Retaining Primary Teachers: Sustaining a positive professional identity and a commitment to teaching in early-, mid- and late-career phase

Maxine Elizabeth Watkins

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2019

University of Worcester

Dedications

To my husband and best friend Phil; thank you for listening patiently to my PhD ramblings, for hours of walking and talking, for acting as a sounding board for my emerging thoughts and questions, giving me honest and valuable feedback, and for your unceasing belief that I can succeed.

To my wonderful children, Alice, Sam and Sarah; three unique individuals who I have learned so much from over the years. Listening to your stories, on your return from school, college and university, has provided me with a much needed break from writing, and has acted as a constant reminder that teachers make a difference, every day, to young people's lives.

Finally, to my parents, Marie and Norman Wilcox who have supported me with much the needed practical help; child care, dog sitting, home cooked meals, and providing coffee when I needed a place of respite since returning to education.

An additional dedication should also go to our family dog, Ellie, whose constant need for walks over the fields has helped to keep me sane (and to avoid thrombosis!) during the long days of staring at a (sometimes blank) computer screen.

It is my privilege to be able to dedicate this thesis to you all.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I want to express my enormous gratitude to the wonderful teachers who took time out of their very busy lives to share their fascinating stories with me, to help me understand their experiences and to piece together how they develop and sustain positive professional identities across their careers, and to comprehend how and why they remain committed to making a difference to the lives of the children they work with.

Many thanks also to my supervision team: Dr Colin Howard and Professor Alison Kington for giving me the opportunity to embark on this extraordinary developmental process, and for your encouragement throughout. Thanks also to Dr Karen Blackmore who joined the team later in the process, bringing new insights and sharing your enthusiasm for the project. I am also grateful to Dr Jay Vickers for sharing his theoretical insight with me.

Thanks to my wonderful friend Anna Place, who, as a qualified primary teacher herself, gave a listening ear as my theory developed, and displayed excitement about the highs of my project, which has helped to motivate me through the lows.

The friendship and support that I have received from my fellow research students in the Research School has helped me to be resilient during times of self-doubt, and offered a sense of community which has helped to fend off the ‘imposter syndrome’ which is all too familiar to me. In particular I would like to thank Dr Rachael Shillitoe, Hazel Richards and Katie Spicksley. I hope that we will remain friends for a long time to come.

Finally, my thanks go to the Research School staff team who work tirelessly to support all research students to travel this unique journey as smoothly as possible.

I am enormously grateful to you all.

Abstract

The importance of the quality of teachers in raising standards in our schools is increasingly acknowledged by school leaders and policy makers. With ongoing concerns in England regarding teacher recruitment and retention, it is essential to schools and the wider population that teachers are able to retain their commitment to the profession.

Educational research exploring the work and lives of teachers has discovered that teachers' identities and career phases influence their commitment and resilience, and that a teacher's professional identity is mediated by the contexts in which they live and work. Previous studies have tended to focus on developing a professional identity in early career while relatively fewer studies have focused on how teachers sustain a sense of professional identity and their commitment over time.

This qualitative study uses a constructivist grounded theory design to give a voice to 20 primary school teachers working in different school contexts in England. Teachers working in early-, mid-, and late-career phases were interviewed to help further understanding of how and why primary school teachers sustain a positive professional identity and commitment across their career.

A narrative approach was taken, with informal life history conversations and professional time line interviews being conducted with each participant. Two participants from each career phase also took part in a follow up semi-structured interview which gave an opportunity for clarification of any points raised in previous interviews, and also to discuss emerging themes within the data and to receive their feedback. In line with the constructivist grounded theory approach, data was analysed through coding, constant comparison and theoretical conceptualizing.

Analysis revealed the complex nature of teacher professional identity, supporting the notion that identity is dynamic and contextual, and has drawn from psychosocial perspectives to acknowledge the intersection in the construction of professional identity and commitment. A multilevel, identity-based model of teacher career is presented that differentiates between levels of professional identity (individual relational and collective) and their relationship to different foci of commitment (personal, situated and professional).

This study makes empirical contributions to conceptual areas of teacher career, professional identity and commitment. Results may be useful for policy makers both at school and national level in supporting continuing professional development and retaining quality primary teachers.

Table of Contents

Vignettes

Memos

Tables

Figures

Appendices

1 Introducing the Study

This thesis has a focus on teachers' sense of their professional identity. More specifically, it considers the development and maintenance of a professional identity and the relationship with resilience and commitment across a teaching career. The overall aim is to develop a theoretical model which will contribute to, and extend, the understanding of the key influences on teacher professional identity and commitment. This chapter will introduce the study by locating it within a research context and providing background information to explain my own interest in teaching and primary education. The structure of the thesis will be outlined.

1.1 *Research Context*

Schools are central to the academic achievements and outcomes of young people. The importance of the quality of individual teachers in raising standards in our schools is increasingly acknowledged by researchers and policy makers (Johansson et al. 2015; Rivkin et al. 2005; Department for Education, 2010), and particularly in schools of low social economic status (Nye et al. 2004). It is essential to schools and the wider population that teachers retain their commitment to the profession and remain employed in their chosen vocation.

There are ongoing concerns in England regarding teacher recruitment (Worth, De Lazzari, & Hillary, 2017), with pay, workload and low status deterring many people from considering it as a career option (Ross & Hutchings, 2003). While a recent survey of school leaders (National Association of Head Teachers, 2015) found that those who had tried to recruit a newly qualified teacher in the last academic year had difficulty doing so, and many had failed to recruit at all, the National Audit Office (2016) reported that the Department for Education (DfE) has missed teacher recruitment targets for four consecutive years, putting pressure on current levels of staffing, and anticipate that teacher shortages will increase.

Once in the profession retention has proved to be a continuing challenge for successive governments, with teacher turnover and early retirement increasing in England's schools (Smithers & Robinson 2005, National Audit Office, 2016). Whilst it is necessary then for governments to continue recruiting quality student teachers, it is equally important to take actions to ensure that teachers working in the middle and late stages of their career are able to sustain their commitment and with it, the ability to give their best in the classroom. The House of Commons Education Committee (2017) reported on the recruitment and retention of teachers in England concluding that the 'Government struggles to recruit enough teachers to ITT each year, making the retention of teachers ever more important. Introducing initiatives to

help improve teachers' job satisfaction may well be a much more cost-effective way of improving teacher supply in the long term' (p.25).

Research carried out in the United Kingdom (Chambers & Roper, 2000; Hayes, 2004) and elsewhere (Mansfield et al., 2014; Scheopner, 2010) has tended to focus on early career teacher attrition with estimates of between 20-50 percent leaving the profession in the first five years from qualifying (Ingersoll, 2012; House of Commons Education Committee, 2012; p. 35). But even where teachers are remaining in the profession, their commitment to the job appears to be eroding, with some research suggesting that teachers with more experience are 'holding on but losing motivation' (Day & Gu, 2009, p.448). Clandinin (2010) suggested that it is important that educational researchers gain a better understanding of what enables and sustains commitment for the majority of teachers who are remaining in the profession.

Throughout the last three decades globalisation and reforms in education have seen huge changes, as countries seek to improve their schools in response to increasing economic and social expectations (Lauder, 2006; Olssen, 2004). Almost three decades of reform for schools in England have had a strong focus on curriculum, measurable accountability, and the technical aspects of teaching, with a focus on the observable aspects of teaching (e.g. subject knowledge, lesson plans and what a teacher *does* rather than who a teacher *is*). School teachers have experienced transformations in their professional lives, with standardized measures of performance (e.g. Statutory Assessments and Teachers' Standards) and accountability now dominating their practice. Some critics have argued that reforms have been implemented in schools without any consideration of the personal beliefs and values which underpin teaching practice (Goodson, 2007; Groundwater-Smith & Sachs, 2002), with a growing number (e.g. Ball, 2003; Fielding, 2001; Goodson & Numan, 2002) suggesting that reforms and policies intent on regulating the actions of teachers, and emphasising the procedural aspects of the profession rather than the caring and creative aspects, have presented challenges for the way that teachers view themselves. Goodson (2007) declared a crisis in education where teachers' sense of purpose was being eroded, and along with it, their commitment to the profession.

A large-scale study which explored the work and lives of 300 teachers found that professional identities and career phases influence their commitment and resilience, and that professional identities are mediated by the contexts in which they work and live (Day et al., 2007; Day & Kington, 2008). While there has been an increasing interest within educational research on teachers' professional identity (for reviews see Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Izadinia, 2013), and a focus on teacher commitment in terms of supporting school

effectiveness (Day et al., 2005) or staff retention (Ingersoll, 2001; Guarino et al., 2006), very few studies to date have addressed these concepts simultaneously.

Equally, much of the literature in the area of teacher professional identity and/or commitment tends to be concerned with, and to focus upon, problems or challenges and therefore has concentrated on issues such as stress and burnout (Chang, 2009; Kyriacou, 2001; Wilhelm et al., 2000), with a tendency to discuss reasons why teachers decide to leave the profession (Smithers & Robinson, 2003, 2005) rather than how they are enabled to stay. In contrast, this study will draw on the principles of positive psychology (Luthans, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) in the hope that a focus on developing and sustaining a positive sense of professional identity and commitment, instead of burnout and attrition, will offer the opportunity to identify strategies and interventions which could support quality teacher retention (Mansfield et al., 2014).

The current study uses a grounded theory methodology in seeking to understand the development of teachers' professional identity and its association with commitment across a teaching career, and to illuminate the key influences in different career phases, and different school contexts.

1.2 *Researcher in Context*

In order to acknowledge the collaborative nature of this grounded theory study, along with the epistemological position of social constructionism (discussed further in section **3.1**), it is appropriate to share here some background information about my own interest in teaching and primary education, and to acknowledge the ways in which my own position has influenced the co-construction of meaning and the interpretation of teachers' stories.

My interest in primary education began as my own children started school when, following what I thought would be a temporary break from my career in the local bank, I began working as a Teaching Assistant in a local primary school. After gaining a few years of experience and finding that I had a natural inclination for working with 'challenging' pupils, I was asked to do some work with one local authority within the West Midlands, in their Behaviour Support Training Team. This new role meant that I was working with children, support staff, and teachers in many different primary school settings throughout the county. The role offered me a unique opportunity to work alongside and observe the work of many teachers, each with differing amounts of experience ranging from newly qualified through to teachers who were nearing retirement, and I was fascinated to observe what a huge influence, whether positive or negative, each had on the behaviour (and consequentially the success or failure), of the children they worked with. It was of great interest to me how a child might be considered as

'disruptive' by one teacher, and consequently (whether intentional or not) would be excluded from classroom interaction and activities; while a different teacher might foster a more inclusive environment, where the same child's presence was valued, with activities being adjusted to accommodate them. I observed the self-concept and attitudes of individual children change, according to the classroom they were in.

It is perhaps partly due to this experience in schools that my own ontological position aligns with a relativist perspective; assuming that an individual's reality is contextual and is influenced by individual experience, interpretation and subjective meaning (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). I would guess that this was also when my curiosity about these important professionals was truly piqued. I observed that teaching is a very personal activity, with each teacher I worked alongside having their own unique way of giving instruction and communicating with the children they taught. With a growing interest in human behaviour and interaction, I studied part-time for a psychology degree as a mature student. Perhaps it's for this reason that when working in schools I was always interested to listen to teachers' stories, and would encourage discussions about the day to day challenges they faced, along with their concerns and successes. It was apparent that they were pleased, and sometimes relieved, to be given the opportunity to talk about them.

It has been interesting to note that while conducting interviews for this study I discovered once more that teachers appreciated the experience of this interaction and the collaborative nature of reflecting on their professional journey.

1.3 *Structure of Thesis*

The thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter One – Introducing the Study. This introductory chapter provides the background context for this research, locating it in time and within existing literature. The researcher's interest in primary education and motivation for this study structure is explained, along with the structure of the thesis.

Chapter Two – Literature Review. This chapter explores a range of literature which is concerned with professional identity and commitment, enabling an *informed* grounded theory study. First, classic models concerned with development across a life cycle and personal career development are outlined. Then four seminal models of teachers' lives and careers are briefly discussed. Next, a broad characterisation of early-, mid- and late-career stages is presented, along with the concept of commitment across a teaching career. Different views of identity are explored along with a more focused consideration of teacher professional identity. Finally, the main aims, objectives and research questions for this study are stated.

Chapter Three – Methodology. The methodology chapter considers my own epistemological and ontological stance in relation to the present study along with my rationale for choosing grounded theory as a methodology. There will be a detailed exploration of the research design and methods employed to answer the research questions, along with ethical considerations and a discussion of the role of validity and reliability in a grounded theory study.

Chapter Four – From Data Collection to Analysis. This chapter provides an account of the constant comparison methods which were employed to analyse the interview data. Included are illustrative examples which show in detail the analytical procedures which informed the initial emerging codes, categories and subsequent literature searches.

Chapter Five, Six and Seven – Findings. The three findings chapters each contain an in-depth analysis of the teachers' stories, along with vignettes which highlight individual teachers' stories. Each chapter includes examples of memos which relate to the focused codes and categories developed during the analysis.

Chapter Eight – Discussion of Findings. The key findings from the study are presented and discussed in relation to the research questions. The discussion draws on existing educational literature and on theories and literature from social and organisational psychology which informed and supported the evolving theoretical model.

Chapter Nine – Conclusion. The final chapter of this thesis presents a conclusion which draws together the findings and discussion of this study. The theoretical model is presented and the grounded theory study will be evaluated by considering the credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness, along with any limitations. Possibilities for future research are discussed.

2 Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to frame the background for this study, by exploring the extant literature concerned with teachers' careers, professional identity and commitment. A rationale will be provided for conducting a literature review which will inform the current grounded theory, and will offer an insight into the existing knowledge within the field of research concerned with teachers' lives and careers. The research aims, objectives and research questions which were developed from the review will be stated at the end of this chapter.

2.1 *Literature Reviews in Grounded Theory Research*

According to classic grounded theorists (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978), any literature review in a grounded theory study should be postponed until data analysis is complete, ensuring that previous theories and ideas do not influence the analysis process, and to encourage the formation of original ideas and new insights. Goldkuhl and Cronholm (2010) challenge this orthodox approach and argue that it is advantageous to include extant literature in grounded theory research, as in some phases of the process existing theories could either inspire or contradict emerging categories. An *informed grounded theory* approach is also advocated by Thornberg (2012) who rejects the idea of a purely inductive procedure, where knowledge is constructed in isolation from existing theory, and argues for the inclusion of literature review strategies which allow the benefit of prior knowledge while taking care to stay true to the data collected.

While it is necessary to remain reflective, critical and creative, this thesis will take an informed grounded theory approach and will therefore acknowledge, and be located within, existing literature. This chapter will present a selection of the seminal literature concerned with identity development, careers and commitment, and more specifically with a focus on teachers' careers, teachers' professional identity, and teachers' commitment to the profession. Although this extant literature will be introduced within this review, further and more recent, literature has been drawn on throughout this study to generate and support the development of a theoretical model. Additional and relevant literature is drawn on during the analysis and the theoretical coding phase to support the emerging categories. The discussion chapter will include literature which supported or contrasted with the analysis and will illuminate where the grounded theory supports, extends or challenges existing literature.

Historically, the study of human development has largely concentrated its focus on the challenges and changes which take place throughout childhood and adolescence, with the concept of a developmental 'stage' being viewed as 'patterned or orderly change across time' (Gergen, 1977, p. 144). Freud's (1905) five stages of psychosexual development, Bowlby's

(1982) attachment theory and Piaget's (1974) stages of cognitive development are recognised widely as significant stage theories within the field of developmental psychology. As each have a primary focus on pre-adult years and a general acceptance that development is essentially complete at the end of adolescence, it is unnecessary to review these works further within this chapter (although research concerned with attachment has since expanded into adolescence and adulthood) (e.g. Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005).

As the objective of this thesis is to explore teachers' professional identity and commitment across different career phases, which will inevitably include adults of various ages, this chapter will begin with a focus on a selection of seminal studies which conceptualise an individual's development as a continual process across the *whole* of the life course, which continues into and across the adult years. Erikson's (1959, 1980) eight-stage theory of development will be outlined and discussed, along with a brief overview of Levinson's (1978, 1986) model, in which early and middle adulthood is represented by developmental tasks which result in phases of change and consolidation. Moving on to consider the professional lives of adults, Super's (1957, 1963) classic work on career development will be discussed along with more recent conceptualisations of career.

Perhaps more particular to this thesis, four seminal models of a teaching career (Sikes, 1985; Huberman, 1993; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; & Day et al., 2007) which consider teachers' lives and career trajectories will be outlined and compared, along with the concept of commitment to the profession. Other relevant research which has been conducted in the field of teachers' lives and careers will be discussed in synthesis. The development of identities which are connected to the organisations in which people work will be discussed, including social-psychological literature which considers the development of identity to be a process of intergroup relations. More specifically, studies concerned with the development of a teacher's professional identity will be reviewed, giving consideration to literature which considers professional identity to be both a process and a product.

