# A systematic review and metasynthesis of qualitative research into teacher's authenticity

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Teacher authenticity is a topic of emerging interest in the field of education. This paper systematically reviews existing qualitative research on the subject of teachers' authenticity from the perspective of teachers and students. The findings from twelve studies are subject to a metasynthesis. Results show that the authentic teacher is conceptualised as congruent, caring, open to encounters and critically conscious. The conditions that foster teacher authenticity are social belonging, self-organising school systems, intentional critical consciousnesses, and intrinsic (caring) motivation. These are contrasted with the perceived inhibitors of authenticity: alienation, systemic control, and Kafkaesque approach. Implications and recommendations for further research are proposed.

Keywords: authentic teacher; systemic control; qualitative metasynthesis.

**Introduction**

In recent years there has been growing interest in the topic of authenticity in the teaching profession. Authenticity is generally conceptualised as a desirable state of a person, organisation, or institution, in which there is a striving for truth, genuineness, and transparency. Alongside the development of research interest in authenticity many changes have taken place in the teaching profession. Broadly speaking, educational policy reforms in a globalised educational market, seem to reflect the progressive move of purposes of education towards a greater alignment with neoliberal and capitalist values (Amsler, 2013; Ball, 2016; 2018a,b; Boltodano, 2012; Hirtt, 2004; Jessop, 2018; Mok & Tan, 2004; Raduntz, 2005; Slaughter & Leslie, 2001). Educational institutions are tasked with developing 'human capital' (Burgess, 2016; Jessop, 2018) to adapt to the needs of 'knowledge economy' and strengthen country's competitiveness (Ab Kadir, 2016; Hirtt, 2004, Mok & Tan, 2004). Marketization of education and trends towards 'academic capitalism' seem to shape the contemporary educational environments (Jessop, 2018; Sigahi & Saltorato, 2019; Slaughter & Leslie, 2001, Wilkins, 2011) and the ideals of performativity while resisted and critiqued (Ball, 2003; 2016; Jeffrey & Troman, 2012; Lasky, 2005; Tang, 2011) gradually become normalised and integrated into teacher's professional role (Frostenson & Englund, 2020; Holloway, 2019; Lewis & Holloway, 2019; Wilkins, 2011). Understanding the profession of teaching in this way it is perhaps not surprising that the topic of authenticity has become of interest as it seems to offer a counter narrative and vision of what the purpose of education can be.

For the individual teacher the standardisation-accountability-outcome culture might increase competitiveness, stress and alienation (Ball, 2003; Katsuno, 2010). Such potentialities have led some to argue that what is needed is 'resilient' and 'quality' teachers to cope with increases of occupational stressors, systemic pressures, reforms and regulations

(Day & Smethem, 2009; Flores, 2019).  But the methods might thwart teacher's innate creativity and expressiveness or their willingness for originality and novelty in methods (Ball, 2003) or castrate it by severing its connection to the pursuit of truth (Munday, 2014). Teaching is a profession which haemorrhages its workers.

The latest Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) report published by Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) based on the data from the 15,000 schools in 48 countries validates the concerns over teachers' recruitment and retention (OECD, 2018).  TALIS recommended policy pointers towards improvement of financial incentives and working conditions for teachers as means of sustaining and increasing teachers' motivation (OECD, 2018). Consequently, 'harvesting' teachers' motivation manifests itself in the governmental strategies in countries like the United Kingdom (DfE, 2019) where novice teacher attrition rates reach up to 50% in the first 5 years (den Brok, Wubbels & van Tartwijk, 2017). Such strategies include financial incentives in the form of training bursaries and retention payments aligned with the ideology of economic growth as a pathway to higher levels of motivation and wellbeing (DfE, 2019).

While the capitalist tendencies have been largely accepted as the only reality a growing body of researchers strive to expose the contradictions between the surface appearance of education as 'public good' and its underlying processes that reproduce existing and contribute to new problems in society (Amsler, 2013; Ball, 2018b; Baltodano, 2012; Blum & Ullman, 2012; Castrellón, Rivarola & López, 2017; Davies & Bansel, 2007; Hirtt, 2004; Nieto, 2005). This seems to be reflected in the dissonance between teacher training content, personal values and the contemporary educational realities where the formation of teachers' identity occurs in the space of contradictions (Anspal, Leijen & Löfström, 2018). It is our understanding that the discourse of teachers' authenticity that emerged in the last 20 years can be viewed as an implicit resistance towards existing incongruities that contribute to

diminishing intrinsic motivation of teachers. Although the theoretical foundations underpinning the existing research on teacher authenticity lack consistency the research reported on in this metasynthesis seem to broadly agree that: (a) being an authentic teacher contributes positively to teachers' motivation; and (b) that the socio-environmental conditions play an important part in the development of teacher authenticity.

