It is widely recognised that there is a widening gap between the literacy practices that children and young people engage in outside of school and the kinds of literacy experiences that teachers provide in school (Marsh et al 2005, Marsh 2010, Carrington and Robinson 2009, Pahl 2006, Lankshear & Knobel 2011).

Recent research suggests there is a need for teacher education to include teaching about new literacy practices and it is recommended that encouraging trainee teachers to reflect on their own and children’s home and school literacy practices is beneficial (Marsh, 2006, Kerin, 2009, Burnett, 2009). Recent research has also shown that trainee teachers have varied digital literacy experiences and that we should not make assumptions about trainees’ digital lives and ability to use new technologies (Robinson and Mackey, 2006, Kerin, 2009, Burnett, 2009).

This study aims to explore how primary trainees can be supported in drawing on their own digital lives to make connections between their own experiences, children’s experiences and their professional roles. Further, it will investigate the issues that primary trainees face in trying to incorporate new literacies into the curriculum.

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- What are trainee teachers’ views of literacy?
- What are trainee teachers’ digital lives like?
- What are the trainee teachers’ experiences of digital literacy in schools?
- What factors impact upon trainees’ confidence and competence when incorporating digital literacies in the classroom?
- What are the implications for ITE?

A range of research methods were used including observations, a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to elicit trainees’ experiences and views. In accordance with the grounded theory of research developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), theory is generated through empirical research built up from the data collected.

The findings suggest that trainees’ views of literacy and their classroom practice are heavily influenced by their own experiences of literacy both as pupils and their experiences in schools as trainees.

This paper begins to think through the implications for initial teacher education.