review can analyse and synthesise the literature base in a field of specialisation: it should highlight the foundations and inspiration for further useful research. The literature review of this study (chapter 2) analysed and reviewed each paper to discuss its aims, how the papers linked or differed, the strengths and limitations; and the common themes. Moreover, the literature review was further analysed to explore the degree to which papers shared TEPs' views while training and helped to consolidate the research question of this study.

The literature review brought to life interesting topics for discussion including supervision, learning theories and models, frameworks, assessments and implications

for the training of TEPs. Subsequently, it was apparent the reviewed literature put more emphasis on investigating and reviewing specific parts of training, in comparison to this research, which took a more holistic approach and based its emphasis on TEPs' experiences more broadly. However, despite this difference in approach, there were a handful of commonalities found between the pre-existing literature and the findings of this study, these will now be discussed.

5.3.1 Supervision and Relationships

It was apparent supervision was the most researched topic when it came to review the literature base on TEPs. This was also reflected in the papers chosen for this study, as five of the ten papers (Atkinson & Woods, 2007; Hill et al., 2015; Mills & Swift, 2015; Murray & Leadbetter, 2018; Woods et al., 2015) researched TEP supervision. Within this study, this was also an important topic of discussion and each TEP chose to discuss her or his supervisory experiences. The way in which the TEPs discussed their experiences of supervision seemed to emphasise the importance of relational factors and nurture, perhaps more so than the type of supervision model used which was the main point of focus for some papers, such as Atkinson and Woods (2007), Hill et al. (2015).

Murray and Leadbetter (2018) discussed in their study that TEPs emphasised the importance of the relationship with their VERP supervisor, for VERP to be successful for reviewing their peer supervision and consultation skills. Murray and Leadbetter (2018) also referenced the importance of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), conditions in modifying and enhancing a learning experience

through the support of another individual, thus showing acknowledgement to the central role of a 'learning relationship'.

Within VERP, the principles of attuned interactions are promoted and Murray and Leadbetter (2018) explained this can support TEPs to develop their relationships with others in practice, which holds relevance to this study, as participants discussed the importance of their relationships with others as part of developing their confidence and practice.

Woods et al. (2015) maintained that one of the important themes generated in their findings was the supervisor qualities and characteristics, which primarily linked to the relationship between supervisor and supervisee. Thus, it seems the literature shares this link with the findings of this study, as TEPs emphasised the importance of the supervisory relationships but also relationships on placement as important factors for their learning.

Mills and Swift (2015) carried out their study on peer supervision whilst they were TEPs and put emphasis on the importance of emotional wellbeing and relational factors within their paper (see section 2.4.3). Mills and Swift (2015, p.113) discussed the reassurance they felt from the sense of *"peerness"* within their peer group and how this often led to supervisory-like conversations.

This was also felt by the TEPs within this research, as Bianca, Alex and Leila spoke in detail about the importance of their cohort and the peer relations within it. It is suggested that the holistic emphasis given by Mills and Swift (2015) to the importance

of relationships and emotional wellbeing may be linked with the authors' trainee identity, given they were still emotionally connected to the experiences of training, like the TEPs in this study.

Hill et al. (2015) also discussed the emotional and motivational needs of TEPs as key areas of focus for supervision and highlighted how well the supervisor can cater for these needs will influence the TEPs' sense of trust in the supervisory relationship. This was also reflected in this study by the participant TEPs, particularly by Sam who seemed to lack this trust with her supervisor because she had to often argue her position and approach to practice.

5.3.1.2 Power Imbalance

It is suggested that Sam's experience links with the dynamic of power imbalance and in the literature, this dynamic is discussed by Hill et al. (2015), Mills and Swift (2015) and Woods et al. (2015). Mills and Swift (2015) cautioned of the barriers unequal power can create to TEP learning and cited Lombardo, Milne and Proctor (2009, p.212) who promoted the importance of the "*learning alliance*" which emphasises the need for non-judgemental, trusting, and respectful supervision.