A summary of the literature review will reveal gaps in the extant knowledge and illustrate how this grounded theory study could extend the existing literature, with a statement of the research aims, objectives and questions.

2.2 *Life and Career Stage Models of Development*

2.2.1 Erikson's Psychosocial Stages

The seminal work of Erik Erikson (1950, 1968) influenced the notion that psychological development endures across the lifespan. Erikson's work, the 'Eight Ages of Man', posits that

alongside the psychosexual stages of development suggested by Freud (1905), the ego transitions through eight psychosocial stages, as an individual develops and establishes them self throughout their whole life cycle. In this view of the life cycle an individual's personality is represented by a series of psychosocial crises which result in a positive or negative outcome brought about by an individual's change in perspective (illustrated in **table 2.1**). Erikson asserts that crises are developmental, experienced due to internal conflicts, rather than by external life events. He assumes that each crisis offers a positive opportunity for development, once the crisis which is particular to each developmental stage has been resolved.

The first four stages of Erikson's (1950, 1968) model (Trust vs Mistrust, Autonomy vs Doubt, Initiative vs Guilt, Industry vs Inferiority) correspond with the first year of life through to school age, while stage five to eight (Identity vs Role Confusion, Intimacy vs Isolation, Generativity vs Stagnation, Integrity vs Despair) correspond to the period from adolescence to maturity.

While the earlier stages are primarily concerned with a transition from dependence to independence during which parents facilitate or inhibit a positive outcome, in the final four stages of maturation the influence of parents is less direct, and a broader interpersonal dimension is introduced.

Identity versus Role Confusion (stage five) is the first stage of Erikson's (1950) theoretical framework to represent the beginning of early adulthood. As childhood comes to an end a young person who has managed, with the help of supportive parenting, to successfully navigate the previous stages (trust, autonomy, initiative and industry), this new period is primarily concerned with a developing *sense of ego identity.* The consolidation of individual values, beliefs and ways of viewing the world and establishing a meaningful role which allows

Table 2.1 Sequence of psychosocial crises (Erikson, 1950)

1 Infancy	2 Toddler	3 Early Childhood	4 School Age	5 Adolescence	6 Young Adult	7 Adulthood	8 Mature Age
Trust vs Mistrust	Autonomy vs Doubt	Initiative vs Guilt	Industry vs Inferiority	Identity vs Role Confusion	Intimacy vs Isolation	Generativity vs Stagnation	Integrity vs Despair

continuity of the past with an anticipated future result in a positive outcome and ‘a conviction that one is learning effective steps towards a tangible future, that one is developing a defined

personality within a social reality which one understands' (Erikson, 1980, p.95). This phase is concerned with establishing ideological commitments, with a 'search ...for ...social values which guide identity' (1959, p. 94). The negative outcome of this stage is role confusion, with no sense of belonging, uncertainty about who one is and about what the future holds.

Building on Erikson's (1959, 1968) concept of developmental crisis, Marcia (1966, 2002) developed an 'identity status' approach asserting that young adults considering possible occupations and personal ideology are in one of four identity statuses of *identity diffusion*, *foreclosure, moratorium* and *identity achievement,* each related to an individual's crisis and their willingness to engage with, and commit to, a particular occupation. Marcia acknowledges that, even when a secure identity is achieved in young adulthood, major life events such as marriage, children, divorce and the death of a loved one can result in further identity crisis at a later life stage.

Having realised and established a secure sense of identity, the succeeding period concerned with intimate relationships begins in a young adult's life (*Intimacy versus Isolation*, stage six). Intimacy in this stage does not necessarily refer to romantic partners, but can also include close and committed connections with any other significant person. Contemporary literature concerned with personality development continues to acknowledge associations between identity and intimacy (e.g. Hope et al., 2014). Erikson (1980) posits that failure to accomplish intimate relationships with others may result in a person isolating themselves or engaging in relationships which lack the warmth and trust which is necessary for healthy development. The relational focus of this stage emphasises the importance of social context and significant relationships for healthy adult development, a concept which had previously been disregarded within the psychanalytic tradition and until Erikson's work, had been left to the sociological realms of Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969).

Erikson's (1950) seventh stage of *Generativity versus Stagnation*, spans middle age, where a person's energy might be focused on parenthood and caring for their offspring. To be *generative* is to be concerned with the next generation, and Erikson (1980) acknowledges that it is not only parents who can be generative and the 'mere fact of having or even wanting children does not attest to generativity' (p.102). He suggests that any person who has an altruistic desire to take responsibility for and to foster the next generation can achieve the positive feelings which he associates with generativity, warning that a failure to develop generativity can lead to self-absorption with the negative feelings of stagnation instead of growth. Acknowledging the 'intergenerational mutuality' of Erikson's (1980) stage theory, Marcia (2002) asserts that interdependence of the generations is not only key to guiding the

adolescent in crisis, but also to fulfilling the intimacy, generativity and integrity needs of older adults: 'the growers also need to be confirmed in their generativity by the growing' (p.204).

The eighth and final stage (*Integrity versus Despair*) in Erikson's (1950) cycle is likened to the 'fruit' of the previous seven stages. The sense of integrity is born from reflecting on one's own life with a feeling of acceptance and satisfaction. There is recognition that a person plays a small role on a far more significant stage and a realisation that 'an individual life is the accidental coincidence of but one life cycle with but one segment of history' (Erikson, 1980, p.104), bringing feelings of solidarity and camaraderie with fellow humans who may have lived in distant times, experienced different cultures and followed different pursuits.

Erikson's (1950, 1959, 1980) work paved the way for a continuation of neo-Eriksonian studies (Schwartz, 2001; Schwartz et al., 2013) which have advanced the fields of adolescent identity development (Marcia,1966, 2002), generativity in midlife (McAdams, 2001; Slater, 2003) and the importance of maintaining a sense of autonomy during transitions experienced in older adulthood (Graves & Larkin, 2006).

2.2.2 Levinson's Seasons of a Man's Life

Influenced by Erikson's (1950, 1959) work, an alternative model of the life and adult development is that proposed by Levinson et al (1978). His work had a focus on adulthood and careers. The central thesis of this model is that people (men, at least) will transition through specific life stages, which are closely linked to biological age, irrespective of contextual influences such as family life or occupation. Levinson (1978, 1986) preferred the metaphor of four *seasons* with each one representing an important era of the total life cycle, having its own distinct and relatively stable characteristics, and requiring a period of reappraisal and a transitional *task* to move from one season to the next (see **table 2.2**). Levinson's (1978) theory expands the idea of life stages with life stage transitions; during developmental crises, a period of transition leads to the next stage. Levinson views each transition as an opportunity to evaluate the past and consider the future by asking 'What have I done with my life? What do I want to make of it? What new directions shall I choose?' (p. 84). Levinson's theory was distinct from Erikson's (1950) as the focus was on the concept of change instead of development, with a transition needed to move from one season to the next. Each transition required the termination of a particular aspect of a man's life, along with the initiation of the next period '…suspended between past and future, and struggling to overcome the gap that separates them' (Levinson, 1978, p. 51).

Levinson et al. (1978) consider the *Settling Down* transition to be fundamental to adult development, where a commitment is made to key relationships, ambitions and established

characteristics of the self. This period is concerned with establishing oneself and becoming a valued member of the community. Occupational ambition takes precedence for men during this period and moving up the career ladder brings success and competence, with the need for a mentor figure reduced.

Table 2.2 Developmental periods from childhood through to late adulthood (Levinson et al., 1978)

Season	Age	Stage
Spring	≤17	Childhood and Adolescence
	17 - 22	Early Adult Transition
Summer	22 - 28	Entering the Adult World
	28 -33	Age Thirty Transition
	33 - 40	Settling Down
Autumn	40 - 45	Midlife Transition
	50	Entering Middle Adulthood
	55	Age Fifty Transition
	60	Culmination of Middle Adulthood
Winter	60 - 65	Late Adulthood Transition
	≥66	Late Adulthood

The *Midlife Transition* has a strong focus on occupational changes which signify either success or failure and emphasises the importance of the work domain within an individual's life structure. There are evident similarities to Erikson's (1950) later life stages, when desire to contribute to the next generation requires a revaluation of what success or failure means. Rather than concern with climbing a career ladder, older adults are said to become more concerned with the *value* of the ladder to self and society. The notion of progression to a more senior role and the process of becoming a mentor is akin to Erikson's stage of Generativity recognising the benefit from utilising skills and knowledge which come with maturity and experience.

While *Middle Adulthood* for Levinson et al. (1978) can prove to be a period of positive contribution to society and a positive period of stability and personal development, some people experience major life transitions which might include a divorce, a new relationship, a change of occupation or a relocation. Levinson argues that there can also be midlife transitions

which can go unrecognised, such as a change in the characteristics of an ongoing relationship, adjustments to a work role or a shift in attitude towards work.

Central to Levinson's (1986) theory is the concept of a life *structure*, which he describes as 'the underlying pattern or design of a person's life at a given time' (1986, p. 6), characterised by a person's personality, biology, major life events and relationships with other people, groups, institutions or cultures. He argues that although each individual life structure is influenced by a multiplicity of specific biological, psychological and social conditions, significant relationships are what give *substance* and meaning to an individual's life course.

Although Erikson's (1950, 1968) classic life stage theory is typically employed as a framework for understanding adult development (e.g. Busch & Hofer, 2012; Malone et al., 2016; Schoklitsch & Baumann, 2012; Wilt, Cox, & McAdams, 2010), Levinson's (1986, 1996) work is more often cited in relation to organisational studies and professional development (e.g. Dutton et al., 2010; Wang & Schultz, 2010).

2.2.3 Super's Life Span, Life Space approach to Careers

It is widely accepted that a person's career is 'the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time' (Arthur, Hall & Lawrence,1989, p.8), with the central idea of this definition being that careers are idiosyncratic and progressive, with the notion that each individual will develop and construct their personalised career trajectory. The assumption that careers offer a developmental opportunity can be related back to life stage theories: Erikson's (1950, 1959) proposed journey from the initial identity development in adolescence through to feelings of integrity or despair late in life, and Levinson's (1978) description of tentatively entering the adult world through to enjoying periods of stability and fulfilment in mid-life.

Super (1957) extended the dominant individual differences approach of vocational guidance, which had been primarily concerned with a person's initial occupational choice and adaptation, viewed through the modernistic lens of vocational personal traits (Holland, 1959, 1997). He drew on existing life-stage and career studies (Erikson, 1963; Levinson et al., 1974), to add a longitudinal aspect to the literature, concerned with how a person's career unfolds over time. The developmental model of career was refined over several years to enable the incorporation of his continuing research (Bell, Super & Dunn, 1988; Super, 1980; Super, 1981; Super & Bachrach, 1957) and to address the complexities of vocational behaviour. Accordingly, Super (1963) elaborated his theory to include a subjective perspective on careers, with a *self-concept theory* (Super, 1981) focused on individual's values, beliefs and sense of purpose, viewing an individual's choice of occupation as an opportunity to give meaning to their self-concept, and their evolving career as needing their sense of purpose and role to be compatible.

His final model (Super, Savickas & Super, 1996) portrays career development as the transition through five vocational life stages: *growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance and disengagement.* The *Growth* stage is concerned with the developmental tasks of young people: considering the future, increasing personal control, developing a conviction about personal abilities and gaining a competency in attitude towards work (Savickas & Super, 1993). The *Exploration* stage sees adolescents and young adults forming ideas about a possible future occupation, making a choice, and implementing any necessary action to realise their desired role. The adult stage of *Establishment* involves becoming socialised into an organisation and proficient in a role, while also developing positive relationships with colleagues. For some individuals this stage could also include career advancement.

Whereas the eras in Levinson et al.'s (1978) model were linear and determined by age, Super (1957, 1980) defines each stage as being determined by context, along with an individual's subjective perceptions of that context. Super's life-space model argues that a person's occupation is not always central in their life, and illuminates the significance of other roles a person plays, advocating a model which sees career as a sequence of positions which span across a person's life. Super (1984) differentiates his work by pointing out that;

> *'He [Levinson] views the stages as rather firmly determined and as progressing in well-ordered sequence. My formulation has sought to make it clear that not only are the ages of transition very flexible, but each transition involves a recycling through the stages, a "minicycle"' (p. 200).*

Reflecting this distinction, the *Maintenance* stage can be either a time of continued stability remaining in the same role and organisation, or an individual can return to earlier stages due to a change in role or setting (Williams & Savickas, 1990). Although it might be expected that the *Disengagement* stage is reached at retirement, it can arise at many different ages, depending on individual circumstances which can be related to personal or professional situations. The process at this stage is concerned with moving from one occupational role towards an alternative role, with the developmental tasks of preparing to separate from a work role and assigning work to other colleagues (in the case of retirement this may be younger workers), and organising a new life structure.

Super's (1984) seminal work continues to influence occupational literature, with more recent studies updating and expanding the central idea of a congruence between a self-concept and the requirements of the job. Ng and Feldman (2010) refer to this synthesis between person and work environment as job 'embeddedness' and draw on career stages asserting there is a positive relationship between embeddedness and innovative ideas for those in later career phases. Career construction theory (Savickas, 2002) is considered an 'update of the theory'

(p.154), retaining Super's (1984) notion of a cohesive vocational self-concept, but emphasising adaptation to environment over innate personal maturation. Savickas (2002, 2005) approaches career development from a constructivist perspective, believing that individuals actively construct their career, addressing *what*, *how* and *why* individuals construct their careers through narrative enquiry.

2.3 *Models of Teacher Career*

Following consideration of the life and career stage models discussed above, it seems timely then to turn to look at work which has contributed to the field of research which has a specific focus on the lives and careers of teachers. The term '*career'* is often understood, in general terms, as representing a positive path, moving through roles with increasing influence and salary. However, it has long been argued that compared to other similarly aligned career options teaching is relatively 'career-less' (Lortie, 1975, p.84) with few opportunities for climbing a career ladder and moving through a clear hierarchy of roles. Kelchtermans (2009a) asserts that promotion in teaching 'is not so much a 'moving up' in the hierarchy of positions (since the position most often remains more or less the same), but rather a 'growing' of one's professionalism' (p. 29). Maybe it is for this reason that the most influential and comprehensive teacher career studies (Day et al., 2007; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993; Sikes et al., 1985) have commonly sought to establish predetermined *stages* or *phases*, which attempt to map the general patterns of a teacher's work life from graduation to retirement, having their foundations in the developmental approaches which were discussed above.

The following sections will briefly introduce these four significant studies summarising the important contributions, and development of thinking, which they have made to the understanding of teachers' careers. A further discussion will follow, supplemented by contemporary and relevant literature, considering teachers' professional lives across early-, mid- and late-career phases.

2.3.1 Sikes et al.'s (1985) Life Cycle of the Teacher

Drawing on Levinson et al.'s (1978) study of adult development as a supporting framework, this conceptual model outlined five distinct phases of a teaching career from entry through to retirement, with each phase linked to the age of the teacher (*21-28, 28-33, 30-40, 40-55, 55+).* Based on life history interviews conducted with forty-eight secondary school teachers in England, Sikes et al. (1985) explored the subjective experience of critical phases and incidents and demonstrated common effects that age and life cycles have on teachers' motivation and commitment across their career.

2.3.2 Huberman's (1993) Lives of Teachers

This seminal model of teachers' careers was developed from extensive interviews with 160 middle and high school teachers working in Switzerland. Huberman (1993) acknowledged the existing developmental psychology perspectives of Erikson (1956), Levinson et al. (1978) and Super (1980) in recognition of the broader theories of the human life cycle. Huberman's life cycle of teachers (*career entry, stabilisation, experimentation/diversification, serenity/ conservatism, disengagement*) was linked to individual teaching experience, with an acknowledgement that career stages can be 'rather discontinuous' (p.195), and do not necessarily progress in a predictable form.

2.3.3 Fessler and Christensen's (1992) Career Cycle Model

A synthesis of interviews, case studies, literature reviews and observations were utilized in the development of this dynamic model (Fessler & Christensen, 1992), which includes a pre-service stage, acknowledging the education and training which is necessary to become a classroom teacher. Subsequent stages are *induction, competency building, enthusiastic and growing, frustration, stability, wind-down* and *career exit.* Similar to Super's (1984) and Huberman's (1993) conception of an individual's career, this cyclical model is not considered to be linear, with Fessler and Christensen recognising the possibility of returning to earlier stages due to a change of role later on in a teaching career, and an acknowledgement that environmental factors also influence individual teachers' professional and personal lives.