In this review of published qualitative studies, we are interested in understanding how teachers' authenticity is conceptualized, and how the development of teachers' authenticity is facilitated or inhibited in the context of psycho-socio-environmental conditions. The only previous review of the literature on conceptions of authenticity in teaching was conducted by Kreber et al (2007) and it concentrated broadly on the existing theories and philosophies, rather than empirical research which at that stage was sparse. The first peer reviewed empirical studies on this specific subject was only conducted a few years prior (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004a, b). Since then, the majority of studies have been conducted in the context of adult/higher education and they were concerned with the teachers' perceptions (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a, b; Cranton, 2010; Kreber et al, 2010; Ramezanzadeh et al, 2016a, b; Ramezanzadeh, 2017; Rappel, 2015) with the exception of studies by Kreber et al (2010) and Kreber and Klampfleitner (2013) where data came from both teachers and students. While the qualitative study by De Bruyckere and Kirschner (2016) and quantitative studies of De Bruyckere and Kirschner (2017) and Johnson and LaBelle (2017) in the context of secondary education focused purely on the students' perspective. The only found study in the context of primary school was a qualitative dissertation by Akoury (2013). Whereas Rabin (2013) study explores the views of preservice teachers training to work with children and young people.

**Method**

Qualitative research metasynthesis, involves 'rigorous qualitative methods to synthesize existing qualitative studies to construct greater meaning through an interpretative process'

(Erwin et al, 2011, p. 186) and are not concerned with offering or forming a new theory. It is recognised as a positivist approach in its endeavour to identify overlapping themes and offer tentative generalisations (Finfgeld-Connett, 2010; Finlayson & Dixon, 2008). Metasynthesis is also considered a beneficial method for 'maximising knowledge production' as well as evaluative strategy in identifying reliable and valid studies (Wimpenny & Savin-Baden, 2013). Saini and Shlonsky (2012) suggest that another function of systematic reviews is to reduce the bias of traditional literature reviews by offering a transparent synthesis of the existing studies relevant to a specific question(s).

This study analyzed the findings of peer-reviewed published qualitative research carried out by multiple researchers on the topic of (a) *implicit* conceptualisations on teachers' authenticity and (b) conditions that contribute or inhibit authentic teacher's development. The aggregative approach was implemented with the aim of facilitating the process of creating the common themes across the studies by means of using predetermined research questions (Saini & Shlonsky, 2012). The literature covers the articles from compulsory to tertiary education in various regions and cultural context. The reasons for it are twofold; firstly, the research on the topic is scarce and secondly, presenting a broad range of sources offers a broad overview of the conceptualisations of teacher's authenticity in empirical studies.

**Selecting the studies**

As this is a first systematic review of empirical research on the subject of teachers' authenticity the studies from all years have been included. We have searched EBSCO (and ERIC), PROQUEST, SAGE journals and Taylor & Francis databases. The search was set to search the abstract and title of the journals. The search terms were identified following an initial much broader literature search and the final version included following terms and Boolean operators: ('Authentic Teacher' OR 'Teacher Authenticity' OR 'Authenticity in Teaching') AND ('qualitative OR interview OR autoethnography'). As we were concerned

with the emerging conceptualisations of the phenomena of teachers' authenticity in qualitative studies the possible alternatives like 'congruence' or 'genuineness' or other descriptions of identity/characteristics were not considered.

The initial search identified 86 studies and the process of selection is described below. Following the search of each database, a list of identified journals has been sent to reference management software, EndNote. After removing the duplicates 52 journals were left for the abstracts to be read to determine the studies relevance. This resulted in 13 studies to be read in full including the investigation of the reference lists. The reference lists brought to attention further 21 studies of which 5 studies were to be read in full. At this stage 8 articles known prior to the search were also to be read in full.

<insert Figure 1. The process of selection articles relevant to the project. Here>

Following the examination of 22 articles, 8 articles did not meet criteria and 2 further articles were excluded as they were applicable to the same sample as a study already included and both the research questions and findings did not present significant differences to warrant inclusion as distinct studies. Figure 1 represents the process which resulted in the final N=12 articles to be included in the review. The criteria used to determine which articles were to be included /excluded was adapted from Wimpenny and Savin-Baden (2013):

<insert Table 1. Here>

**Quality rating**

The studies included implemented a range of qualitative research methods. The most popular methodological choice appeared to be grounded theory (n=4) followed by studies of

phenomenological nature (n=3), narrative inquiry (n=2) and one life history project. There were also n=3 studies that did not specify their methodological orientation and in turn their focus was to methods used including in-depth interviews (n=2) and repertory grids interviews (n=1). All of the studies in this review implemented interviews as their primary research instrument. Other methods included focus groups, observations, field notes and general meetings.