Hill et al. (2015), Mills and Swift (2015) and Woods et al. (2015) considered how imbalanced power within relationships can be counterproductive to one's learning. This is in line with the findings of this study as section 4.3.2.2 details the influence of power imbalance on the participant TEPs. Within this study, there was a sense some TEPs felt strongly opposed to the power imbalance dynamic, yet they also seemed to

oscillate between this and wanting to be kept safe and protected; showing an example of the movement between the depressive and paranoid-schizoid position.

Considering the findings in relation to the literature, it is apparent there is a common barrier for successful supervision found within power imbalance. However, the extent of this barrier within TEP professional relationships may not be truly reflected in its significance within the literature base, as the TEPs in this study seemed to feel that this power dynamic played out in more relationships than just those of supervision, as Elle gave an example of managing this barrier with others more broadly.

5.3.2 Developing a Sense of Identity

Within this research, supervision was an important factor that contributed to the development of one's professional identity. For example, Bianca spoke positively about her experiences of supervision and how, within this space, her supervisor helped her to think about herself in relation to her strengths and within the role of an EP. In the reviewed literature, the link between supervision and identity was explained through various learning theories.

Mills and Swift (2015) offered the Johari window (Luft & Ingham, 1982) (see section 2.4.1) as a way of conceptualising one's self-awareness, development and 'unknown' and known competence. This linked with the TEPs in this study who reflected upon their experiences of developing self-awareness and how they experienced managing uncertainty. Leila explained that as her training progressed, she became much more comfortable with being uncertain. Leila's experience and Elle's metaphor of

transitioning into a moth (see section 4.3.2.1) also linked with the integrative developmental model (IDM) (Stolenberg & McNeill, 2010) explained by Hill et al. (2015) who acknowledged the process of change over time as part of professional development.

This IDM model (Stolenberg & McNeill, 2010) discussed by Hill et al. (2015) and the theory of experiential learning (Kolb, Boyatzis & Mainemelis, 2001) explained by both Mills and Swift (2015) and Squires and Dunsmuir (2011) emphasised the central role of learning through experiences. This was also an area addressed by the TEPs in this research. TEPs felt their experiences and relationships with other EPs, schools, parents, children and experience of receiving feedback were significantly linked to how confident they felt in their EP identity. The importance of learning through experiences and the process of change over time was also felt to link with the adolescence theoretical connections made in this study, such as the need for containment and the movement between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive position.

However, a noticeable difference between this study's findings and the literature was the intricacy of the TEPs' development of identity. TEPs within this research discussed in detail how they shifted between different identities and described their experiences of holding in mind these different identities. The management of this seemed to place a significant emotional and cognitive demand upon the TEPs, and it is argued by the researcher that this significant aspect of the TEP training experience does not seem adequately reflected within the reviewed literature.

5.3.3 The Course Syllabus

The reviewed papers offered an insight into the EP training syllabus and the different frameworks used within it. The papers reviewed TEPs' experiences of delivering CBT (Squires & Dunsmuir, 2011), using VERP (Murray & Leadbetter, 2018), working with 16 to 25-year olds (Atkinson et al., 2015), different learning and assessment frameworks such as online-problem based and enquiry based learning (Bozic & Williams, 2011) and objective structured professional assessments (Dunsmuir et al., 2017). However, within this study, TEPs did not put the same emphasis on the course syllabus when they described their experiences of training. Rather, TEPs talked about the syllabus in relation to what they found useful in practice and how they felt about their workload.

Evans et al. (2012) conducted an extensive review of the doctorate course structure and asked newly qualified EPs about their experiences as TEPs, what learning they felt was most valuable and what learning they felt was not implemented in their practice now qualified. The findings showed that whilst the participants had received teaching on research skills, a number of these participants were not using these research skills in practice. Research skills were also highlighted by Bianca, who queried whether the large research element of the EP training and the doctoral thesis was *really* necessary to becoming a good EP.