2.3.4 Day et al. (2007) Professional Life Phases

Influenced by the work of Huberman (1993), who suggested that teachers progress through five phases in their career, Day et al. (2007) conducted a large scale study[1] exploring the work and lives of 300 teachers, and discovered that teachers' identities and career phases influence their commitment and resilience, and that professional identities are mediated by the contexts in which they work and live. Day et al. developed a model of teachers' career, which asserts there are six professional life phases, which each relate to the number of years in teaching (*0-3, 4-7, 8-15, 16-23, 24-30* and *31+ years*). The study suggests that teachers' work and lives span across these six professional life phases, with analysis revealing that variations in teachers' effectiveness can be understood by investigating teachers grouped within one of the phases. Day et al. argue that teacher identity is composed of competing interactions between personal (related to their lives outside school), situated (related to their lives in school), and professional (related to their values, beliefs and the interaction between these and

[1] The VITAE research project (Variations in Teachers' Work, Lives and their Effects on Pupils) was conducted between 2001 and 2005 commissioned by Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

administrative policy agendas) dimensions. They identified key influences such as: school leadership, colleagues, pupil relations, personal events, work/life balance, and policies, which had either a positive or negative effect on a teacher's professional identity during different professional life phases. Conceptualising teachers' professional *lives* rather than a teaching career 'enabled an understanding of the complex factors which influence teachers in different phases of their work' (Kington, 2012, p.191).

Since these four seminal works, there have been numerous studies exploring professional development and commitment across a teaching career (e.g. Anderson & Olsen, 2006; Choi & Tang, 2009; Richter et al., 2011), along with some criticism of these career stage models (Dall'Alba & Sandberg, 2006; Gu & Day, 2007). There is, however, a general consensus that there are common aspects of professional development which can be identified across teachers' career trajectories (Rolls & Plauborg, 2009). The next section will explore the literature and summarise the core characteristics which relate to the commonly accepted characteristics of a teaching career.

2.4 *Characteristics of Early, Mid and Late Career Stages*

2.4.1 Early-Career Stage

In England there are various pathways to gaining qualified teacher status, with the majority of routes being university led, and an increasing move towards school centred training (National Audit Office, 2016, p.6). Each of these pathways have the entry requirement of a degree level qualification. Fessler's (1992) model of teacher career included a stage termed *pre-service* which acknowledged the period of training and study when a person prepares to become a teacher, while it has also been asserted that individual beliefs about what it means to be a teacher are already being established during a person's own experience of school life (Chong, 2011; Flores & Day, 2006). Although Huberman (1993) and Day et al. (2007) do not explicitly build a pre-service phase into their model, they both consider the motivators in choosing to teach, with the latter reporting that the majority of teachers in their 0-3 phase 'indicated that they had been primarily attracted to teaching because of their teaching family background and/or their expectation of a rewarding opportunity to work with children and contribute to their progress' (Day et al., 2007, p.70). With a similarity to Super's (1984) notion of a *minicycle,* Fessler suggests that a person who changes positions at a later career stage can return to a state of pre-service, unrelated to their age or years in the profession.

In line with broader life and career stage models, concerns around competency and the task of establishing a unique identity are characteristic of a person in this establishment phase (Erikson, 1950; Levinson et al., 1978; Super, 1957). Relating this initial period to Levinson's

(1978) *21-28* age group, Sikes et al., (1985) suggest that recently qualified teachers have not yet committed to a long-term career in teaching as it is 'something of a trial period' (p. 26). In contrast, Day et al. (2007) found that most teachers in their 0-3 years phase had a high commitment to the profession. Literature concerned with teacher attrition (e.g. Flores, 2006; Lindqvist, 2014; Schaefer et al., 2012) acknowledges the decision to leave teaching is often made during the early career phase, which can be made due to either individual (i.e. burnout) or contextual (i.e. lack of support) factors (Rinke, 2006).

There is now considerable literature concerned with pre-service and beginning teachers in areas such as professional learning (Falk, 2014), resilience (Castro et al., 2010) and support (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009), with some attributing a negative experience to inadequate initial teacher education (e.g. Hebert & Worthy, 2001; Goddard et al., 2006). Far less literature explores the period which immediately follows those unsettled initial years, perhaps due to the notion that teachers' careers during this stage are becoming stable, with increasing levels of pedagogical mastery (Huberman, 1993). Day et al. (2007) identify a professional life phase of *4-7 years* which is characterised either by teachers' ability to develop, and sustain, a sense of identity and efficacy (with some teachers taking on additional responsibilities such as head of a department), or by teachers who have become concerned about an increasing workload or a lack of support from school leadership. This contrast with Huberman's *stabilisation* stage could be due to 'recent changes in the way the teaching profession has been structured' (Day et al., 2007, p.74), referring to the intensification of teachers' work (Hargreaves, 1994) which has continued during the period between the two studies being conducted.

Entering the profession as a newly qualified teacher is a stage which is broadly recognised as being a shock to new teachers (e.g. Hagger et al., 2011; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Veenman, 1984), where the realities of the classroom and socialisation into an unfamiliar environment can present a challenge which has to be overcome. This period can be experienced as a time of 'easy' or 'painful' beginnings (Huberman, 1993, p. 35). The contrasting experience described by Huberman is also evident in Day's (2007) sub-groups within the professional life phases, in which they establish that support from colleagues and leadership nurture a 'developing sense of efficacy', while teachers who feel unsupported experience a 'reduced sense of efficacy' (p.71).

2.4.2 Mid-Career Stage

Although mid-career is often considered as a *competency building* stage (Fessler & Christensen, 1992) with increasing levels of self-efficacy (Kington et al., 2014), it has also been identified as a critical period, during which external demands can create work-life

tensions which can challenge teachers' motivation and commitment (Day et al., 2007). Sikes (1985) introduced the notion of commitment to a teaching career in her second phase (*28-33* age group), asserting that this period is when a teacher is likely to 'confirm or change one's provisional life structure' (p.41). Relating commitment to increased pedagogical mastery and confidence in the classroom, Huberman's (1993) *stabilisation* phase also sees teachers making a commitment to the profession.

Teacher career models also identify mid-career as a period for career advancement, with Sikes et al. (1985) noting that while fatherhood increased the likelihood to seek promotion opportunities, motherhood can lead to career breaks or reduced hours. More than thirty years later Thornton and Bricheno (2009) found continuing divisions between male and female teachers, with men being over represented in leadership roles, although several studies also suggest that their preference would often be to remain in the classroom (e.g. Deneen, 2011; Mills et al., 2008), but financial responsibilities require that they earn a higher salary. Although Fessler and Christensen (1992) cite family influences as a personal environmental factor during their *enthusiastic and growing* stage, they do not explore the different experiences of parenthood for male and female teachers, while fifteen years on, Day et al. (2007) acknowledge the changing and complex home lives of contemporary teachers' family lives which can include 'increases in dual career families, one parent families, and later starts to families' (p. 244).

Rolls and Plauborg (2009) summarise the mid-career as the period when teaching careers are 'characterised by teachers that are focused on pedagogical and curricular development as well as their own career development' (p. 22). Although, they also acknowledge the increased work/life tensions which can be experienced due to changing personal and professional circumstances (Day et al., 2007).

2.4.3 Late-Career Stage

It is broadly agreed that teachers working in their late-career phase, or *veteran* teachers (Day & Gu, 2009) are considered to be skilful and proficient in their role and routines. Although it is also recognised that some teachers become *disenchanted* or *serene* as they reach career *wind down* (Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993), with Day et al., (2007) recognising that there are both personal and professional challenges to sustaining motivation as teachers approach retirement. Kington et al. (2013) found that teachers in the mid- and late-career phases allocate more time to developing personal relationships with pupils, and are more concerned with nurturing self-esteem and maintaining mutual trust and respect, which concurs with Day and Gu (2009) who discovered that, for later career teachers, positive pupil-teacher relationships are a main source of fulfilment and pleasure.

Sikes et al. (1985) included teachers in their study who had been promoted to leadership roles taking them out of the classroom, an approach which differed from studies with a central focused on those who were primarily still teaching in the classroom (Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993). This meant that they were able to consider the 'counter-incidents' in later career, which had been stage managed (such as a promotion to head of department, or subject), rather than the unanticipated critical incidents which are often experienced by newly qualified teachers. Sikes also found that some mature teachers considered themselves to be seen as the 'dependable backbone of the school' (p. 51), and had taken on unpaid responsibilities which improved their status on an *informal* hierarchy, placing them as more competent and professional than newer teachers.

As teachers enter the late phase of their careers, there is a general consensus that their increased knowledge and abilities give them increased confidence as a teacher, with notions of *settling down*, *stabilization* and *stability* (Sikes et al., 1985; Huberman, 1993). However, the belief that increasing years of experience in teaching automatically leads to expertise and effectiveness was challenged by Day et al. (2007), who found that teachers with longer service 'are not necessarily more effective in relation to their pupils' levels of attainment than their younger counterparts' (p. 101). This finding challenged the notion that professional learning is as linear as the more traditional stage theories had suggested.

Major changes in educational policy, such as secondary reorganisation, along with changes in personal lives (such as divorce, bereavement, grandparenthood) were considered to have a 'profound effect on teacher careers' (Sikes et al., 1985, p. 231) as they tried to navigate new situations at a later age, while 'policy diktats continued to demonstrate a strong negative impact on teachers' sense of effectiveness' (Day et al., 2007, p. 93) for late-career phase teachers in a study twenty years on. The influence of policy reform on teachers' work has also been recognised within international educational literature (e.g. Goodson et al., 2006; Olsen & Sexton, 2009), acknowledging the key role that teachers' work plays in the enactment of change (Hargreaves et al., 2005), along with the professional learning which is required to implement reforms successfully (Hoekstra et al., 2009) and the influence of educational reform on professional commitment (e.g. Day et al., 2005).

2.4.4 Commitment Across a Career

While Nias' (1981, 1989) seminal work acknowledged the frequency that the term 'commitment' was used by primary teachers to describe their own or others level of altruism, it seems that much of the seminal work concerned with a teaching career focusses as much on teachers' level of commitment as on their professional learning and career trajectories. It is perhaps inevitable that commitment is recognised as 'a key factor in teachers' work' (Day

et al., 2007), as the importance of an individual's commitment to a career has been recognised since Erikson's (1959, 1968) psychosocial stages, Levinson's (1986) seasons and Super's (1980) life span approach to careers, and has long been acknowledged as an important workplace behaviour (e.g. Becker, 1960). Teacher career stage models suggest that teachers' commitment can differ according to stage, with terms such as *stabilisation* (Huberman, 1993) or *frustration* (Fessler & Christensen, 1992) used to denote either the decision to commit to teaching or a feeling of disillusionment with the profession. Sikes et al.'s (1985) *age 30 transition* was characterised by teachers who either made a long-term commitment to a teaching career, or were beginning to consider alternative options, with the mid-career phase being recognised as a 'watershed' period, when changes in their professional and/or personal lives can cause tensions which challenge commitment and resilience (Day et al., 2007; Kington et al., 2014).

Fessler and Christensen (1992) suggest that, beyond the *enthusiastic and growing* stage, some teachers working in later career phases are 'doing what is expected of them, but little more' (p.171), while in contrast, Day et al. (2007) assert that 'teachers in their early years were, in relative terms, no more or less committed than those in middle or later years', stressing that commitment should be understood in the context of 'policy, pupil, personal and practice factors' (p. 226). Although Sikes and colleagues (1985) appear to conceptualise commitment as a behavioural phenomenon, which is related to teacher attrition (Chapman, 1983; Smithers & Robinson, 2003, 2005), Day et al. refer to 'quality retention' (i.e. teachers who are giving their best in the classroom), with commitment being defined in terms of an attitude to teaching, rooted in their personal values and motivations.

While some educational literature conceptualises commitment in terms of motivation and the positive attitude which teachers have (e.g. Day et al., 2007; Sammons et al., 2007), and a dedication to make a difference to young people (e.g. Day & Gu, 2009), organisational literature has conceptualised commitment as ' … a psychological state that binds the individual to the organization (i.e. makes turnover less likely)' (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p.14), a conception more closely aligned with Sikes et al. (1985). Meyer and Allen (1997) assert that commitment is a multidimensional construct, which can be sustained due to feelings of *obligation* (normative commitment), to *avoid* any potential loss from breaking the attachment (continuance commitment) or a *desire* to belong (affective commitment). Affective commitment has been found to be associated with positive work outcomes such as retention, performance and citizenship behaviours at work (Meyer et al., 2002), and is more closely aligned to the conception of commitment which is typically used in educational literature which is 'ideological in nature' (Day et al., 2005, p. 570).

Teacher commitment also has associations with positive outcomes. For example, Day et al. (2007) assert that pupils who are taught by highly committed teachers are likely to see higher academic attainment, irrespective of the career phase in which the teachers work. This being said, a reduction in teacher commitment is problematic, not only in terms of teacher attrition (Chapman, 1983; Smithers & Robinson, 2003, 2005), but also in terms of sustaining school performance (Gu & Johansson, 2013). Studies have found that teachers' sense of self-efficacy (Canrinus, 2012; Klassen et al., 2013), strong relationships (Gu, 2014; Kington et al., 2014; Spilt et al., 2011), school leadership (Devos et al., 2012), and policy reforms (Day et al., 2005) are all associated with commitment and resilience, with Hong (2010) citing poor pupil behaviour and negative emotions as being related to teacher attrition. The relationship between self-concept and organisational commitment which has been established in organisational literature (e.g. Johnson & Chang, 2006), was supported by Day et al. (2007) who argued that commitment 'is affected primarily by teachers' sense of identity' (p. 215), mediated positively and negatively by personal, situated and professional influences (discussed further in *teacher professional identity* section, **2.5.2**).

The next section of this review will consider the broad literature which is concerned with developing a sense of identity, along with literature which has a particular focus on how teachers build and sustain a sense of professional identity.

2.5 *Identity*

The notion that a person's identity plays an important role in their career development and commitment is not new. Indeed, the idea of 'self-concept' was a central theme in Super's (1957, 1963) theory of career development, and was incorporated into his developmental perspective of careers. Super (1957, 1980) asserted that personal beliefs, values and self-perceptions (which develop before an adult's career begins) can influence later career satisfaction and success, viewing career development as a continual process of aligning one's self-concept with the work environment. Hall (1971) considered a person's career to be a series of *sub identities*, with each transition from one career role to another representing a change in role expectations and self-image. Before focusing on the idea of teacher professional identity, it is helpful to discuss and understand the general notion of identity as it is described in seminal literature.

Identity has been studied in diverse fields such as anthropology, philosophy, sociology and psychology, with the term 'identity' being used interchangeably with words such as personality, character, self-concept and role. In research terms, Breakwell (1986) suggests that 'the behaviourist employing factor analytical methods on questionnaire material from large scale surveys talks about personality; the psychoanalyst or psychodynamic theorist using single

clinical case studies might be more likely to refer to the ego or identity; the symbolic interactionist might talk of the self-concept' (p.10) and she considers any distinction which has been drawn between different terms to be exaggerated.

There is not sufficient space within this literature review for a full discussion on the similarity or difference between the terms 'self' and 'identity' and so I will herein take the position that terms such as self, self-concept, self-image and self-esteem fit comfortably under the larger umbrella of 'identity' and literature which reference either of these conceptions, if considered relevant, is included within this review.

2.5.1 Models of Identity

Fundamentally, a person's identity is rooted in their ability to answer the question 'Who am I?' Although Erikson's (1950, 1959) model of personal development spans the periods of infancy through to late adulthood, he understood the question 'Who am I?' to be instigated and, all being well, to be answered during the adolescence crisis of *identity versus role confusion.* Erikson considered adolescence to be the stage when an identity is formulated because he believed this to be when individuals develop both physically and cognitively, enabling reasoning and integration of a set of personal beliefs and values. Whitbourne and Connolly (1999) extended his theoretical model, considering intimacy, generativity and integrity to be subcategories of identity, rather than distinct stages. Although this conceptualisation of identity outlines the changes over time, identity from this perspective is typically considered to be fixed and stable once it has developed (e.g. Arnett, 2000).

This developmental conception of identity refers to identity at a personal level which 'represents the amount of self-knowledge, synthesis, and consistency that a person possesses over time and across situations' (Schwartz et al. 2009, p.143). This personal or individual conception of identity includes the notion in which the life course is considered to be constructed through narration, focusing on the stories which a person tells themselves and others, and how this process encapsulates and re-establishes their personal identity (Klein, 2001; McAdams, 2006). Erikson's (1950, 1959) concept of generativity has also been incorporated into this life-story approach, with the assertion that stories of generative actions become more common during midlife (McAdams, 1996, 2001). Other aspects of an individual's self-image and identity development could include self-evaluations (Sedikides & Gregg, 2008), personal expression and goals (Marcia, 1966; Waterman, 1999), feelings of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1989), and expectations about a possible future (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Mead's (1934) work has also been influential in contemporary thinking about self and identity. While he recognised the biological and individual aspect of self ('I'), he considered the whole

self to be composed of both an 'I' and a 'Me' (the self-composed from the attitudes of others). Blumer (1969) coined the phrase 'symbolic interaction' to define Mead's assertion that human nature is a social state, developed through language and social experiences, with social interaction being primary, 'for society and self both emerge from social process' (Serpe & Stryker, 2011, p.227).