For each study that has met the inclusion criteria, the Quality Checklist has been completed. This was informed by the approach to evaluation of qualitative evidence in metasynthesis in the field of psychotherapy (Murphy et al, 2018). The quality checklist used is the adapted version of Saini & Shlonsky (2012) 'Qualitative Research Quality Checklist'. The adapted checklist comprised of 19 items in the following sections: qualitative framework (3 items), study design (1 item), sampling procedures (2 items), data collection (3 items), ethical issues (1 item), reflexivity of the researcher ( 3 items) data analysis (2 items) , findings (3 items). Using a three-point system for each item addressed yes=2, unclear=1 and no=0; with the range of quality scoring between 0 to 38. A completed Quality Checklist has been submitted to the journal in a supplementary file for the review.


<insert Table 2 as a supplementary file here>

**Data analysis**

One of the researchers initially reviewed all 12 papers and collected detailed information about the findings as reported by the original researchers into the table (see Table 3). Qualitative analysis software MAXQDA was used as all the papers could be uploaded and coded in one place. The initial coding involved locating themes/subthemes as reported in the original studies and then grouping those codes thematically. This resulted in the emergence of overarching themes and a number of subthemes in response to each question. Then each paper was read and coded again using the overarching themes and subthemes from the collective to identify any commonalities and differences and reveal the shared features and content.

The number of subthemes was reduced using the option of creative coding in MAXQDA where the similar subthemes were merged together. To enhance the knowledge production the feature of 'code cloud' was used to visualise the frequency of the codes within the overarching themes and subthemes and the connections between them.

In response to the 1st question the process of analysis led to the identification of four intertwined overarching themes and fourteen subthemes which can be viewed in the Table 3.


<Insert Table 3. Here>.


To answer the 2nd research question the same process was implemented, the themes were abstracted, and subthemes grouped and when appropriate regrouped using the

function of creative coding in MAXQDA. This has yielded four overarching themes and 24 subthemes (see Table 4).

<insert Table 4. Here>

## Results

The reports from a total sample $N= 221$ participants included in this meta-synthesis consisted of teachers (T$N$=133) and students (S$N$=88). The 12 published studies reported on 11 independent samples. The overview of the results can be viewed in the Table 5. Two studies by Carusetta and Cranton (2005b) and Cranton and Carusetta (2004a) were drawn from the same samples. Studies by Kreber (2009) and Kreber et al (2010) are drawn from one sample of teachers but not students. Average sample size was N=20 and ranged from 6 to 46.

The quality of the studies was in the range from 10 to 31 with the mean of 22.07 (59% out of 100%). The frameworks for quality assessments of qualitative evidence do not seem to be yet a standard in metasynthesis in the field of education. To compare the results qualitative metasynthesis by Murphy et al (2018) using framework by Spencer et al (2003) report range from 29 to 45 (potential range 18 to 54) and 36.62 (52% out of 100%) average mean.

<insert Table 5. Here>

### *Authentic Teacher*

While this synthesis offers a set of overarching themes in response to the first question that are consistent across all of the discussed studies there are some differences between the conceptualisations of some of these constructs. The themes are presented in Table 4

and consist of being *congruent, caring, open to encounters and critically conscious*. These are followed by four polarised overarching themes in response to the second research question (Table 5): *'Social Belonging/Alienation', 'Self-organising School Systems/Systemic Control', 'Intentional Critical Consciousness/Kafkaesque Clerk (Approach)' and 'Intrinsic (Caring) Motivation/ Kafkaesque Clerk (Approach) w*hich are discussed below. These are closely intertwined, and the process of synthesis aims to encapsulate those relationships.

*Congruent*

The next first theme in the conceptualisations of teachers' authenticity, *'congruence'* constitutes of four subthemes: *self-knowing, being genuine, defined by one-self* and *taking responsibility for one's actions*.  This was the most prominent theme in all of the examined papers. All of the presented teachers' accounts suggest that *self-knowing* is an essential step towards becoming authentic as it fosters the genuine way of being. It could be viewed as paradoxical to be genuinely oneself when not pursuing the knowledge of who the self is. However, the conceptualisation of what it means to be oneself as a teacher has been viewed from different theoretical orientations, including existentialism (Cranton 2010; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a, b; Kreber, 2009; Ramezanzadeh et al, 2016a, b; Rappel, 2015), humanism (Rabin, 2013), and communitarianism (Kreber, 2009, Ramezanzadeh et al, 2016a,b; Rappel, 2015).