Evans et al. (2012) also found that participants reported they had not received training on group work, yet group work was a part of their EP practice. However, this contradicts what was described by both Elle and Sam who demonstrated their

knowledge of group theories and group dynamics. It is worth mentioning here that both Elle and Sam were from the same training provider, thus it may be that the findings from Evans et al. (2012) are not representative of the teaching syllabus across all training providers and may further highlight that there are some differences between the courses.

5.3.4 Overview of Literature Implication Links

In the reviewed literature, Atkinson et al. (2007) and Woods et al. (2015) explained the important implications of reviewing the supervisory relationship and the need for faculty staff and supervisors to understand how TEPs develop competence. Hill et al. (2015) also suggested supervisors should be aware of the changing needs of TEPs over the course of their development. These points seem to address the importance of relational connections and the developmental changes experienced by TEPs in this study.

Murray and Leadbetter (2018) also suggested that VERP could be beneficial in its use as a pedagogical tool for supporting TEP development in consultation and peer supervision skills, given its emphasis on strengths and attuned interactions between the trainee and supervisor. This also seems to allude to the importance of the supervisory relationship for learning.

The reviewed literatures' models and theories for supervision and VERP offered some helpful insight into the importance of the learning relationship. This seemed to influence the TEPs sense of identity and this linked with the experiences shared by the

participating TEPs in this study. However, beyond the topics of supervision and the use of VERP , which is argued to be a form of supervision in itself (see section 2.4.3), the implications from this research (detailed below in section 5.6) do not appear to have much direct overlap with the implications for practice found in the overall reviewed literature.

This is perhaps consequential to the purpose and aims of the studies reviewed, which explored and investigated specific parts of training, whereas this research took a much broader approach. In comparison to the overall reviewed literature, it is suggested this study's psychosocial approach has offered more breadth of information on TEP training experiences which influenced their sense of development and learning.

This study has also facilitated the researcher to make theoretical connections to the data which arguably goes deeper and beyond the spoken word. The value added from this approach is perhaps most evident through its rich perspective of illustrating the developmental trajectory and holistic element of the TEP behind the professional self, which is be argued to be somewhat lacking within the overall reviewed literature.

5.4 Strengths & Limitations

This study was the first of its kind known to research and apply a psychosocial lens to TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change throughout their training. This study's methodological approach and research question allowed for the exploration of the interconnected inner psychological, and wider social factors that influence one's experience of change over their training.

The FANI interview allowed for free associations and important narratives to emerge and enabled the researcher to elicit not only the explicit semantic content of the interviews, but also what might underpin it, supported by the researcher's reflexive fieldnotes. Conducting both an initial and a follow up interview, created more reflection time for both the researcher and participant, thus, allowing them to return to any additional thoughts following the first interview and build on any experiences discussed previously, as suggested by Hollway and Jefferson (2013).

The second interview also allowed the researcher to think critically about arising hypotheses to the data. This interview process helped to develop a rich sense of each participant and their experiences. The follow up interviews allowed time for the participants to 'get to know' the researcher and subsequently, perhaps feel more familiar with the research process.

The researcher felt her own position as a TEP played an important factor in the interview dynamics with the participants. Participants commented that they found this shared TEP identity comforting, and it was assumed in some respects, that the researcher would perhaps understand their experiences to a deeper level. All participants commented on the interview process as enjoyable. Bianca, Elle and Leila found the interview process particularly uplifting given they were coming to the end of their training and it offered them a reflective space.

A potential limitation of this study lies with the timing of the interviews. It was mentioned by Bianca that it would be interesting to see if what she shared would have

been different if interviewed at a less poignant time in her training. It could be speculated that the participating TEPs may not have felt the same way or shared the same content if interviewed at a different time in training, therefore, this may be an interesting point to consider for future research with TEPs.