> *'The self is both the ''I'' and the ''me''; the me setting the situation to which the 'I' responds. Both the 'I' and the 'me' are involved in the self, and here each supports the other … The ''me'' I have said, presents the situation within which conduct takes place, and the ''I'' is the actual response to that situation'* (Mead, 1934, p. 277).

While both Erikson's and Mead's work view that there is a personal and social aspect to identity, self-categorisation theory (Hogg, 2011; Turner et al., 1994) draws a clear distinction between a personal and a social identity, due to an individual's connection to, and identification with, a significant social group. From a self-categorisation perspective, a person's self-concept can move between a personal and social identity, dependent on the 'process of social categorisation and of identification with the groups we belong to, which we then characterise as part of ourselves' (Spears, 2013, p.203). An individual can have several different social identities (e.g. female, researcher, member of a political party), which relate to different social contexts (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987). From this perspective, rather than being an entity, identity is generally viewed as a process; the process of *identification* (Jenkins, 2008, p.5), where the social group is not external to the individual, but upholds values which can be internalised and contribute to a person's 'definition of his own position' (Turner, 1985).

The importance of these social identity processes have also been recognised in other fields, where the concept of an occupational identity (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Haslam & Ellemers, 2013) has attracted much interest in organisational studies (also referred to as *organisational* identity). Several studies attest to the benefits gained by organisations whose employees identify with the organisations aims and goals, such as increased performance (e.g. Voss et al., 2006) and resilience to stress (Haslam & Reicher, 2006). Identity then, is also acknowledged as being important to organisational life (Haslam et al., 2003), with Haslam and Ellemers (2013) asserting that 'identity lies not only at the centre of organisational psychology, but at the heart of the organisation itself' (p. 716).

It is also acknowledged in organisational literature that individuals can have an identity which is unique to a particular profession (e.g. medicine and law), referred to as a *professional* identity (Ibarra, 1999; Pratt et al., 2006). Pertinent to this thesis is the distinct and growing area of research which is concerned specifically with the professional identity of teachers,

illustrated by a number of literature reviews on the subject (e.g. Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Izadinia, 2013).

2.5.2 Teacher Professional Identity

In a general move away from developing a model of teachers' careers, the study of teachers' professional identity is increasingly recognised as essential to understanding their lives and work. Teacher professional identity is the way in which teachers understand their professional selves and is shaped across a career (Day et al., 2007; Huberman, 1993; Kelchtermans, 2009b; Sikes, Measor, & Woods, 1985). The construct of teachers' professional identity is important to understanding both the personal and professional aspects of teaching (Olsen, 2010), being related to motivation, efficacy, and intentions to leave the profession (Canrinus et al., 2012; Day et al., 2007; Hong, 2010). Professional identity has also been identified as an important influence in teachers' response to school reforms (Day, 2002; Day et al., 2005; Lasky, 2005), and in turn, teachers' sense of professional identity can be influenced by educational reform (e.g. Kelchtermans, 2005).

It may be suggested that it is not only past personal beliefs and visions of the teacher they wish to become (Hamman et al., 2010, 2013) which direct their sense of professional identity, but also the contexts in which they live and work (Beauchamp & Thomas 2009; Flores & Day 2006; Hong 2010; Schepens et al. 2009). Other studies have supported this idea (Olsen, 2008; Sfard & Prusak, 2005), defining identity from a sociocultural perspective, viewing teacher identity as the product of external influences, and as an ongoing process of development which is influenced by multiple roles and relationships.

Much as developmental identity studies have tended to have a focus on the stage of adolescence and young adulthood (Rattansi & Phoenix, 2005), teacher identity studies have tended to have their focus predominantly on the period of transition from student to classroom teacher (e.g. Flores & Day, 2006; Lovett & Davey, 2009; McNally, Blake & Reid, 2009). Although Beijaard (2011) states that the concept of identity 'implies a holistic lens for looking at becoming *and being* a teacher' (p.515, emphasis added), these studies typically explore how the development a professional identity relates to the period of *becoming* a teacher, during the transition from student to teacher (e.g. Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Kelchtermans and Ballet 2002), citing the conflicts and tensions (Pillen et al., 2013a, 2013b) which have previously characterised the period of 'reality shock' (Veenman, 1984) at the beginning of a teacher's career. In contrast, Izadinia's (2013) literature review notes that many studies concerned with the development of student teachers' professional identity present 'a rosy picture' (p.709), overlooking the inevitable tensions and challenges which will be met on

entering the classroom. She argues that 'failing to incorporate a realistic and sophisticated understanding of teacher identity construction into teacher education amounts to failure to fulfil the most fundamental aim of teacher education, which is helping teachers to teach' (p.709). There is also a growing body of research suggesting that teachers in the later stages of their careers are experiencing identity tensions between recognising the personal needs and circumstances of individual children in their classes and meeting the objectives of the school (e.g. Day et al. 2005).

Although Day et al.'s (2007) professional life phases had a broad focus on the effectiveness of teachers, their findings also supported an earlier review of research on teachers' professional identity (Beijaard et al., 2004) which summarised it to be a dynamic and ongoing process of interpretation of events, with analysis suggesting that teachers' professional identity involves both personal and contextual influences. They discovered associations between teachers' professional identities, their career phase and commitment, asserting that to develop a positive professional identity requires a successful negotiation between three dimensions: *personal* (influenced by life outside of school), *situated* (influenced by the specific school in which they work) and *professional* (influenced by long-term policy and social expectations of what constitutes a good teacher). Day et al. (2007) argue that;

> *'Each dimension of identity is subject to a number of positive and negative influences. It is the degree of dominance which these influences have on each dimension of identity, and the way teachers manage them, which determine the relative stability or instability of teachers' composite identities and whether these are positive or negative' (p. 107).*

Studies concerned with teacher professional identity have tended to evolve in parallel from each other, which has led to the assertion that an integrated definition is needed (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Izadinia, 2013), rather than the fragmented pockets of knowledge which have been created. Despite the importance of teachers' sense of professional identity to motivation, resilience, commitment and effectiveness (e.g. Canrinus et al., 2012; Day et al., 2007; Hong, 2010), a comprehensive model which considers the development of teacher professional identity across early, middle and late-career phases has not yet been developed.

2.6 *Chapter Summary*

The purpose of this literature review was to *inform* this grounded theory study, by considering a sample of the seminal literature concerned with life span and career development, teachers' careers, commitment and professional identity development, so that the current study is located within the existing literature and a background has been established for the project.

The review has highlighted the connection between a teacher's life span, their career, and the personal, situated and professional contexts which can influence career trajectories. Previous literature concerned with teachers' lives and careers has identified the fluctuations in commitment which are common during different career stages (Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993; Sikes et al., 1985), while Day et al. (2007) found that teachers' commitment is influenced by professional identity and professional life phases. During the last twenty years, the focus of research appears to have shifted from career stages and trajectories towards the study of teachers' professional identity, which has evolved into a separate, and growing, research area (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard et al., 2004; Izadinia, 2013).

With this in mind, Rolls and Plauborg (2009) noted that the key challenge within this field of research is 'to re-conceptualise the term career trajectories in such a way that it reflects the complexity of contemporary career patterns' (p.26). Therefore, this study will build on extant literature which has found relationships between primary teachers' sense of professional identity and their commitment during different phases of their career (Day et al. 2007; Kington et al. 2014), by developing a theoretical model which considers all phases of a teaching career through the lens of professional identity and commitment.

2.6.1 Aims and Objectives

The main aims of the research will be;

- To *identify* key positive influences on primary teachers' professional identity and commitment in different career phases and different school contexts.
- To *acknowledge* key tensions, professional and personal concerns and professional life pathways or trajectories of teachers in different phases of their careers, in different school contexts, which challenge their capacity to sustain positive professional identities.
- To *understand* how and why primary teachers sustain positive professional identities and commitment at different phases of their careers and in different school contexts.
- To *build* a theoretical model which illustrates the development of a positive professional identity and the relationship to commitment across a teaching career.

The key objectives of this research will be;

- To *explore* (using a qualitative approach) the ways that primary teachers respond to and build upon positive opportunities and favourable influences and relationships in

their life and work contexts, overcoming challenges and scenarios which they experience over the course of their careers.

- To *reveal* the conditions, which enable teachers to maintain the belief that they can make a difference to the lives of young people and to sustain a commitment to this belief.
- To *foreground* the perspective of the teacher, seeking to gain an understanding into their lived experiences.

2.6.2 Research Questions

The central aim of this research is to develop a theoretical model which illustrates the development of a positive professional identity across primary school teachers' careers. It is necessary then to identify the key influences on primary teachers' professional identity in different career phases and to explore how these influences impact on their commitment to the profession over time. The research questions were developed to recognise the diversity of primary school contexts in which teachers work. The research design also ensures the flexibility to acknowledge and address any policy changes which might occur during the period of study. The two research questions which this study will respond to are;

1. What are the key influences on primary teachers' sense of professional identities at different phases of their careers?

2. To what extent do these key influences impact positively and negatively upon primary school teachers' commitment to the profession?

The next chapter of this thesis will offer an explanation and rationale for the methodology and methods which have been employed to answer the above research questions.

3 Methodology

This chapter will present an explanation for the selection of methodological approach taken in this study. The theoretical underpinnings and the chosen methodology and methods of the study will be discussed, along with the rationale for employing a qualitative rather than a quantitative method of inquiry to answer the research questions. After providing an overview of grounded theory, the reasons for employing a constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) as a methodological framework along with life history methods (Goodson, 2008, Goodson and Sikes, 2017) as an appropriate means of data collection will be explained. The sampling and recruitment strategies are also defined.

3.1 *Theoretical Foundations*

Quantitative inquiry pursues explanations and causation with the aim of providing conclusive 'evidence', with tools being employed to collect 'data in numerical form' (Coolican, 2009: p.26) within what is referred to as positivist research. The aim of this research (see **2.6.1**) - to *understand* the ways that teachers sustain a positive professional identity and commitment across a career - does not fit into a research paradigm with the purpose of testing existing theories, discovering causal relationships, or to emphasise measurement of data. In contrast, this study employs qualitative research methods, which position me, the researcher, as 'the primary instrument of inquiry for data collection and analysis' (Merriam, 2002, p.5). Qualitative methodologies such as phenomenology and social constructionism utilise language and stories to help the researcher access the underlying perceptions, beliefs and emotions relating to a particular situation or event, in order to better understand the experience as lived by the participant, along with the meanings that they ascribe to that experience (Barker, Pistrang & Elliott, 2002).

Epistemology is the study of the way that we define knowledge (how we come to know what we know) and is integral to the research process (Dick, 2013), with Carter and Little (2007) suggesting that epistemology can be considered to be 'the justification of knowledge' (p. 1317). For a research design to be robust, researchers should select a research paradigm that is congruent with their personal beliefs about the nature of reality (Mills et al., 2006). Recognising the active role that a researcher takes in the construction of knowledge, I take a critical stance towards the traditional positivist research paradigm of science, which assumes that knowledge is based on objective, unbiased observations of the world. My personal view is that what is accepted as knowledge about the world depends on *where* and *when* a person lives, as what is *known* is specific to a particular culture at a particular time in history. I reject the notion of an objective 'truth' and consider knowledge to be constructed through social processes, created and developed by people as they enact their lives. This study, therefore,

sought to build on the existing research about teachers' professional identity taking the epistemological position of *social constructionism*, which is founded on the understanding that people construct their identity through relationships, language, choices and practices (Elliott, 2005).

As the use of language and other human practice is central to social constructionism, the theoretical perspective which underpins this research should take account of these important structures. Symbolic Interactionism is an interpretivist perspective which has its foundations in the work of George Mead (Mead, 1934) and assumes that it is the actions taken by people and the language they use that construct the self and society. While humans construct the social worlds in which they live, individuals then respond to collective actions, and this is viewed as a reciprocal process. Mead (1934) asserts that the 'self' is located and developed through interactions with the social world, and the two cannot be separated, while Blumer (1969) stresses the significance of the interpretation of interactions. Charmaz (2014) notes that unlike traditional sciences which assume stability and continuity, the symbolic interactionist perspective assumes that process and change are fundamental to human life and attempts to explain stability.

One of the aims for this research was to build a theoretical model which will illustrate the development of a positive professional identity and the relationship to commitment across a teaching career, and as school is a *socially constructed* world (Goodson, 2008), the concept of 'self' as constructed through social interaction is appropriate. It makes sense then to employ a research methodology and design which, while allowing for exploration of teachers experiences and the meanings they assign to them, will also allow for the development of an explanatory theory as the analysis evolves. For this reason, the overarching methodology which is most applicable to my study and its anticipated outcomes is a Grounded Theory approach. Therefore, this study will seek to build on the existing research drawing from grounded theory analytical processes, with its theoretical foundations rooted in symbolic interactionism (**figure 3.1**).

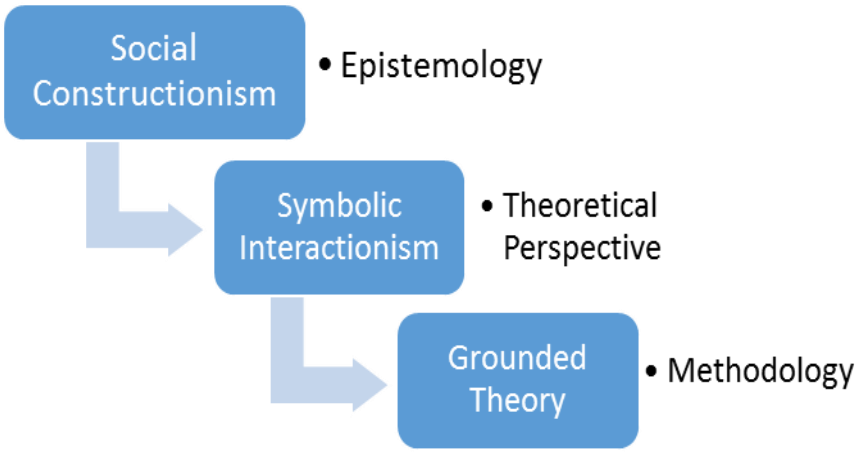


Figure 3.1 A visual representation of the theoretical foundations underpinning the methodology of this study

3.1.1 Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory was first identified as a method of analysis in the seminal work of sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in which they advocated the development of a novel theory which emerged from data as it was collected, coded, and analysed simultaneously. As a research methodology, grounded theory takes an inductive approach to build conceptual models and theories which are quite literally grounded in qualitative data. Having initially developed grounded theory as an alternative systematic strategy to the dominant quantitative research methods prevalent in the 1960s, which Glaser and Strauss felt only served to validate existent theories, the aim was to 'move qualitative inquiry beyond descriptive studies into the realm of explanatory theoretical frameworks' (Charmaz, 2014, p.8)

The original grounded theory collaboration (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) had successfully combined both Glaser's positivist and Strauss' pragmatist contrasting sociological traditions. It later became apparent that both researchers had strong theoretical and philosophical beliefs that differed in fundamental ways (Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987) and two divergent schools of grounded theory emerged (van Niekerk & Roode, 2009). These schools are referred to as either the *Glaserian* approach, which operates within a post-positivist paradigm or the constructivist *Straussian* approach, which acknowledges human agency and subjective meanings (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Glaserian and Straussian grounded theory approaches diverged in several ways, with positivist and interpretive traditions being acknowledged by Charmaz (2014) as she juxtaposes the objectivist and constructivist positions. Glaser believed that to acknowledge extant literature at the beginning of the research process would result in

preconceived ideas being 'forced' from the data (Glaser, 1992; Glaser, 1998), while Corbin and Strauss (2008) advocate that a literature review can be performed at any stage. While the Straussian perspective supports formulating research questions from existing literature, prior experience or knowledge before entering the field (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Corbin & Strauss, 2008), the Glaserian approach rejects starting the process with prior knowledge or preconceived research questions. The analytical methods for both approaches are coding and constant comparison methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967 p.102) combined with sampling which is aimed towards the construction of a theory (theoretical sampling).

3.1.2 Constructivist Grounded Theory

> *'Stated simply, grounded theory methods consist of systematic, yet flexible guidelines for collecting and analysing qualitative data to construct theories from the data themselves.' (Charmaz, 2014, p.1).*

Literature concerned with qualitative research methods (e.g. Morse et al., 2009) recognises the work of Glaser and Strauss as the *first generation* of grounded theorists and acknowledges that subsequent influential grounded theorists used their ideas as a "launch pad" (Birks & Mills, 2015, p.3). For this thesis, I have adopted the antecedent methodology of the 'second generation' constructivist grounded theorist (Charmaz, 2014).