*Caring*

The next theme that characterises an authentic teacher is *'Caring'*; consisting of three subthemes: *caring for the subject*, *caring for students* and *caring for oneself*. Caring appears to be a perceptible manifestation of authenticity. Care for the subject reflects not only the passion and individual interests and pursuits of a teacher (De Bruyckere &

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Kirschner, 2016; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b; Kreber, 2009) but their commitment to inspire others and deliver the subject in a way that is meaningful to students (De Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2016; Rabin, 2013). In fact, this multifaceted subtheme also refers to caring for the subjects that reflect the passions and interest of students. Being authentic as a teacher involved sharing sometimes personal connection to subject matter and being explicit about how it can be integrated in the wider context (Kreber, 2010; Rabin, 2013). While *caring for the subject* appears to be often simultaneous with *caring for the students* the distinction has been made as it appears possible not to experience the connection with the students while being passionate about the subject and vice versa.

*Open to encounters*
The nature of relationship between a teacher and a student was explored to various degrees by the all of the researchers in attempt to conceptualise its connection to being an authentic teacher. *Meaningful dialogic encounters* were presented as representative of authentic relationship, having a transformative potential for both teachers and students. The meaningful dialogue was characterised as open, where the teachers could simultaneously reveal the subject and relevant parts of themselves (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b; De Bruyckere & Kirschner; Kreber, 2009; Kreber et al, 2010; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015; Ramezanzadeh, 2016a). This form of encounter, where the teacher was received as genuine was seen as an invitation to a dialogue for students who could also freely debate their own ideas, experiences and meaning making processes.

However, there were some discrepancies around the concept of openness and sharing and the 'appropriateness' was debated. Studies involving student participants were explicitly reinforcing the idea that sharing oneself as a teacher is not equivalent to

full disclosure but has to be framed in the subtheme of caring for the subject and the student (De Bruyckere & Kirschner; Kreber et al, 2010). For some, the openness to encounters extended to relationships with colleagues and other staff members (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005) and this overlaps with the subtheme of *'collaboration'*. Authentic teachers seem to be orientated towards *collaboration,* creating communities of practice where the teachers can share and 'strengthen bonds' between one another (Rappel, 2015), and create non-judgemental networks of support and spaces for reflection (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005).

*Social belonging/ alienation*
*'Social belonging'* contrasted with *'Alienation'* captures the essence of feeling accepted and valued by the learning community and has been most evident in the findings of Cranton and Carusetta (2005a, b), Rabin (2013), Rappel (2015) and Ramezanzadeh (2017). This theme splits into three polarised subthemes: *shared values/ vailed values, validation/de-validation, webs of support/competitive exclusion.* While 'social belonging' is perceived as facilitative for the development of authenticity, '*alienation*' is seen as contributing to psychological distress and inauthenticity. Experiencing *'alienation'* offers justification for self-centred approaches discussed earlier.

Cranton and Carusetta (2004b), Carusetta and Cranton (2005a, b) and Cranton (2010) suggest that the sense of belonging to a learning community develops when teachers and students can recognise themselves as valuable members and feel accepted as individuals. *Validation* from the learning community is expressed through recognition of teacher's actions, opinions, thoughts or feelings as valuable: Kreber (2009) expands that openness from students might be also a facilitative factor. Authenticity appears to be nourished where teacher's efforts as well as struggles are recognized and appreciated. The experience of *de-validation* occurs when teachers

report feeling discriminated, judged, unappreciated or when their voices are neglected (Ramezanzadeh et al, 2016a; Rappel, 2015).

Once the teachers feel recognised as persons, they are more likely to debate their values and beliefs about education; only then the *'shared values'* might be identified and differences acknowledged (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a, b). When the existing social/school system does not accommodate the time and space for such encounters the values are likely to remain veiled and unexamined. *Veiled values* signify the separation of individuals within the community, where the assumptions and common truths might prevent the teachers from experiencing themselves and each other as authentic. For instance, wanting quality education might be a common truth that underpins motivations of teachers and students, but without learning what it might mean to an individual there is a potential for contradictions or resentment.

The *web of support* is a subtheme describing a space where teachers are feeling connected to the community that offers a safe but stimulating space for voicing ideas, challenges or dilemmas. The need for spaces characterised by informal and supportive atmosphere can facilitate collective growth (Rappel, 2015) as well as individual flourishing (Cranton, 2010).