In addition, the limited biographical diversity within the participant sample may also pose as a limitation. All participants identified as white, English, either 28 or 31 years of age, were in relationships, and apart from one, no participant identified as religious, see appendix 8. This research did not set out to identify such a homogenous group, it is queried that perhaps the homogeneity amongst the participant sample reflects the population of those who predominantly undertake the EP training within the SEEL consortium. In the same vein, it is suggested by the researcher that most EPs and TEPs are female, this may reflect why Alex was the only male participant in the sample. However, it is not possible to make such claims with certainty, given the small sample size of five.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that the research findings do not claim generalisability and do not represent the personal and professional change experiences for all TEPs in the SEEL consortium. Rather this research presents the personal and professional change experiences of a group of TEPs who all have unique experience of training yet share some commonalities. The participants came from four out of the five training provider settings, no TEP came forward from one of the training providers, thus the impact this may have had on the data set is unknown.

In addition, the researcher knew two of the five participants prior to the research. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that for these two participants, Alex and Leila, the pre-existing relationship with the researcher did not potentially influence what they chose to share in the interviews, see participants' PEN portraits, appendices 18 and 21 for more information on these relationships.

5.5 Dissemination of Findings

As promised to the participants, the researcher will email each participant a summary of the findings including a synopsis of each theme and interview extracts once the research has been completed. The researcher will also detail the prospective implications of these findings and will once again send thanks to the participants for their participation. The findings of this study will also be shared with the researcher's local Educational Psychology Service, where several EPs work as tutors on training provider courses. A summary of the findings and a synopsis of each theme and interview extracts will also be shared with the TEP associates of the AEP.

5.6 The Implications

In relation to the research question:

How do TEPs' describe their experiences of personal and professional change over the doctorate training programme?

The research findings shared a breadth of contributing factors that TEPs described influenced their trajectory of development and change, both personally and professionally. It seemed they described these changes as latent and although there

were commonalities across the TEPs, it was apparent that these were unique and personal to each participant. It is suggested that the findings of this study are informative and hold relevance for those wishing to undertake the EP training, including teachers, teaching assistants and assistant EPs.

From a broader perspective, this research has come at a time of national EP shortage. To combat this shortage and to support with the significant increase of Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) requests nationally, the DfE (2019a) have pledged to support more than six hundred TEPs with free tuition and grants worth a total of £31.6 million. Therefore, given the large government investment to EP training and increase of TEPs in training, it seems pertinent perhaps now more than ever, to have up-to-date and relevant literature on TEPs and their experiences whilst training, for those wishing to be informed.

5.6.1 The Learning Relationship

In terms of the EP profession, this study holds relevance for its professional training providers as it offers an in-depth insight into a collection of personal and professional change experiences, which may help to inform the support offered to TEPs. From review of the reflexive fieldnotes and data gathered at the interview, the researcher suggests that each of the themes (nurture and containment; challenges and painful learning; developing EP identity; navigating course impact on personal relationships and journey) arose from the desire for connection and relationships.

It was apparent that for learning and personal development, TEPs highly valued the relational features behind the learning and training such as relationships with course tutors, peers, supervisors and relationships on placement. This is an interesting point to highlight, as it seems beyond the discussion of supervision, this is not sufficiently addressed in the reviewed literature base.

What is more, given these research findings, the researcher suggests that organisations such as training providers and local authority placements can support TEPs by offering further consideration to the importance of the learning relationship in training and assessment. Youell (2006) maintained the psychoanalytic model of a learning relationship is based on learning from experience, and the relationship between the caregiver and child facilitates and sustains interest and curiosity. Although TEPs are undergoing training as adult learners, like children and adolescents is it apparent they too desire these relationships.

The importance of the learning relationship has been maintained by Tzuriel (2000) in his educational and intervention perspective and by Vygotsky (1978) in his learning theory of the ZPD, who's principles were also acknowledged in the reviewed literature by Murray and Leadbetter (2018). Both psychologists emphasised the importance of human connection to enable a learner to achieve more.