This contemporary approach embraces the methodological developments which have arisen in qualitative inquiry since the original 'discovery' of grounded theory and openly presents the

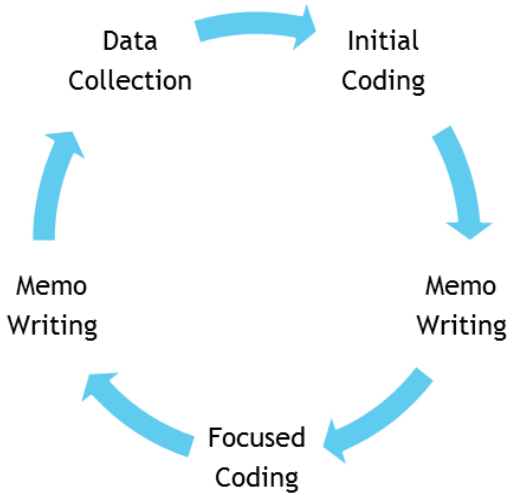


Figure 3.2 Illustration of the continual procedure of coding and memo writing in grounded theory

subjective nature of the researcher. The relationship between the researcher and the participant positions the process as a joint construction of knowledge which is located in a particular time, while retaining the procedural strategies of coding, memo writing and theoretical sampling which were present in the early work, illustrated in **figure 3.2**.

The assumption of this approach is made clear and 'places priority on the phenomena of study and sees both data and analysis as created from shared experiences and relationships with participants and other sources of data.' (Charmaz, 2006, p.130). A more detailed overview of the procedure which was followed during data analysis in this grounded theory study will be discussed in detail in chapter **4.**

3.2 *Methods*

While methodology concerns the ideas and values which are compatible with the particular philosophy informing the research design, methods are the practical ways in which a researcher generates and analyses data. There are no recommended or specific tools for data collection in grounded theory, but the strategies for the analysis phase, which will be outlined in the next chapter, are prescriptive (Charmaz, 2010). Epistemology shapes methods (Carter & Little, 2007; Charmaz, 2015). With constructivist grounded theory as a methodological framework, the next section outlines the process of life history interviews (Goodson, 2008; Goodson & Sikes, 2017), which were employed as data collection methods in this study to answer the research questions.

3.2.1 Ethical Considerations

As this research involves human participants it has been conducted with the appropriate ethical oversight (George, 2016) in order to protect participants (and researchers) from any potential harm (Sikes, 2006). With this in mind, ethical approval was sought and granted from University of Worcester Ethics Committee (see **Appendix A**). Although ethics is a formal part of studying for a PhD, it is important to continue to reflect on ethics throughout the research process. For this reason, after gaining initial informed consent (see **Appendix C**) from each participant, I continued to check throughout the project that verbal consent was maintained and that participants remained aware that they could withdraw from the project at any time. The ethical considerations for this study were also related to issues of respect for each participant (acknowledging and respecting their personal beliefs and values), being sincere with participants, doing them no harm, and considering any possible consequences of this study on individual participants or the school community (Stutchbury & Fox, 2009). Each participant was aware that their data would be anonymised, and a pseudonym would be used. Each interview was digitally recorded in order that a verbatim account could be transcribed for

analysis. Hand notes were also taken to record any nonverbal observations, or any points of interest which may have been returned to later in the interview. The study adheres to the British Educational Research Association (BERA) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2014) and the University of Worcester Ethics Policy (2014).

3.3 *Research Design*

3.3.1 Sample

A sample of twenty teachers participated in this study, adopting the three broad career phases of early (NQT-7 years of teaching), mid (8-23 years of teaching), and late (24+ years of teaching) from previous studies (Day et al., 2007; Kington, 2012). The sample included practitioners working in early (N=7), mid (N=6), and late (N=7) career phases. The need to identify a population of primary school teachers working across career phases, along with the iterative nature of a grounded theory study required that a theoretical sampling method was employed (McCrae & Purssell, 2016). Initial participants were recruited by drawing on the University of Worcester's associations with local primary schools i.e. contacting head teachers directly asking them to distribute information letters (see **Appendix B**) to any interested parties. As the study progressed teachers who were working in the specific career phases which enabled representation from across all three career phases proved to be harder to identify and reach. This challenge was overcome by the use of both traditional and virtual snowball sampling methods (Baltar & Brunet, 2012). **Appendix D** shows screen shots of recruitment related tweets which were shared on my personal Twitter account to increase potential reach (Wasilewski et al., 2018).

As analysis of the first interviews began, with initial and tentative codes and categories being developed, data continued to be collected, and the process of constant comparison was employed (see section **4.3**). With qualitative research it is the depth of exploration and analysis which is important, rather than the sample size. In keeping with a grounded theory approach, data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously (Charmaz, 2014), and the recruitment of subsequent participants and interviews continued until theoretical saturation had been reached. Theoretical saturation is reached as a result of theoretical sampling; that is, 'sampling on the basis of concepts that have proven theoretical relevance to the evolving theory' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.176). Saturation was reached when sufficient data had been collected to account for all features of each emergent category.

All of the teachers in this study were working/had worked within different contexts in primary education, to include maintained schools, academy schools and free schools; representing primary schools in rural, urban and semi-urban settings across England. All participants had

achieved Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and were working in different teaching roles including Newly Qualified Teachers, Key Stage Leaders, Senior Leadership and Head Teacher roles. **Table 3.1** shows characteristics of the teachers who participated in the study.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of sample of teachers in this study

Pseudonym	Years in teaching	Age	Sex	Route into teaching	Most recent role	School type
Early Career Phase (NQT-7 years teaching)						
Andrea	NQT	45	F	PGCE	Y3 Teacher	Primary Academy
Anna	NQT - 1	26	F	B.Ed.	Y2 Teacher	Community First*
Michelle	2	38	F	PGCE	Y1 Teacher	Voluntary Aided Primary (CofE)
Russell	2	31	M	Teach First	Y4 Teacher	Primary Academy
Justin	3	28	M	Teach First	Head of Y2/ Class Teacher	Free School
Sophie	5	27	F	PGCE	Foundation Teacher	Community First
Cat	5	34	F	GTP	Y5/6 Teacher/ Assistant Head	Community Special School
Mid Career Phase (8-23 years teaching)						
Ellie	9	34	F	PGCE	Y2 Teacher	Voluntary Aided Primary (RC)
Nigel	10	40	M	B.Ed.	Head of Y1/ Senior Leadership	Community Primary*
Katie	11	40	F	GTP	Y1 Teacher	Community Primary
Emma	16	37	F	B.Ed.	Y2 Teacher	Community First
Ricky	17	41	M	B.Ed.	Head Teacher	Primary Academy (CofE)
Louise	18	40	F	B.Ed.	Early Years Lead/ Assistant Head	Community Special School

Table 3.1 continued

Late Career Phase (24+ years teaching)						
Sarah	24	45	F	B.Ed.	Deputy Head	Primary Pupil Referral Unit
Julia	25	46	F	B.Ed.	Y2 Teacher	Community Primary
Janet	26	49	F	B.Ed.	Head Teacher	Community Primary
Norma	27	50	F	B.Ed.	Part-time Y6 Teacher/University Lecturer	Community Primary
Alan	28	51	M	B.Ed.	Y1 Teacher/ SENCO	Community Primary
Lee	33	57	M	PGCE	Head Teacher	Community Primary with a religious character (CofE)
Sue	38 (retired)	65	F	B.Ed.	Advanced Practice Teacher	Local Authority
* School converted to academy status during contact						

3.3.2 Data Collection

Each participant was interviewed twice, spanning the academic years of 2015/2016 and 2016/2017. Initial informal life history conversations (Goodson, 2008) and professional time-line interviews (Goodson & Sikes, 2017) were conducted with each participant, with selected teachers (N=6) also partaking in a follow up semi structured interview which gave an opportunity for clarification of any points raised in previous interviews. This third interview also offered a chance for member checking (Charmaz, 2014), whereby the grounded theorist is able to ask questions related to emerging themes within the data and to receive participant feedback, in order to elaborate categories. In line with the constructivist grounded theory approach, data was analysed simultaneously through coding, constant comparison, and theoretical conceptualizing.

3.3.2.1 Life History Interviews

Life history interviews (Goodson, 2008) were conducted with each participant. Life histories are a specific type of case study, concerning one individual's life. The aim of these interviews was to understand individual stories as located in a particular time and place, while also considering any historical, contextual or political influences. This unstructured conversation provided an opportunity to explore the whole person, and to understand each participant's personal beliefs about teaching and education. The interview explored teachers own early experiences of being at school, their family life, and any particular beliefs or values which could have potentially influenced their professional identity. The process of life history interviewing is congruent with the epistemological standpoint of constructivist grounded theory (Betts, 2012).

The initial interview was an extended, unstructured interview, which enabled each teacher to tell his or her own unique story, to help give me a complete understanding of their personal journey into teaching, rather than any story which I may have assumed or predicted. Each interview lasted approximately between one and two hours, though time was reduced or extended in accordance with the participant's preferred contribution and any time restrictions. The interviews each took place in a private and comfortable setting, chosen by the participant. I asked them to choose a place where they felt at ease to talk, for example, some teachers preferred that the interview took place in their own home, some preferred a private office at school and one teacher met me in the coffee lounge of a local hotel.

Although participants were free to discuss topics of particular interest to them, an interview guide was used in order to prompt memories relating to their personal journey into teaching (see **Appendix E**). This guide was used as a framework for the *grounded conversation* (Goodson & Sikes, 2001), rather than as strict instructions to follow. Each personal narrative was then transcribed into a Word document and analysed using processes outlined in chapter **4**. Data analysis required complete immersion in the data (Goodson, 2008) achieved by reading and re-reading transcripts, focusing particular attention to both unique and/or common themes which emerged.

3.3.2.2 Professional Timeline Interviews

Whereas previous studies have been conducted with the purpose of developing models of career stages or phases (Day et al., 2007; Huberman et al., 1993, Sikes et al., 1985), the goal of this study was to understand the development of teachers' professional identity and commitment *over time*. A second interview followed the initial life history interview, during which I was able to feedback initial thoughts and themes that had emerged so far. Rather than being an open conversation about each teachers' general life history, this interview was more

specifically about their professional history; their experience of *being* a teacher. Kelchterman (2009a) asserts that 'career stories' allow for a deeper understanding of teachers' personal experiences (and how they make sense of those experiences) over time, rather than focusing on the specific roles or responsibilities which they might undertake throughout their careers. It has been argued that the relevance of individual stories 'lies not so much in their historical truth, but their power to reveal the particular meaning events had for the teacher' (Kelchterman, 2009a, p. 31).

Teachers had completed a professional timeline (see **Appendix F**) prior to this second interview, which had a particular emphasis on the phase in which they were working. Completing the timeline enabled each participant to review and reflect on their own career journey. Each participant drew a continuous line on the chart to indicate fluctuations in their own professional identity as a teacher over time (they were told that the line might be a series of peaks and troughs, with peaks indicating a stable, positive professional identity and troughs indicating an unstable professional identity). A discussion followed. While particular interest was paid to peaks and troughs which indicated a critical incident (Sikes et al., 1985) relating to a change in professional identity and/or commitment to the profession, I felt that it was also important to explore the omissions, or the spaces in between.

Encouraging a discussion around the transition from peaks to troughs (or vice versa) offered important contextual information, helping to locate each individual story in a broader social context. Kelchterman (2009a) acknowledges that these key events or turning points can also be connected to a significant person or to working within a particular group, and so attention was paid to the mention of 'critical persons'. The critical incidents were explored further to explore the contexts, circumstances and contributing factors (whether personal, situated or professional influences) which were identified as being influential in the change. A copy of the verbatim transcript for the professional timeline interview was again provided to each participant.

3.3.2.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Each semi-structured interview which was conducted had a focus on the themes and ideas which had emerged during analysis of preceding interview data, and also included questions unique to individual participants, which aided in the development and refinement of emerging theoretical ideas (see **Appendix I** for an example interview schedule). Semi-structured interviews offered me the freedom to explore topics which had emerged as being significant to the participants (Sullivan, Gibson, & Riley, 2012) in previous interviews and the flexibility to discard questions which were not relevant. This meant that unlike quantitative methods of data collection, such as surveys, it allowed me the flexibility to encourage an area of interest to

develop, and also to omit any questions which I considered to be irrelevant to any particular individual participant.

Each interview was recorded using digital equipment and was transcribed verbatim. The iterative process of a grounded theory approach meant that after each interview was conducted, transcribed, and subjected to initial analysis, I had the flexibility to revisit and, if necessary, reframe tentative conceptual categories before constructing additional data with a different participant. Although the first six participants in this study participated in this third interview, as the grounded theory developed, my understanding increased, and emergent categories were being defined and refined, I was able to ask questions for clarification and interpretation purposes during the initial life history and the professional timeline interviews. For this reason, it was not necessary to interview every participant three times. An account of the iterative process of interviews and analysis is provided in section **4.3**.

Once transcribed, a copy of each interview transcript was returned to participants to check for accuracy. This provided them with the opportunity to make any changes, to clarify meaning of the data, or to remove any information which they considered to be identifying or which they simply did not wish to be included in the thesis. Only one teacher requested the removal of data, which related to a professional development opportunity which he thought might make him identifiable. The time allocated for this discussion also proved to be an important step in building a trusting relationship with each participant.

In addition to this universal member checking activity I discussed the analysis with two participants from each career phase during the third semi-structured interview. This technique offered participants 'the opportunity to engage with, and add to, interview and interpreted data' (Birt et al., 2016, p.1802) several months after the initial interviews. The presentation of emergent categories and themes enabled an exploration as to whether my interpretation resonated with teachers' experiences while embracing the co-constructed nature of constructivist grounded theory.

3.4 *Validity and Reliability*

The notion of validity and reliability originate from the scientific traditions associated with positivist research, where results are deemed to be valid if they 'reflect the study variables accurately', and reliable if they are 'likely to be consistently accurate' (Birks & Mills, 2015, p.141). This grounded theory study used life history methods to generate rich data to develop an understanding of the key influences on primary teachers' sense of professional identity and the relationship to commitment. Hussein et al. (2014) assert that the issue of generalisation is not discussed in qualitative research 'because the main goal of qualitative research is to provide a rich and contextualized understanding of the human experience' (p. 8).

Within qualitative studies, where the processes are interpretive, the researcher accepts and acknowledges the influence their own biases will have on any results with a 'more or less subjective interpretation' (Rolfe, 2006) being embraced. For this reason, it has been argued that validity and reliability in qualitative research should be understood in terms of trustworthiness (Sandelowski, 1993), whereby the researcher is considered to have made their data collection and analytical methods 'visible and, therefore, auditable' (p. 2). Tobin and Begley (2004) also argue that rather than promoting validity or rigour, qualitative researchers should be concerned with demonstrating a 'logical understanding of *what* we do, *how* we do it and, equally importantly, *why* we do it' (p.394, emphasis added). Throughout this thesis I will endeavour to make transparent the procedures and developments in this study, and to clearly document the process in a logical and traceable format (Schwandt, 2001). This should enable the reader to develop a clear understanding of the connections between the interview data, the emergent categories, and the developing theoretical model.

3.4.1 Credibility

Charmaz (2014) suggests that there are four important criteria by which to evaluate a grounded theory study; credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness. The originality, resonance and usefulness of this study are discussed in chapter 8, as I reflect on the study, considering its contribution to knowledge and conclusions which will be drawn from the findings and discussion.

Turning to the requirement for a grounded theory study to be *credible* means consideration of whether enough evidence is provided to support any claims which are made (Charmaz, 2014). In addition to presenting excerpts of data which support the evolving theoretical model in the findings chapters of this thesis, built into the research design are opportunities for *respondent validation* which are provided by the collaborative nature of life history work (Goodson & Sikes, 2017). This particular verification of data analysis within qualitative research has been regarded as 'the single most critical technique for establishing credibility' (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p.239), and has proved to be a valuable exercise which aided in the interpretation of the stories told by the teachers in this study.

A further precept of a credible grounded theory study requires systematic comparisons to be made during the iterative data collection process (Charmaz, 2014). The systematic nature of data collection and analysis in grounded theory have led to the assertion that it is the most rigorous of qualitative research methodologies (Bryant & Charmaz, 2010; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). During analysis, comparisons were made across the participant data, while also considering further supporting literature and other documents such as government and Ofsted reports, news articles and personal documents which some teachers shared with me (e.g. one

participant showed me an email which had been sent to all staff from the new head teacher outlining particular colours of pens which should be used when marking children's work). Chapter **4** will provide an insight into the procedures followed in this study of initial and focused coding, memo writing, and theoretical coding. Aside from 'the validation potential' which this data triangulation process offers (Padgett, Mathew, & Conte, 2004, p. 226), it also presents a grounded theory audit trail which enhances credibility (Bowen, 2009).