The polarising subtheme is expressed as a *competitive exclusion,* this term is lifted from natural sciences; it describes condition where the two sympatric species compete for exactly the same resources and for that reason cannot exist in a stable equilibrium (Amir,1981). This seems to depict the relationships in the educational environments where teachers feel pressured to compete for resources and recognition (Rappel, 2015). *Competitive exclusion* might contribute to fragmented or hostile

relations between the staff as well as students and prevents collaborative practice (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Rabin, 2013).

*Critically conscious*

This leads to the next theme of becoming *critically conscious*; a binding theme that fuses the conceptualisations of teachers' authenticity together. Regardless of theoretical orientation all the researchers appear to have come to the conclusion that being a critically reflective practitioner is at the core of becoming an authentic teacher. This theme will be discussed in light of three subthemes: *reflective self-awareness, search for meaning and contestation*.

      *Reflective self-awareness* should not be considered in isolation to awareness of others and the context – but as we process the experiential world through the medium of oneself the perception of everyone/everything happens in the space for self-awareness. While *reflective self-awareness* was addressed by all of the researchers that worked with teachers as participants, its significance and depth appears to be varied. Examining one's methods of teaching, negotiating the subjects, being aware of one's own passions, defining one's identity as a teacher seemed to all be related to being self-aware and authentic.  For some it reaches to the depth of the human core within the individual, where the person examines their own values, beliefs and experiences while intentionally contrasting them with those of others with openness for change (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Rabin, 2013). *Reflective self-awareness* can be considered as a method of gaining self-knowledge and knowing yourself was strongly associated by all of the teachers in the studies with being authentic.

      There was a clear emphasis on teaching as a meaningful occupation, where one's purpose is somehow linked to being a teacher (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b).

Researchers referred to meaningful: relationships (Carusetta & Cranton 2005a; Cranton, 2010) learning (Rabin, 2013), communication (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b), encounters (Rabin, 2013) subject matter (De Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2016), horizons of significance (Kreber, 2009). In addition, Ramezanzadeh et al (2016b) suggests that s*earch for meaning* extends beyond one's role of a teacher and reflects on our purpose of human life and our place in the world.

*Contestation* in this synthesis is a subtheme that describes not only the ability to challenge the system or oneself as explored by Kreber et al (2010) and Ramezanzadeh et al (2016a; b) but also inhabitation of a state 'in disagreement'. As recognised by many of the teachers and researchers challenging the system is not always a viable option for the fear of losing their job (Rappel, 2015) or the efforts to do so might be perceived as futile. In such cases *contestation* refers to a choice of staying 'in disagreement' rather than intrinsically accepting what is and becoming compliant (Ramezanzadeh, 2017). As discussed in the response to the second question the compliance inhibits teacher's ability to recognise potentialities when they do appear. Contestation can be viewed in the light of exercising of the personal power – realising and accepting one's drive for change and finding their own direction which in turn can facilitate the process of becoming *critically conscious*.

*Intentional critical consciousness's/ Kafkaesque clerk approach*
*'Intentional critical consciousness'* was among the personal conditions fostering authenticity and all of the researchers have found that *awareness of complexities* enables teachers to *act intentionally* in response to ever changing realities. Being critical of the contextual influences (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Ramezanzadeh, 2017), institutional norms and expectations (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b), uniqueness of the students (De Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2016; Ramezanzadeh, 2016a) or power dynamics

(Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b; Kreber, 2009; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015) has to be considered collectively to consequentially act with intention. Teachers are *acting intentionally* when they adapt and develop pedagogies for complexity, where the learning is situated in a context relevant to students as individuals as well as a collective. It seems that to understand what is relevant to students authentic teachers remain *open to encounters,* where the authentic motivations of students can be recognised; those beyond the traditional motives like certification.

      *Commitment to critical self-reflection* received less attention as a condition to becoming authentic. Rappel (2015) concentrated her critical attention on the issue that appears external to the teachers; this implies that if the context was to change teachers would be able to be more authentic. Perhaps the context plays a role in assigning value to such reflection; for instance, the communitarian cultural atmosphere acknowledged by researchers in the studies by Ramezanzadeh might somehow inhibit the tendency for self-reflection; conceptualising it as a self-indulgent act or self-centredness. Studies by Kreber (2009) and Kreber et al (2010), while referring to knowing and being oneself do not expand beyond the 'identity as it is' and while integrating self-identity with a teacher-identity there is no observable attempt of deconstruction and questioning of 'identity as it is'.

