The literature on teacher education consistently refers to the value of reflection as a means of developing practice (LSDA, 2003; Harkin, 2005; Pollard, 2005; Hillier, 2012). Therefore reflection should form an important element of educational theory within teacher education programmes. However, there are a variety of different theories and models and the difficulties of defining reflection are also noted (Moon, 1999; Roffey-Barentsen and Malthouse, 2009), not least because of the range of associated terms, such as reflective practice, reflective learning, reflective writing, critical reflection. The differing views of the nature of reflection in the literature, whilst indicating that reflection constitutes a 'lively' area of critical debate (Tummons, 2007:73), may also lead to confusion for those expected to make use of reflection. Indeed there is recognition that students are often uncertain about the process of reflection and what is expected of them (Loughran, 1996; Bolton, 2001, Mueller, 2003; Moon, 2004). Gay and Kirkland (2003) suggest that many trainee teachers don't have a clear understanding of what reflection is, or how to do it. So if reflection is required for professionals to develop their practice, then it would seem essential that this is clearly defined and adequately supported at all stages, but particularly during teacher education.

The work of Schön (1983; 1987) has been identified as promoting the growth in the use of reflection for professional development evident through the 1980s (Fendler, 2003; Kilminster et al, 2010). His distinction of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action is a widely used characterization of reflective practice which frequently features in texts for trainee teachers (Roffey-Barentsen and Malthouse, 2009; Hillier, 2012). Several other significant texts on reflection/reflective practice were also produced during the 1980s (Kolb, 1984; Boud et al, 1985; Brookfield, 1987) which also feature in texts for trainee teachers.

Despite Moon's (2004:1) assertion that 'we all reflect', there is evidence in the literature that individuals may differ in their capacity for and engagement with reflection (Boud et al 1985; Reiman, 1999). With regard to trainee teachers, studies have identified differences in their capacity for reflective thought (Freese, 1999; Manouchehri, 2002; Giovannelli, 2003; Griffin, 2003), possibly related to their conceptions of teaching and learning (Sumsion, 2000). The findings suggest that we cannot assume that reflection happens automatically for all individuals, or that they will all use reflection in such a way as to improve performance (Reiman, 1999; Moon, 2004). Furthermore Day (1993) suggests that teachers may approach reflection differently at different times/stages in their career, so that the requirements of beginning teachers may differ from those of more experienced practitioners, such as teacher educators. Consequently it would seem that student teachers should to be offered a variety of techniques in order to support their use of reflection (Adler, 1991).

While there has been a lack of detail about teacher educators, the complexities of the role are becoming well documented (Korthagen et al, 2005; Murray et al, 2011; Boyd et al, 2011). They occupy a dual role, since as they teach they simultaneously model teaching (Korthagen et al 2005; Murray et al 2011) and this includes the development and modelling of reflective practice (Loughran, 1996; Hughes 2005; Murray 2007), as well as using reflection to develop their own practice (Murray et al 2011). Harkin (2005) notes that within the Lifelong Learning sector the interpretation of reflective practice and the range of theory to be covered in teacher education programmes are left to those teaching them. Consequently as Tanner and Davies (2009) emphasise, teacher educators' own knowledge and ability to critically reflect on practice is vitally important for the development of critical reflection amongst their students.

This paper reports an investigation of the experience and use of reflection by teacher educators teaching on Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) programmes for the Post-Compulsory sector within a partnership network comprising a University and seven partner colleges. The study used a mixed methods design, with a questionnaire used to sample teacher educators' experience and use of reflection and to obtain biographical data which was then used to select a sample of experienced teacher educators (having more than five years experience) to participate in a semi-structured interview.

Questionnaire data from twenty four teachers educators indicated that the majority were introduced to reflection during their own teaching qualification or other academic study. Brookfield and Schön were identified as theorists they personally found useful. These also featured as theorists commonly used with trainees, along with Kolb and Gibbs. Most teacher educators said they aimed to introduce reflection as early as possible and provide trainees with a range of different theories. These commonalities suggest shared ambitions.

Interviews with eight experienced teacher educators drawn from the University and four partner colleges, support the questionnaire findings, Kolb and Schön were the theorists most frequently used to introduce reflection to students. A range of theories and models were used with students, with Brookfield's critical lenses the most frequently mentioned, both for developing their own personal reflection and that of their students.

Tensions around the use of reflection were evident regarding evidencing how professional standards were being met and the grading of students' written reflections. There were some concerns too that increasingly directed reflection might restrict opportunities for reflection on individual issues. These aspects suggest reflection also represents a site of contested ambitions.

This study has begun to explore teacher educators' experience of reflection, the ways in which they use reflection personally and with their students to develop

practice. However despite the apparent commonalities in their practice, most were not fully aware of exactly which theorists their colleagues use and how or when they are introduced.   During most of the interviews there was something which caused the interviewee to pause and to comment that this was an aspect they needed to think further about:

> '*I hadn't really engaged with or thought about [that], now that's going to wrestle in my head now, thank you*'

This study suggests that reflection is an area of shared and contested ambitions within teacher educators' practice which merits further study.

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