3.4.2 Reflexivity

A demand which is common to both life history work and constructivist grounded theory research, for quality control purposes, is that the researcher reflects on and recognises their own place in, and their impact on, what is being studied (Richards & Morse, 2013), with the idea that a researcher can be an 'insider' or an 'outsider' having received a significant amount of attention (Le Gallais, 2008). From the beginning of this project with 'the assumption that social reality is multiple, processual, and constructed' (Charmaz, 2014, p.13), I also recognised and acknowledged the subjectivity that I have brought to the study, and have sought to understand the ways in which my own ideas and beliefs might inform my analytical focus and subsequent insights. I consider myself to be an integral part of this study and acknowledge that my own thoughts, feelings and views will influence my understanding and in turn, any questions I ask, or the ways in which I have analysed my data. This research is recognised as a *collaborative venture* (Sikes & Goodson, 2017), and therefore is a co-construction of knowledge between myself as researcher and my participants.

As a way of self-monitoring the impact that my own biases might have on my research, I decided early on in this learning process to monitor this by writing a reflective journal throughout (Ortlipp, 2008). In keeping with this standpoint, I want to take a moment to reflect on my own experiences to date which might have positioned me as either an *insider* or an *outsider* researcher.

3.4.3 Researcher Positionality

It seems fair that while I asked my participants to tell me their personal and professional life stories, that I was also willing to share my own life history and identity construction, and the path which had led to my interest in their careers, along with my reasons for wanting to conduct this study. Recognising the importance of sharing my own experiences and establishing common ground with participants (Goodson & Sikes, 2017), I would introduce myself and my study before each interview, by explaining my interest in teaching and education and I would talk freely about my own background working as a teaching assistant in different primary schools.

I am not a qualified teacher and I have never trained as a teacher, so I do not claim to have shared the same experiences as my participants, but my experience working in schools means that I do possess *a priori* knowledge (Merton, 1972) of the primary school community and of its members. Literature in the area of researcher positionality tends to establish a dichotomy between insider and outsider research, and so the question hung over me; Am I an *insider* or am I an *outsider*? There are arguably advantages to studying what is familiar, with an insider position making access to participants easier, respondents who may be more inclined to share information and personal experiences with someone who they perceive to understand their situation, and the use of a shared language making communication and information gathering smoother (Berger, 2015). Equally, it has been argued that studying the unfamiliar is advantageous in that the participants are instantly placed as the experts, which can be empowering for them, and can result in the emergence of new ideas stemming from a different point of view. Hellawell (2006) suggested that 'both empathy *and* alienation are useful qualities for the researcher' (p.487).

I learned that my position as an outsider with the advantage of an *insight* into the work of a teacher was a positive, and throughout this study I have endeavoured to capitalise on the benefits of each. While I understand the community in which primary teachers work, I have also been able to actively empower them by openly acknowledging them as being the experts in the conversation and asking them to clarify points I did not fully understand, where another teacher might have made a taken for granted assumption. I found that asking for clarification of a key term or for further explanation of a commonplace experience really could 'transform his or her passing comment into opening an analytical moment' (Charmaz, 2015 p. 1615). As an active participant in the generation of data I remained self-reflexive during the collection and analysis stages and was mindful to continue to acknowledge how my own thoughts and beliefs about primary schools might impact on the research process.

3.5 *Chapter Summary*

This chapter has provided a summary of the constructivist grounded theory methodology along with the epistemology and theoretical perspective which underpins the approach. The research design which employed life history methods has also been outlined. The teachers who were recruited to participate in this study were working in different schools across England, with the final number of participants (N=20) being determined by theoretical sampling. This methodological framework and methods were considered to be appropriate to assist in the development of a theoretical model which is intended to explain how teachers develop, and sustain, a positive professional identity and commitment across a teaching career. The techniques which have been employed to increase the credibility of the study have

also been outlined. The next chapter will outline the analytical process which led to the emergent categories and evolving theoretical model.

4 From Data Collection to Analysis

As was identified in the previous chapter, the credibility of a qualitative study is dependent on the research process being visible and auditable (Charmaz, 2014; Sandelowski, 1993). While Chapter 3 has presented the methodological framework and data collection methods, this chapter will provide an account of the coding strategies which were employed to analyse the data, as suggested by Charmaz (2014). There will also be illustrative examples included which make transparent the analysis procedures of the memo writing and constant comparison of data, which informed the initial emerging codes and categories. Charmaz (2015) asserts that following grounding theory analysis strategies helps develop analytical skills and to 'scale up' emerging analysis (p. 1610).

4.1 *Coding Strategies*

The 'heuristic device' of coding in grounded theory requires that the researcher 'stop and ask analytical questions of the data' (Charmaz, 2014, p.109). In procedural terms, coding is the application of a naming label which summarises and categorises a particular section of data but, on an analytic level, it is also where the stories told make the transition from raw data towards theoretical construction (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

4.1.1 Initial Coding

Initial coding is the first step towards developing a theory which is grounded in the collected data and is literally the process of naming each line of the transcript (Glaser, 1978). Charmaz (2014) suggests that the line-by-line coding process can encourage researchers to engage fully with their data, supporting the development of analytical thinking until enough preliminary codes have been generated. For this reason the initial interviews which included a sample of six teachers who were working in early (N=2), mid (N=2) and late (N=2) career phases were transcribed verbatim and each line was individually coded (see **Appendix G** for an example), which helped to generate initial ideas and advance theoretical analysis (Sbaraini et al, 2011). For example, when Emma talked about her journey home from work, line-by-line coding helped me to consider her words in a new way, offering leads to pursue which might have been disregarded in a general thematic analysis (Charmaz, 2014, 2015).

During this process, codes were developed such as 'realising a sense of belonging' and 'feeling cared for'. From these early codes I began to understand the significance that being part of a community held for Emma (see **figure 4.1**), and was able to consider this code in further data collection. Thus, where the interview transcripts detailed the words that had been spoken, the initial coding began to aid the understanding of how the participant might be feeling.

Emma (Mid-Career Phase) Life History Interview Transcript	Initial Line-by-Line Coding (what is she doing/feeling)
I got home and [husband] said 'You know what I'm going to say' and I went 'I know'.	Having repeated conversation with husband about arriving home late.
I've passed five or six schools on my way home, and I've battled through traffic. But it's still worth it. Because it's not like…at an early stage I probably didn't feel like it was my school, but I do now. I feel like I'm, you know…I had a chat to the head in the morning about something personal, nothing serious at all, just something that had happened. And I came back in the evening and I text her and said 'Oh it's all fine. Everything is sorted.'	Noticing other closer schools Considering long journey to be worthwhile Feels different later in career Realising a sense of belonging Leadership being accessible for chat about a personal matter Feels able to text Head to say all is ok
It was no major issue at all. And she text back saying 'Oh brilliant.' And I thought 'Yes, it's both ways.'	Feeling cared for Relationship is mutual

Figure 4.1 Example of line-by-line coding

4.1.2 Focused Coding

Focused coding was the second stage of analytical coding. This stage identified the most significant or the most frequently occurring initial codes to 'synthesize, analyse, and conceptualise larger segments of data' (Charmaz, 2014).

Emma (Mid Career Phase) Life History Interview Transcript	Initial Line-by-Line Coding (what is she doing/feeling)	Focused Coding (what does this mean?)
I got home and [husband] said 'You know what I'm going to say' and I went 'I know'.	Having repeated conversation with husband about arriving home late.	
I've passed five or six schools on my way home, and I've battled through traffic. But it's still worth it.	Noticing other closer schools Considering long journey to be worthwhile	School is worth the journey – indicates a commitment to school community
Because it's not like…at an early stage I probably didn't feel like it was my school, but I do now. I feel like I'm, you know…I had a chat to the head in the morning about something personal, nothing serious at all, just something that had happened. And I came back in the evening and I text her and said 'Oh it's all fine. Everything is sorted.'	Feels different later in career Realising a sense of belonging Leadership being accessible for chat about a personal matter Feels able to text Head to say all is ok	Sense of belonging Supportive leadership
It was no major issue at all. And she text back saying 'Oh brilliant.' And I thought 'Yes, it's both ways.'	Feeling cared for Relationship is mutual	This relationship is important

Figure 4.2 Example of initial line-by-line and focused coding for life history interview script

At this stage I began to consider not only what was said, but what the teachers' words and stories implied. While the verbatim transcripts contained details of stories told, the initial coding considered what participants felt, and then focused coding reflected on what this implied. **Figure 4.2** shows the focused codes which developed from the same extract of Emma's interview transcript. This process captured the significant patterns of 'commitment to the school community' (blue), 'sense of belonging' (green) and 'important relationships' (yellow).

These focused codes helped to shape the analysis of subsequent interview data.

4.2 *Memo Writing*

Memo writing during the qualitative research process is essential as, while coding generates ideas to explore, memos provide a conceptualisation of what participants are saying (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I began to write memos in my journal from the planning stage of my research, which later proved to be beneficial as I was in a good habit of writing contemplative notes early on. This seemed to be an informal process of reflection, but proved to be a key analytical stage, as it was ultimately the questions which developed from my memos (Lempert, 2007) which shaped the evolving model.

Memo writing was an exciting part of this research, it was often when my most insightful thoughts occurred – the lightbulb moments which derived from a conversation with myself (Charmaz, 2015). **Figure 4.3** is an example of a memo I wrote when I realised there was a connection between Emma's sense of belonging and her commitment to the school.

Memo – Emma 12/10/2015

Connections between relationships/sense of community and commitment to the school

Emma talks about the fact that she is prepared to drive a long distance each day to get to her school, passing many others on the way. As she describes this she realises that the reason for this is the sense of belonging she now feels with the school.

She compares her past to the present teacher she is, and recalls that she didn't have that sense of belonging earlier in her career.

'..at an early stage I probably didn't feel like it was my school, but I do now.'

Emma recognises that the supportive relationship she has developed with her Head (and other staff in the school) over time have helped her to feel a part of the school community.

NOTE! The idea of close relationships in school appear throughout Emma's narrative. She displays a clear sense of belonging across all three of her interviews.

***Has her identity/commitment developed through these close relationships?**

***Explore this idea further across other interviews/constant comparison**

***Revisit identity/professional identity literature to search for associations between relationships/identity/commitment**

Figure 4.3 Example of a memo

Although this memo was written early in the research process, it formed a tentative conceptual category which advanced my analysis. The importance of memo writing in grounded theory is clear in Birks and Mills' (2015) assertion that 'you must do it' (p. 42). Perhaps as a result of this stark warning, memo writing was afforded priority during the analysis process; if I was transcribing data or reading a journal article when an idea was sparked, or a question arose, I would stop and write a memo. Memos can be written in 'informal, unofficial language for personal use, rather than public consumption' (Charmaz, 2014, p.165), and it is perhaps this private aspect which encouraged a freedom of thought and experimentation with ideas.

Even though my memos were often private thoughts, a sample of them are presented within chapters 5, 6 and 7 to illustrate some of the moments when my own understanding and interpretation of teachers' stories was advanced, altered or challenged. Each memo retains the participants voice (Charmaz, 2014), while also including my own thoughts, along with any notes of interest and questions raised which influenced my interpretation and informed my subsequent return to the literature (see section 4.4.1).

4.3 *Constant Comparison of Data*

As data collection and analysis are carried out concurrently in grounded theory, an ongoing process of comparing 'incident to incident, incident to codes, codes to codes, codes to categories and categories to categories' (Birks & Mills, 2015) until a cohesive grounded theory is realised.

Comparison of participants' data revealed both similarities and differences in experiences, feelings and actions. One example of this was the recognition that language used during story telling was different for teachers working in different career phases and/or different schools. Whereas Emma, working in her mid-career phase, identified as being part of a collective of teachers by using phrases like 'we' and 'our school', quotes from Anna, a newly qualified teacher working in her second term, used the word 'they' revealing that she positioned herself as outside of the group. Although this was initially assumed to be related to the number of years in teaching, further comparison with Justin's interview transcript suggested that the sense of belonging was not necessarily related to career phase but to a sense of belonging (see **figure 4.4**).

In contrast, some comparisons of participants' data revealed similarities. Comparison of two critical incidents on teachers' professional timelines which focused on personal events revealed the experiences as having a negative influence on both teachers' sense of professional identity, with reduced feelings of motivation experienced by both mid-career phase teacher Nigel, and late-career phase teacher Norma illustrated in **figure 4.5**.

Emma – mid career phase Life History Interview	Anna – early career phase Life History Interview	Justin – early career phase Life History Interview
You know, as a team, **we** don't ask questions, **we** just do… that's what **we're** like at [school name]. Because **we** deal with such tricky parents, **we** have to be. You know. There's that sort of ethos here. That whatever **we** think of each other, and **we** actually quite like each other... But whatever is going on in school, at the end of the day **we** show a united front	I think **they** do try hard to include the parents at **this** school. So **they** have workshops for the parents, and have what **they** call a Family Friday, so where the parents come in and read. There's load of terms, I know there's loads of terms in every job…But there's loads of terms in teaching, which **they** always use, and I'm like 'I've no idea what that is.'	So **we** ring-fence a proportion of places for children on free school meals. About 35% to be reflective of the makeup of the local area. And then **our** catchment is basically that tower block (indicates outside), which became problematic… because **we're** a free school, and new, and wanted to set up to serve the local community, and **we've** done well as a school… I say **'we'** I only joined in September!

Figure 4.4 Example of differenced in language used revealed during data comparison

Nigel – mid career phase	Norma – late career phase
He had cancer, and I used to speak to him every day. Most days throughout the year I would walk to Tesco and go and get my food, and we would have a chat. He was really poorly. And I think that year was hard, with him being like that.	I wasn't probably productive, I don't think. In those… probably twelve months, when it all kicked off, I wasn't at my best. And my dad died, and my sister died as well. In the same year.

Figure 4.5 Example of similarity revealed during critical incident comparisons

These two critical periods for Nigel and Norma were influential in my thought process. They both related to change and transition in personal lives, but had resulted in a reduced sense of self-efficacy and professional identity for both teachers. Each narrative revealed a sense that they were trying to cope alone; trying to negotiate a personal sadness that left them feeling isolated from the other staff within school.

4.4 *Emergent Categories*

The processes of coding, memo writing, and constant comparison meant that I was fully absorbed in the data. Although these processes are central to developing a grounded theory, it was often during times away from the data, such as walking the dog or driving, when my own ideas would mature, and organise the codes into groups which would shape into a theoretical category. **Figure 4.6** illustrates the mapping of focused codes and possible emergent categories in an attempt to understand the connections between each.

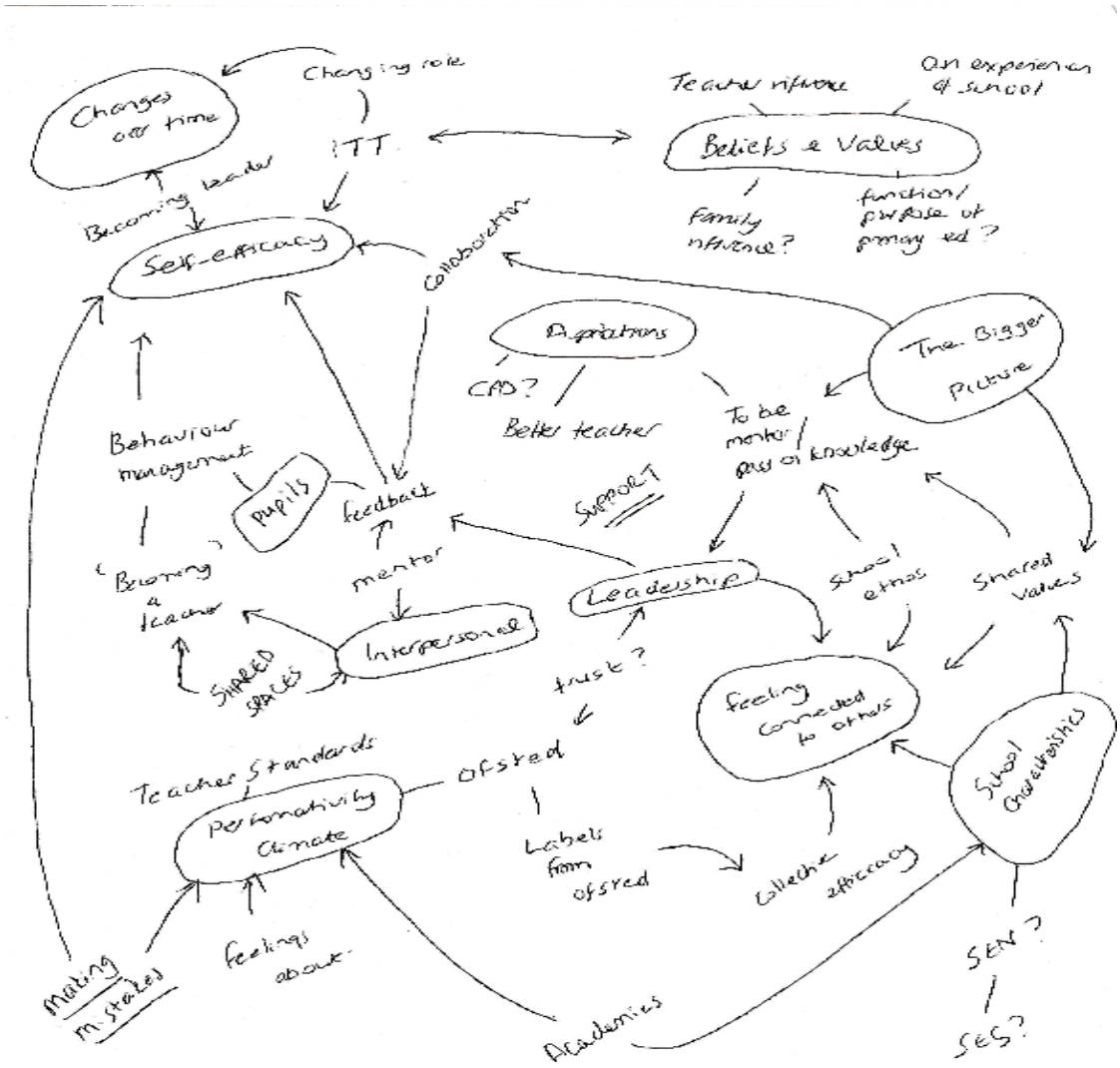


Figure 4.6 Mind mapping of focused codes and connections in developing emergent categories

4.4.1 Returning to the Literature

In grounded theory, comparisons continue on completion of data analysis, as literature is once again reviewed during the final stages of analysis (Charmaz, 2014). Congruent with both constructivist grounded theory methodology and life history methods, the emergent categories (discussed in chapters **5, 6** and **7**) were compared with existent theories, literature and other relevant policy documents (Goodson & Sikes, 2017). Locating the categories alongside, and within, relevant literature illustrated how the categories might be supported and illuminated, or ways that the evolving theory might extend or diverge from the seminal literature in the field. The Discussion in this thesis (Chapter **8**) considers the categories in relation to the existing literature on teachers' lives and careers, professional identity and commitment, while also drawing on theories and literature from both social and organisational psychology.