      *Commitment to critical-self reflection* encapsulates the process of intentional deconstruction of a person's becoming and recognizing other pathways that while not travelled, are considered as just as viable.  Understanding of how our identity, values, beliefs, fears and hopes are constructed is a source of self-knowledge. This form of self-reflection begins to be explored in papers by Cranton & Carusatta (2004b), Carusetta & Cranton (2005) and Rabin (2013).

The polarized theme *'Kafkaesque Clerk Approach'* is a continuation of the theme discussed earlier and encapsulates personal conditions perceived as inhibiting the development of authenticity. The subthemes include *reductive simplification* that refers to the process of fragmentation of self (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b), knowledge (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005) or labour (Kreber, 2009) in order to arrive at prescriptive pedagogy that relieves the individual from responsibility of self-direction (Rabin, 2013). Where *'compulsory reflectiveness'* compliments the process of fragmentation by considering only some aspects of teaching practice that either further withdraw the responsibility from the teacher or reassure his self-concept (Cranmer, 2010). For instance, teachers might be reflecting on the 'disengaged learners' as an issue rather than their own repetitive or teacher-centred practices as noted by students in De Bruyckere and Kirschner (2016).

The outcome of engaging with the processes of fragmentation and what might be considered as a superficial reflectiveness leads to the third subtheme of *prescriptive reacting*. This appears to be evident in the case of inexperienced teachers that struggle to trust in their own becoming and might initially rely on authoritarian approaches (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b; Cranton, 2010).

*Self-organising systems/ Systemic control*
The 'Self-Organising Systems/Systemic Control' is the theme harvested in response to the second research question of environmental factors facilitating or inhibiting teacher's authenticity. This theme splits into fours subthemes: *collaborative approach/ dominance hierarchy, systemic fluidity/ rigidness & fragmentation, daring culture/fear culture.* Environment seems to play an important role in exercising personal power and being authentic, with collaborative and flexible systems being recognised as conducive

and rigid and hierarchical as preventive (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Cranton, 2010; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004b; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015).

*Collaborative approach*

While not explicitly defined as collaboration all of the researchers seem to agree that dialogic encounters facilitate the development of authenticity and promote the transformative learning environments. Carusetta and Cranton's (2005a) study evidenced the potential of collaborative learning and organising in creating a self-organising educational system that evolves together with its individual members. This view appears to be supported by Rappel (2015) that advocates for the opportunities for teachers to work together; including peer mentoring, formation of communities of practice and forums where the experiences and knowledge can be shared. Both Cranton (2010) and Rappel (2015) suggest that creating collaborations and staff-unions might be a step towards challenging the educational systems that inhibit authentic pedagogies.

This subtheme overlaps with the previously discussed sub-theme of *meaningful dialogic encounters* identified as characteristic of authentic teachers. Therefore, open channels of communication might be viewed as the core of collaborative practice, where the ideas and knowledge claims can be questioned and deliberated (Kreber, 2009). For Cranton and Carusetta (2004a, b) and Carusetta and Cranton (2005a, b) this approach requires the intentional relinquishing of the power from the one that is recognised as authority and inhabiting the role of a facilitator and a learner within the community.

Sub-theme of *collaborative approach* is contrasted with *dominance hierarchy* where persons within the learning community are subjected to the mechanisms of control that distribute power (Rappel, 2015). Such environments promote authoritarian approaches and competition over the positions within the educational structure and over

the resources (Cranton, 2010; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015). *Dominance hierarchy* can be applied to microstructure of the teacher-learner relationship where teacher has the *'single voice authority'* (Ramezanzadeh et al, 2016b), to the other end of the trajectory where educational system is being controlled by the political powers (Cranton, 2010).

*Systemic fluidity* captures the flexible, adaptable and interconnected structure of the educational system that organises itself in response to changing conditions and situations. This has a direct impact on the perception of safety; when recognising change as a part of the process towards growth and facilitating *webs of support,* taking risks might be perceived as constructive action rather than a threat (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004a; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a). Rappel (2015) also identified the flexibility and a degree of freedom as conditions that foster authenticity. The process of experiencing context as either fluid or rigid, seem to be also connected to critically reflective practice. It appears possible not to recognize the existing possibility for some movement within the existing setting if one has a compliant approach (Kreber, 2009).

The fluidity or flexibility of the existing system can be observed in the utilization of time. Working with rigid and tight timetables and schemes of work that do not allow for movement or do not allocate the space for interaction, exploration and collaboration can inhibit the strive towards authenticity and caring (Rabin, 2015).