Therefore, given the apparent importance of the learning relationship and from reviewing the themes, the reflexive fieldnotes and the psychosocial principles of Hollway and Jefferson (2012; 2013), the following reflective questions have been

compiled. It is hoped that these may enable reflection on the learning relationship for those supporting TEP learning:

- How do I relate to these TEPs? And how do they relate to me?
- What experiences of TEP personal and professional change have I facilitated and how?
- How do I recognise power imbalance? How do I manage it?
- How have I influenced TEPs learning experiences? How do I want to influence their experiences?
- What do I want them to remember about me as a teaching/supporting professional?

5.7 Prospects for Future Research

This study researched TEP experiences within one consortium, therefore, future research on the topic may wish to take a broader nationwide approach, branching out to other courses in the UK, including Wales and Northern Ireland. Furthermore, given the unintentional homogeneity of the participant group, this may provoke an interest into the study of the experiences of different gender and ethnic groups within the EP training courses.

Moreover, the timing of the research seemed to perhaps influence how the TEPs viewed their training, given it was coming to an end. Therefore, future research may choose to investigate TEPs' experiences within other years of the training. Also, elements of this study's findings such as the financial strain of training and managing stress and workload, seemed to be significant factors to how the TEPs in this study felt about their

training, thus it may be worthwhile for future projects to further explore these specific areas.

5.8 The Conclusion

This research sought to answer the following question:

How do TEPs' describe their experiences of personal and professional change over their doctorate training?

The research aimed to:

- Provide an insight into TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctorate training. This aim was met through exploring the psychosocial experiences of five final year TEPs, with the generation of five connected themes (nurture and containment; developing EP identity; navigating the course impact on personal relationships; journey and challenges and painful learning) and the application of psychoanalytic theory to show links with adolescence.
- Enable training providers with a greater knowledge of TEPs' personal and professional change experiences whilst training, which may influence how they support TEPs. This aim was met through the application of the psychosocial lens, the generation of themes (nurture and containment; developing EP identity; navigating the course impact on personal relationships; journey and challenges and painful learning) and through offering reflective questions on the learning relationship for the consideration of those supporting TEPs.
- Add knowledge of TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change over their doctoral training to the EP literature base. This aim was met as this

research is the first known to have studied TEPs' psychosocial experiences of personal and professional change, offering new knowledge of these experiences and the importance of the TEP learning relationship to the current literature base.

- Inform those who wish to apply for the doctoral training by offering an insight into TEPs' experiences over their training. This aim was met through the application of the psychosocial lens, the generation of themes (nurture and containment; developing EP identity; navigating the course impact on personal relationships; journey and challenges and painful learning) and through offering the visual representation to illustrate the TEPs trajectory of change and development.
- Offer insight to TEPs' experiences of personal and professional change by applying a psychosocial lens. This aim was met as the psychosocial lens allowed the researcher to draw upon the intersubjectivity of the participant and researcher relationship to create a visual representation of the TEPs trajectory of change. The psychosocial lens also facilitated the application of psychoanalytic theory to adolescence and supported the researcher to highlight the importance of the learning relationship.

This research endeavoured to develop a distinctive, holistic understanding of TEPs' experiences of training and how it has changed them, both personally and professionally. Considering this, this research has highlighted the various complex factors and multi-faceted dynamics which may influence experiences of self-change over the TEPs training.

Moreover, through exploring the TEPs developmental links with adolescence, it is suggested this research has offered an alternative lens to how we view the experience of training, learning, and changes in confidence and identity. Lastly, in chapter one, the researcher mentions that the BPS (2019) recognised the importance of EPs undertaking a position of life-long learning and it is suggested this research has explored a pivotal chapter in this learning: the beginning of the EP journey, the training.

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