4.5 *Data Management*

Although the initial phase of data collection was subjected to line-by-line coding, once initial codes and categories had emerged, the transcription of each interview was organised and coded using NVivo11. This is a computerised qualitative data analysis software programme (see **Appendix J**) for screen shots during analysis phase) used for managing a large volume of data, with the purpose of *assisting* in the analysis of qualitative data (Bazeley & Jackson 2013). The intention was not to replace the immersion process or the reading and re-reading of data, but was to collate the data in a way where similarities, differences and connections could be linked to relevant journal articles, documents and memos.

4.6 *Theoretical Coding*

In the later stages of analysis, theoretical coding was employed. This stage of analysis had a focus on how the emergent categories, developed from initial and focused coding, could relate to each other in a way that could be refined and integrated into a developing theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). Charmaz (2014) asserts that the 'purpose of these codes is to help you theorise your data and focused codes' (p.150). The categories which emerged in this study were grouped together under theoretical codes which related to different levels of identity; *individual*, *relational* and *collective*, concepts which have been adopted from social psychology literature. Charmaz (2014) warns grounded theorists to be cautious at this stage, asserting that current trends in a discipline could 'limit ways of seeing and perhaps force data into old boxes' (p. 153), although the rigorous analytical steps taken in this study allowed me to feel confident that the theoretical codes had earnt their way into the theory (Glaser, 1978). These

three levels of identity which were identified and explored as the theory evolved will be discussed further in the Findings (chapters **5, 6** and **7**) and then in relation to extant literature in the Discussion (chapter **8**).

4.7 *Chapter Summary*

This chapter has outlined the methods which were employed in this grounded theory study to analyse the interview data, drawing on guidance from Charmaz (2014). Included in this chapter there have been examples of analytical strategies which illustrate the flexible approach taken to develop the initial and focused codes along with the emergent categories. Examples have also been provided to demonstrate how the process of constant comparative analysis can illuminate similarities and difference across the data sets, leading to the initial generation of codes.

The following three chapters each contain an in-depth analysis of the teachers' accounts. Each chapter relates to the focused codes and categories which were developed during analysis. The headings of Individual Professional Identity and a Commitment to a Role, Relational Identity and a Commitment to the School Community, and Collective Identity and a Commitment to a Shared Ideology of Primary Education each correspond to the categories and themes which emerged using the methods defined above.

5 Developing and Sustaining an Individual Professional Identity and a Commitment to a Role

Many of the influences that teachers from all phases (early-, mid- and late-career) discussed as being important to their developing sense of professional identity, tended to have a focus on individuality or personal aspects of their identity. At certain points across their careers, a teacher's individual identity takes primacy as they define their identity as based on uniqueness, such as their own beliefs about school or reasons to teach, their perceived level of competency, the purpose of their role, and aspirations for the future. Teachers in all phases of their careers often talked about their professional identity in terms of times when the importance of their own individual circumstances or development needs came to the foreground, emphasised particularly during challenging periods and times of change in their personal or professional lives. During these periods, teachers required acknowledgement of their individual strengths, and support during times of challenge to promote a stable identity, and with it, a sustained and increased commitment to their role. Although the primacy of individual identity could be due to circumstances which affirmed a positive sense of self, the teachers in this study seemed to have considered their own needs particularly during times when personal values or perceived efficacy were threatened, during circumstances which had resulted in an unstable sense of professional identity and reducing commitment to their role.

The influences which teachers discuss in this chapter have formed the categories of **beliefs[2] and values, self-efficacy, aspirations,** and **changes and transitions.** These**,** along with the focused sub codes from which they were developed, are illustrated in **table 5.1**.

Throughout this chapter the categories listed in the table below, along with the related focused codes, will be discussed, supported by the use of illustrative quotes from interview transcripts. Individual vignettes will also be used to highlight individual teachers' stories which were told, illuminating associations between the primacy of an individual professional identity, whether positive or negative, and a commitment which is focused on a particular role.

[2] Key words (denoted in bold) are identified here as they represent the categories which aided in the development of the grounded theory

Table 5.1 Categories and focused codes for Individual Identity

Categories	Focused Codes
Beliefs & values	Prior experience About primary school
Self-efficacy	Initial teacher education Becoming a Teacher Managing behaviour Making mistakes Temporal self-evaluations Performance evaluations
Aspirations	Possible selves Professional development Generativity
Changes and transitions	Changing role Changing school Moving into senior leadership Transitions in personal life

5.1 *Beliefs and Values*

Individual identities were supported across all career phases by a sense of uniqueness which was derived from deeply held values which had often developed prior to teacher training. Original motivations to teach were varied. For example, several of the teachers in this study had grown up with family links to teaching (n=7), knowing from a young age that they wanted to teach, half of the teachers in this study were the first person in their family to go to college or university (n=10), while some were career changers (n=5), or had made the progression from a teaching assistant role in school (n=4), and most believed they had personality traits which were suited to the role. In spite of these differences, teachers in all phases talked of their desire to '*make a difference'* to the lives of young children.

5.1.1 Prior experience

Teachers' life history interviews revealed memories of school days and relationships which had helped to inform some teachers of their own style of teaching. Early-, mid- and late-career phase teachers recalled their most and least favourite teachers as they sought to replicate, or reject, their pedagogical approach.

Cat recalled fond memories of a favourite teacher who had helped to instil in her a sense of fairness and social justice.

> *She was nurturing, I think that's probably the best word to describe it… I remember her being fair, and she used to say 'Fair is not the same. What's fair for one child isn't what's fair for another.' …And I remember we used to be able to earn vouchers for McDonalds and things, and we used to get people saying 'It's not fair, so and so gets it all the time.' But actually, looking back, it was fair. Because I'd had my breakfast in the morning, and I did nice things at the weekend, whereas some of those children didn't.*
>
> *But now I'm the teacher, and I try to do things like that, because it's the thing I remember. And now when the children say 'It's not fair' I say 'Fair is not the same.' I do, I say it now (laughs). Good old Mrs Taylor. (Cat, ECP)*

Acts of kindness, where teachers had considered their feelings of worry or distress, were consistently recalled across the narrative interviews.

Ellie recalled one day when her dad dropped her off late, and how upset she felt, coupled with a sense of panic

> *I had to run across the playground and I was on my own, I burst in through the classroom and I was really upset, and I cried. And she took me by the hand and she sat me on her knee and she comforted me, and that just stuck in my head. (Ellie, MCP)*

In contrast to these fond memories, feelings of aversion were clear when Nigel told his story of an incident with his PE teacher.

> *I remember we were being silly in the PE room, there was three of us running around, which we shouldn't have been doing. And he came in and it was really booming, his voice. And he called each child over, each one of us over, and he gave them a slap on the legs. And this was only, how old was I then? Twelve, so twenty-seven years ago, you know … And he slapped each one. And then he called me over, and I said 'No'. I totally refused. I thought 'No, you're not going to touch me. That's not going to happen.' And he called me into his office, I remember, I was stood in there. And I was a bit worried, because it was only him and myself. And he said 'When I ask you to do something, you come.' I didn't like him at all. And he had a kind of… a really mean kind of attitude.(Nigel, MCP)*

Teachers in later phases of their careers recalled individuals who had inspired them and influenced the type of teachers they still aspire to be.

> *I still remember my primary school year six teacher, I really got on well with him, and I thought that I wanted to be one of those people that children… remember I suppose. It was his caring side. That's what I always remember, he was very caring, very understanding. And he was interesting, he made school fun. All of those things that you want to be as a teacher. (Louise, LCP)*
>
> *She was always very positive, and she stayed very calm. She was never stressed, or never seemed stressed, and I never heard her raise her voice. But you did know if she wasn't happy, by her face and her tone. And she worked really hard.*

The children mattered to her, you could see that. She worried about them and she wanted the best for them.

And to this day, I don't generally raise my voice or shout … I do try to be like that, yes. Even though sometimes inside I am [shouts], that doesn't really help with children. (Julia, LCP)

Sarah summarised succinctly what each of the other teachers had been trying to convey.

And if I think of the teachers, it wasn't about their lessons, necessarily. It was about the kind of people they were. (Sarah, LCP)

Teachers' recollections were consistently concerned with how they had been made to feel when they were in school. Their memories informed the values which they had brought with them into their own role, and teachers in all phases felt that these early experiences were still influencing their individual beliefs about what a teacher should be and, consequently, influenced their own behaviour in the classroom.

5.1.2 About primary school

Teachers in all phases discussed their own beliefs about school and the purpose of primary education. Personal opinions varied as to what is the main priority of their role.

Justin talked about closing the attainment gap in education, and felt that his priority was for children to succeed in core subjects.

I think that English and Maths are more important than any other subjects. One hundred percent. So I think that if a school isn't…if there are children who aren't reading well, or writing well, then I am quite happy for them to do no music or art. I know it upsets a lot of people, but I think you're doing that child no favours in the long term by saying 'I'm not going to teach you how to read, but you'll have a lovely time learning to play this recorder.' I think that child will get to 18 with crap life chances and say 'Fuck you. Why didn't you teach me to read?' (Justin, ECP)

In contrast, Ellie felt strongly that the social and softer skills which develop in school are as important as curriculum learning.

I think it's also about teaching them how to be a good human being, and because the school I work in is a Catholic school, so it's very much based around being a good Catholic. Are you being kind? Are you being a good friend? That kind of thing. So I see my role as making sure these children grow up as good people. And obviously being able to read and write. (Ellie, MCP)

Memo – Justin 10/09/2016

Different ideas and beliefs about what makes a 'good' lesson, a 'good' teacher or a 'good' school, but these differing beliefs do not detract from the desire to make a difference to the lives of the children.

Having spent time listening to Justin's journey into teaching, his determination and passion for the profession which he believes can change lives is undeniable. I begin to see, and understand, that different beliefs about education do not mean that teachers care any more or less about the children in their class.

'***I think that English and Maths are more important than any other subjects.***'

Personally I believe that arts and music are not only fundamental to education, but to being human (and with my own daughter studying for a degree in Fine Art, our feelings about this aspect of education could not differ further). But Justin obviously cares so much about future opportunities for the children in his class, that I begin to understand and accept that this is precisely why he feels this way.

NOTE! The importance of a core curriculum, discipline and standards run through each of Justin's transcripts. His values are closely aligned to the neoliberal notion of education – which contrasts with most of the other teachers. It would be lazy to discount or dismiss this conflicting point of view, and I think doing so would be detrimental to this study.

*** Did Teach First program influence Justin's beliefs?**

***Compare/contrast with other ECP teachers – how do beliefs differ?**

***Search for literature related to ITT/Teach First and ideology development**

Memo 5.1 Individual beliefs about Education

Louise felt uncomfortable when primary schools were used as a place to promote certain values or belief systems.

> *I don't like the 'British' values thing in school. It gets my goat. I just feel that we should just talk about values, it makes me feel a little bit uncomfortable talking about 'British' values.*
>
> *We've got a multicultural staff here, and when we're bashing on about British Values it makes me feel like I'm a member of the BNP or something! I think they are really good values, but why do we have to say 'British'? (Louise, LCP)*

All teachers held personal beliefs which had been shaped by their own experiences as pupils, by political opinions and by views about the society and culture in which they lived. These beliefs were shaping the way they taught and influenced their individual professional identity.

5.2 *Self-efficacy*

As teachers discussed their personal career trajectories, their professional identity was often associated with a perceived sense of self-efficacy. The degree to which teachers believed they were able to have a positive impact on pupils' progress, both academically and socially,

was influenced by their initial and continuing professional development, the school culture and by their own experience.

5.2.1 Initial teacher education

Most teachers working in their early-career phase attributed their feelings of being ineffective and underprepared when they entered the classroom to their initial teacher education, claiming that they weren't able to transfer what they had learned to their particular school context. The reality of the classroom shifted the focus from theoretical knowledge and aspirations to the transmission of information and the practicalities of the classroom.

Andrea evaluated the worth of the lectures she had attended during her PGCE.

> *And they would say 'You need to understand where you're coming from, and your approach.' But I didn't think I did need to understand that. I couldn't see how it was going to be valuable to me. The practicalities of the job would have been more valuable: how to plan a lesson.*
>
> *On the first placement we were told to plan for a small group, and yet nobody told me how to put a lesson plan together. So I felt that the basics were missing. The things I needed to know to be successful in the placement weren't the things they were giving me. (Andrea, NQT)*

Although Anna did value the theoretical knowledge she gained during her B.Ed., and could see its application, she believed that no course could fully prepare any student for having full responsibility of the classroom.

> *I enjoyed the three years I spent at university. We had exposure to a variety of experienced practitioners who imparted a lot of knowledge. I was able to teach in different schools and see lots of different teaching styles. I think we were given a lot of free time to reflect on the learning we had undergone and able to extend our ideas.*
>
> *[But] how can any course prepare anyone? Until you're actually doing the job, you know. (Anna, NQT)*

Justin and Russell both entered teaching through Teach First, with neither feeling that the summer training programme could equip anyone for that first year of teaching.

> *I think they [Teach First] over sell the impact that you are going to have. When you're applying and when you're going through the initial training in the summer institute, they set you up with like 'You're going to be a world changer. You'll go in and save schools.' And then you realise that you're a crap teacher, and even if you weren't, you have minimal impact in a school. Especially if it's a dysfunctional school. Like, who cares what you think? You're a trainee teacher, an NQT and you're not going to change anything. So that, I think, can leave you feeling a bit disillusioned with the whole thing.*
>
> *And often, the schools that you're placed in, by virtue of the fact that they've asked for Teach First are…those schools often have the least capacity to train and support new teachers, and to*

mentor them appropriately, so I was more or less left to my own devices for that year. Just to bumble along. (Justin, ECP)

Could six weeks training outside a classroom prepare you? No. I don't think it can. You can learn theory six weeks prior to starting, but I think to be a half decent teacher you need experience of the classroom, and a passion for doing the job really. They're the two key elements for me. (Russell, ECP)

Alongside being a head teacher, Lee worked with a local university observing and moderating students during their PGCE final teaching placements.

I don't think my training equipped me to do that job. And I'm not convinced that the current teacher training does the same either. (Lee, LCP)

There was only one early-career teacher who had felt fully prepared when she entered the classroom as a teacher for the first time. Cat had studied part-time for a degree in Education Studies while employed as a higher-level teaching assistant, and then trained to teach through a salaried route in the same school.

I had planned lessons before, I'd got established routines, you know, I was already doing it all really, but without the piece of paper. And so I started high. (Cat, ECP)

For most teachers their experiences and comments illuminate a disparity between their initial teacher training and the expectations placed on them when they entered the classroom. While the initial training offered educational and learning theories, they felt that the immediate requirement was practical knowledge and subject transmission skills. If these skills were lacking teachers felt a dip in confidence, resulting in a negative influence on their sense of self-efficacy and professional identity.