*Rigidness & fragmentation* is on the opposite side of the spectrum to the *systemic fluidity,* this is when the systems are perceived as fixed and hierarchical and the persons within the system are compartmentalized and alienated by design (Cranton, 2010; Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b; Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015). These types of systems seem to foster the conditions for *competitive exclusion* and prevent the formation of

*social belonging* (Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015). Authoritarian nature of such environment offers teachers limited choices and promotes compliancy to maintain the existing order (Rabin, 2013; Rappel, 2015). Rabin (2013) critiques environments where the existing structures impose central focus on testing rather that fragmentises the learning process and obfuscates responsibility of teachers and learners in becoming self-directed.

Self-organising systems of education can be also viewed through the lens of the collective courage encapsulated in the subtheme of *daring culture* tightly interlaced with *systemic fluidity* and discussed earlier subtheme, *webs of support. Daring culture* of the learning community appears to facilitate the authenticity of individual persons, promoting their growth and development (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Cranton & Carusetta, 2004a). In their studies teachers began to co-construct a new learning programme; daring to accept the uncomfortable uncertainty while collectively trusting in their ability to create more intuitive structures (Cranton & Carusetta; Carusetta & Cranton). Emerging alternative or new systems or pedagogic approaches presents the element of risk and consequently fears of failure that can expose vulnerability (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005a; Rappel, 2015). Welcoming failure as part of the process of learning and growth can promote the *daring culture* and authenticity.

Carusetta and Cranton (2005a) refers to university teaching as a secretive profession where the fear of judgement by others prevents teachers from sharing their challenges, successes or failures. This authenticity inhibiting atmosphere is captured under the subtheme of *fear culture.* Rappel (2015) boldly discusses the perceived fear of losing the position as a consequence of voicing concerns or seeking change. *Fear culture* might be viewed in relation to *dominance hierarchies* where punitive mechanisms are implemented in attempt to maintain control (Rabin, 2015).

*Discussion*

The synthesis of the secondary data from the above studies in response to first question drew attention to four themes: *congruent, caring, open to encounters, becoming critically conscious.* While acknowledging that teachers' behaviours need to be congruent with the words or values, none of the researchers characterised an authentic teacher specifically as congruent. The use of the term is informed by the person-centred theory where the self-concept of a person is congruent with their experience (Rogers, 1959). Being honest, genuine, knowing yourself, being yourself, true to oneself, owning yourself, taking responsibility for your actions are just some of the constructs mentioned by the researchers that can be conceptualised as manifestations of inner congruence.

Congruent teachers continuously reflect and re-adjust their self-concept or self-knowledge in the light of new experiences. Carusetta and Cranton (2005a) encapsulated this transformative process where teachers move from inner control to freedom, from anxiety/fear to trust, from teaching to facilitating. Rabin (2013) also indicates that knowing who you are is not a final destination for an authentic teacher but a starting point where a teacher becomes aware of their own assumptions and value judgements so they can be examined and diffused when appropriate.

Broadly discussed by all the researchers *caring* seems to be a choice that characterises authentic teachers and it is driven by valuing the students' flourishment. The *congruence* of the teacher might enable the students to perceive teacher's caring attitude as genuine (De Bruyckere & Kirschner, 2016). *Caring* for the student needs to be relevant to what is meaningful to the student. This point is explicit in the work of Rabin (2013) where in order to care for what matters to the student teachers must know the student. This wasn't so apparent in the work of Kreber (2009), Kreber et al (2010) where caring was fragmented to caring for the subject and students learning and extended to academic progression of the students. While in the studies by

Ramezanzadeh caring for the fellow human being was intertwined with the religious obligation. Perhaps, the significance of perceived caring attitude is influenced by the context; De Bruyckere & Kirschner (2016) study was conducted in a secondary school setting and Rabin (2013) collected her data from preservice teachers preparing to work with children whereas all Ramezanzadeh studies took place in a communitarian culture. However, to draw any conclusions further research would be required. All of the researchers to various degrees implied that what they perceive as caring for students might be in conflict with the educational establishments' expectations of professionalism, performance and efficiency.

While all the researchers appear to agree that critical reflection has to accompany the development of teachers' authenticity the explanation of why this process is necessary, seems somehow flattened. Teachers seemed comfortable to critique the hierarchical systems, curriculum content, pedagogies, management, bureaucracy, cultural differences, disengagement of students, competitive environments etc. And even then, the reflections are often fragmented, failing to identify implicit function of education that suppresses human potential and silently carries forward the dominant ideologies of capitalism (Rabin, 2013) or neoliberalism (Kreber, 2009).

Only some teachers spent time exploring the importance of becoming critically conscious of self to identify, understand and unlearn the introjected values and unexamined common truths (Carusetta & Cranton, 2005b, Rabin, 2013). To contemplate the deeper experience of having to constantly prove one's worth that somehow can be translated into measurable outcomes and success rates (Rabin, 2013). Kreber et al (2010) and Rappel (2015) both observed the tendency towards a 'client-centred approach' within education where learners are the consumers and where teachers are in the position of having to respond to their educational demands rather

than consciously care for the whole persons. It must be noted that here the use of 'client-centred approach' originates from business principles and not person-centred theory.

This same avoidance tendency of exploring and deconstructing self-concept is present when searching for the answers to the second question on the conditions that facilitate or inhibit the development of authenticity. All of the researchers to various degrees explored the environmental and social conditions, the importance of *social belonging, self-organisation of the school systems* and as well as their counterparts of *alienation* and *systemic control*.

But only few examined the facilitative psychological conditions within the person of *intentional critical consciousness*; or *intrinsic (caring) motivation* where inhibiting conditions encapsulated under the theme of *Kafkaesque clerk* received even less attention. To maintain the current construct of self, a teacher is obliged to defend the existing structure and resist engaging with critical reflection that threatens the self-concept. Self-concept that is carefully constructed against existing traditions and professional requirements that once passively absorbed might contribute to self-perception as an authentic or a quality teacher. Becoming critically conscious might lead to a realisation that an employed pedagogy is incompatible with what is in the best interest of students. It must be noted that all of the researchers in this study reported that the external requirements, pressures and time constrains prevent the space for the development of *intentional critical consciousness.*

All the above is necessary to contemplate and understand teacher's designed function in maintaining the status quo. Only then, one might authentically engage with ideas that matter or the 'horizons of significance' as suggested by Kreber (2009) and Ramezanzadeh et al (2016a, b).

Perhaps the work of Cranton and Carusetta (2004b) and Carusetta and Cranton (2005a, b) offers a strongest argument that to provide conditions that facilitate the development of authenticity the new learning environments must emerge. Humanistic education that facilitates the development of authenticity in teachers and learners is incompatible with a system conditioned by capitalist realism where standardization and testing are the main focus (Rabin, 2013).

The contrasting example that further emphasizes the need for the new learning environments is a study by Rappel (2015), where adult language teachers experience feeling unappreciated, taken for granted and even exploited. While teachers in her study appear intrinsically motivated and appreciative of their freedom, many do not have a sense of '*social belonging*' within their institutions. In the attempt of protecting the profession and the associated educational values and purposes Rappel (2015) proposes regulation of the profession and setting of the unified standards for adult language educators. One might note how this approach might actually limit the freedom and agency of the individual. This is an example of how in seeking resolution that addresses perceived lack of security might occur at the expense of authenticity.

There is a number of limitations to this study. As with all the research all the choices are made subjectively by the scientist (Rogers, 1953). This study has been informed by the existing knowledge of the person-centred orientated research team. While our theoretical orientation influenced the process of synthesis, we are confident that the findings presented are congruent with the original sources. It must be noted that the number of studies on the of teacher's authenticity is still relevantly small limiting opportunities for a more focused inclusion criterion. Perhaps, it would be beneficial to include studies that do not use the same terminology but explore similar terms like 'congruent teacher' or 'good teacher'. Also, grouping and comparing findings from

studies set in particular regions, cultures or educational settings (for example: compulsory, higher or alternative education) could clarify similarities and differences in the understanding phenomena of teacher's authenticity potentially influenced by the context.

*Conclusion*

Further research is needed in the development of theory on authentic teachers that offers a consistent, philosophically sound conceptual structure that can be applied in practice. Once the theoretical framework makes dependable hypothesis possible, further quantitative studies might shed a light on the both facilitative conditions and barriers that inhibit the development of teachers' authenticity. There is also a need for qualitative research focusing specifically on the role of critical reflection in the construction and deconstruction of a teachers' self-construct. In light of the existing findings it appears apparent that teachers' authenticity is a worthy pursuit. However, it is not reflected in the existing teacher training programs. It is our recommendation that the university and school-based programs should be reviewed in light of promoting the development of authenticity for Newly Qualified and Qualified Teachers.

It is also worth noting that the quality rating of the included journals reveals the significant variance in the rigour of qualitative scientific research on this topic. While some of it might be due to inconsistent requirements from the publishing journals perhaps using the quality rating scales when writing the article would improve the overall scores.

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