5.2.2 Becoming a teacher

The transition from initial teacher training to the classroom provoked a mix of emotions from participants. As they negotiated the initial relief of securing a teaching post, the enthusiasm of being able to put what they had learnt into practice, and the reality of the challenges ahead, teachers often referred to reduced confidence and self-efficacy, resulting in a dip on their professional timelines.

As a mature career changer, Andrea had previously been a school nurse. Having received consistent positive feedback during her teacher-training programme she was shocked at the intensity of emotion that she felt in her first week of teaching.

But it was just the enormity of it hitting me I think. I was just like 'I don't know how I'm going to get through, I don't know how I'm going to do it.' …And I was really low. Then once I started crying I just couldn't get a grip. (Andrea, NQT)

Anna also experienced a loss of self-confidence as she felt she felt overloaded by a multitude of expectations which were being placed on her by the school. As feelings of inadequacy began to surface, she considered leaving.

> *…The first seven weeks…it was just like being run over by lots of buses. Just constantly, you know. So they were saying 'Right, every single day you have to do hand writing, you have to do some calculations, you have to make sure you've written, you have to record in their Maths book. You have to do this…*
>
> *But it got to a point, when I was sitting here feeling really sad, and I thought 'I just don't want this experience.' (Anna, NQT)*

On qualifying, Sophie had found work as a supply teacher before beginning her NQT year. Having the opportunity to plan and mark with a more knowledgeable colleague increased her confidence and her developing sense of self-efficacy.

> *I go to the NQT year of teaching, and the teacher I was working alongside was an experienced teacher, so there was all the support that came with it as well. And she was just fantastic on my NQT year. It didn't feel like an NQT year, she kept saying to me 'You're not really doing your NQT year, because you've been doing all of this already.' So it was nice to have that support from her. (Sophie, ECP)*

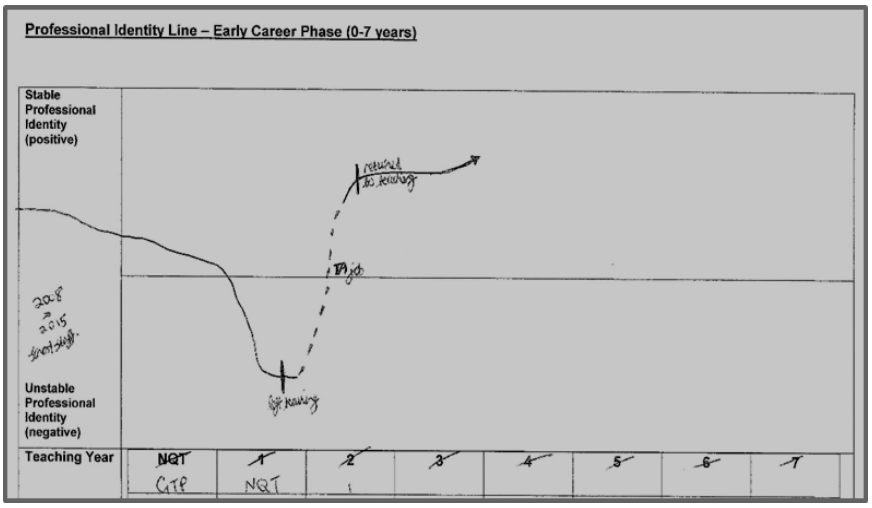
While late-career phase teachers also remembered the responsibility they felt being in charge for the first time, they each recalled predominantly positive memories of their early experience of being in the classroom and their professional identity had generally remained stable.

> *It was a steep learning curve, as I said, but I was fine. I was there for five years in [local authority] and I learnt a huge amount. I was a very different teacher when I left there with the experience, and the staff there were great. (Julia, LCP)*
>
> *…I went in wanting to teach, loving the class, loving the school, very happy and very settled really, and that pretty much continued throughout my time there. I had lovely colleagues who supported what I needed to do, and they were very talented people. So my first, sort of, six years probably, were exciting, and what I wanted. They were tough, but it was all fine. It was all very positive. (Janet, LCP)*

For all teachers, the level of support and encouragement received in their initial teaching post had influenced their developing sense of professional identity and feelings of self-efficacy. Michelle's story illustrates the influence this had on her belief that she could be successful and remain in her role as a teacher;

Michelle's story: Low level of support, reducing sense of professional identity, commitment to role of teacher reduced.

As a mature career changer, Michelle was in her early career phase at aged 38. Having recently changed schools and working in Year 2, she recalled her negative experience as a trainee teacher, where she felt that her in-school mentor was intentionally hindering rather than helping her progress.



…Basically I went straight in, erm, doing a hundred percent, with nobody ever in the room with me. Because I was a student teacher there, if so and so was off ill in Year Six, [she said] 'You go and teach Year Six today'. So it was just, I was sent everywhere. All over the school. With ten minutes notice of what I was teaching, and delivering. And as a student teacher, before you're even an NQT, that's not much fun… it was a very unpleasant time. (PTI)

Feeling that she had nobody in school to turn to for support, she contacted the union and later discovered that she had not been the only new teacher who had felt victimised by this particular mentor.

Err, yeah, a very, not so nice person was my mentor, who has now had to move on to other places, because she, it's been sort of, found out what she was up to. And, erm, it was a very horrible experience. There was a lot of bullying, erm, the union were involved. (PTI)

The negative experience meant that Michelle lost her confidence, having a negative influence on her identity, and as her sense of mental wellbeing was also affected, she began to feel that she might not be able to continue as a teacher.

I finished early. Yes, erm, I basically was signed off work, erm, and… So I came away at the Easter, and I applied for a few teaching jobs, but, very reluctantly. I wasn't really sure whether it was going to be for me. I think you start to doubt your own ability. (PTI)

With a reduced sense of self-efficacy as a classroom teacher, Michelle felt more comfortable to apply for a job as a teaching assistant in a different school. In this new context she received high levels of support from the leadership and colleagues, her confidence returned, and when a teaching vacancy became available mid-year in the school she was encouraged by other staff to apply for it.

I lasted as a TA for three months, and then was asked to teach. To which I replied 'I'm not sure. I came here as a TA and I promised I'd give you a year as a TA.' And they said 'No, you're needed in the classroom.' So that was it (laughs). (PTI)

Working in a key stage team with two other teachers, she felt well supported.

Now that's all three of us, rather than it being 'I've done it wrong, the other two have done it right.' So it's nice. I think it makes you feel a bit more secure. Erm, it's nice to know that if you're having trouble wording something, or you're not sure how you're meant to be getting it across, you've got that person saying 'Well, I tried this last year. This really works…'

So it's…you feel like you're far more supported. (PTI)

As the encouragement she received continued to have a positive influence on her developing sense of professional identity, she felt able to move on from the negative experience and put it behind her.

But it doesn't matter, because I'm here now. (PTI)

Although Michelle had been competent in her previous roles, feeling unsupported during her training meant that she began to doubt whether she was capable of being a classroom teacher. This negative influence on her sense of professional identity influenced her wellbeing, and reduced her commitment to the role of teacher, resulting in her resignation before she had completed her NQT year. With support and encouragement from the staff in a different school setting, her confidence returned, along with her positive sense of professional identity, and her commitment to teach increased.

Vignette 5.1 Michelle

Teachers in later phases of their careers contrasted their own early experiences with the NQTs who were working in school, suggesting that the expectations on new teachers were much higher, with more pressure and less room for experimentation in the classroom.

Nigel and Norma felt that they had easy beginnings compared to new teachers of today.

I look at NQTs now, and the rigour they are under as an NQT. I would say that my NQT year was the easiest year of my teaching … There was nothing as it is now. I think NQTs are under a vast amount of pressure. (Nigel, MCP)

*When I think about what we expect our students to do, and what I was expected to do, when I first started. They're poles apart. I don't remember working that hard when I was a student... We were accountable, but not **as** accountable. It was very different. (Norma, LCP)*

The initial experience of entering the classroom was one of feeling overwhelmed by the variety of challenges, along with the recognition that new teachers are expected to have the same level of competency and accountability as a more experienced teacher.

5.2.3 Managing behaviour

Managing pupil behaviour effectively was a much coveted, and sometimes perceived to be deficient, skill which was frequently mentioned by ECP teachers as having a strong influence on their sense of efficacy.

Pupil behaviour had been mentioned during one of Anna's lesson observations. She acknowledged that pupils' talking was causing low level disruption but felt that she needed targeted help with different strategies to enable her to engage a much larger class size to the school where she had trained.

> *…And they were definitely right, but, at my last placement I taught 12 children, so I taught a class of twelve. And that is completely different to 29! (Anna, NQT)*

For Michelle, behaviour management was considered to be *'so important'* to her teaching, and to her children's learning, and she accepted personal responsibility for each child's behaviour.

> *The way I see it is if some children act out or don't pay attention, or if they're not listening, maybe they're talking, turning round, what aren't you doing right at the front? What aren't you doing that's not engaging them, enough, to actually stop the disruptive behaviour that actually then has a knock on effect and spirals out of control? What is it that you're not giving them to make them think 'Oh my God, I want to learn about that!'? (Michelle, ECP)*

Having had a learning support role in a secondary school before training to teach, Russell had anticipated that managing behaviour would be a skill that he could take with him to primary teaching.

> *I thought it would be my strength. But it wasn't.*
>
> *Because it's working in a completely different context, with [primary] children… where me having a loud voice, is just going to frighten them … and it's not going to work, it won't have the desired effect. So I've had to change everything that I believed I was good at. (Russell, ECP)*

In Sophie's few years of experience, she had learned that different classes and different cohorts of children brought diverse challenges. She recalled a particularly difficult class which she had taught during her second year of teaching.

> *There were a group of boys who were underachieving when they started … their behaviour was stopping them from progressing in Maths and Literacy, so that was difficult, trying to work out how to get them to progress, and make the progression they needed to, so they were difficult.*
>
> *It sounds bad, but if behaviour is an issue, you can't do… you can still do exciting things, but you do them in a different way, because they then take a long time to calm down.*

Recognising the challenges which Sophie faced, the head teacher made sure that the focus of her professional development was particular to her individual needs and centred around behaviour management.

> *I went on some courses. There was one, [name of trainer], which was a good one, and the head teacher actually sent me on that one, because she'd been on his training before and she said it was fantastic. And for that group of boys, she thought it would work particularly well for them, so that was a very specific course. (Sophie, ECP)*

In line with Sophie's experience, several mid- and late-career phase teachers recalled their early years in the classroom, when the behaviour of one particular class or child had caused them to doubt their ability to teach.

Emma recalled her second year in teaching, when a particularly challenging class had a negative impact on her sense of well-being and she had felt unable to continue as a teacher.

> *I actually drove to school the one morning, spring termish, and turned round and drove back. I thought 'I can't. I can't go there. I'm not going there.'*
>
> *And it was frustration I think, looking back. At the time I just felt like I wanted to cry. So, I went to the doctor, got signed off, and had the rest of the summer term off.*

On reflection Emma felt that she should have admitted earlier that she didn't have the expertise and should have asked for more support.

> *I was upstairs in quite a small classroom, on my own, and, I suppose I'd look back and think 'you did the wrong thing, you should've gone down, you should've asked for help, you should've said…' (Emma, MCP)*

Lee also reflected on a period at the beginning of his career when he felt too inexperienced in managing behaviour to be an effective teacher.

> *I had a class that were a bloody nightmare! They were really difficult, and I struggled with that class. And then it dents your professional pride. You think 'Why can't I manage them?' What I'm doing works for everybody else, why's it not working here?*
>
> *It took me about four years in the classroom to get to a position where I thought 'I'm good at this. I can do this.' It's a long time, but I think that's realistic. And some people don't make it to that point. (Lee, LCP)*

Teachers working in their early-career phase considered skills and strategies which enabled them to manage pupil behaviour as being critical to effective teaching and pupils' learning. Teachers who felt able to ask for help and had received support and training were able to develop the necessary strategies, and not only did they gain confidence in her own ability to

manage challenging behaviour, but the outcome was a boost to their own sense of self-efficacy, and with it their individual professional identity.

5.2.4 Making mistakes

There were teachers in all phases believed that some mistakes they had made acted as a professional learning opportunity. Those who felt able to admit to mistakes and ask for help viewed 'disaster' lessons as having a positive effect on future teaching. While some teachers admitted that they would try to hide problems for fear of harsh judgments, others worked in schools where errors were more likely to be viewed positively, as a particular type of practice-based learning.

The evaluative nature of the relationship that Anna had with her mentor in her NQT year meant that, unlike her university mentor, she would not be prepared to tell her if a lesson had gone terribly wrong.

> *I would have done when I was in university, I'd have told my mentors there. I'd have said 'That was rubbish.' Because everyone has bad days don't they? And we would unpick what went wrong, and what was right about the lesson, and try again tomorrow. Whereas here, it just feels like I'd be giving them ammunition to make life even harder for me. (Anna, NQT)*

In contrast, Michelle admitted freely to her fallibility, secure in the knowledge that there would be no judgement made on her, and after a chance to reflect, any necessary support would be put in place to avoid any future problems.

> *I normally just own up, erm, it's never like 'How dare you do that!' It's all like, 'well, let's talk about it. Is it really as bad as you think? Or are you just tired and over analysing it?'*
>
> *Erm, and if it is bad then 'Let's sort it. Let's help you sort it.' And then 'How can we stop it from happening next time? What can we do to stop it?' (Michelle, ECP)*

With a growing confidence and a positive sense of professional identity, Justin had begun to support a student teacher in school. He believed that experienced teachers masking mistakes was a precarious path for the profession to tread, which would ultimately impact on children's learning. He talked about a student teacher who had been working with him.

> *She went through a different year group, to have an alternative year group, a different key stage experience. And she just fell to pieces in this lesson. It was awful. It was a terrible lesson, and nobody learnt anything (laughs at the memory). So then what do you do with that? Because it's completely understandable, and we need to help them to understand that bad lessons happen to everybody. If somebody says it doesn't happen to them then they're lying. (Justin, ECP)*

Cat felt that her professional identity stayed positive during challenging times in the school she worked in because she was able to admit freely to her own shortcomings.

> *I think it's about having the ability to laugh at yourself, and to say 'Do you know what? That was rubbish! Thank God nobody walked in that lesson!' I think it would be quite hard if there was one of us who wasn't like that, but thankfully we all share the same sort of mentality. So maybe it's about our own security in our own abilities, because we are all confident in our own ability, which makes us feel okay to say 'I need help with this.' (Cat, ECP)*

Having recently been moved to a younger year group Sophie knew that some errors were unavoidable, but she was confident that any mistakes, where things didn't go to plan, would not be judged as failing, but as a fruitful opportunity for her to develop her skills.

> *I don't think… with children you can't have a perfect day, there's always things you can do differently. The head teacher knows that as well. I think it helps that she teaches, because she knows that some things go really well, and some things don't. We obviously want them to go really well, and we strive to be the best, but you're learning all the time. (Sophie, ECP)*

Teachers in mid- and late-career phases stressed the importance for teachers in their early-career being able to experiment in the classroom to find out what worked for them and for the children as learners.

> *I do think you have to have those car crashes in teaching. You do have to have them, because you can't learn everything by positive. Lessons have to go wrong. And I think those new teachers need to know that. That actually if you rip up the plan... and I still do it… and I think they need to know that too… That actually the rest of the teachers have some horrible lessons! (Emma, MCP)*

In his role as head teacher, Ricky was aware that the teachers working in his school needed to be allowed to make, and resolve, their own mistakes. He felt a sense of regret that, under his own leadership, some teachers were left unsupported and made to feel like failures, resulting in them leaving the profession.

> *If you give people that flexibility and allow them to make mistakes, and to find themselves, then they don't want to leave. When people leave, it's because they are so restricted that they feel they can't do anything. And they feel that they are always failing. And I have learnt that from experience. I've made mistakes, and I've lost good people. (Ricky, MCP)*

It was broadly recognised by teachers in all phases of their career that mistakes, errors and lessons which fail to achieve the learning objectives are inevitable in teaching.

Memo – Ricky 10/02/2017

The detrimental impact of making people feel like failures.

Most of the teachers I have already interviewed have talked about making mistakes in the classroom – and the 'car crash' (Emma) lessons which all teachers experience. As a head teacher, Ricky reflects on other people's mistakes. But he recognises that, as a new head teacher, he has not always managed the need for professional development well – which he believes has resulted in some of his teaching staff leaving.

'When people leave, it's because they are so restricted that they feel they can't do anything. And they feel that they are always failing'

Ricky admits that he has '*lost good people'* and believes there is a clear association between feeling like a failure and teacher attrition.

NOTE! Making mistakes is considered to be a learning opportunity by teachers but:

*** Can poor management of mistakes lead to feelings of self doubt and reduced commitment?**

*** Why might some teachers fear making mistakes?**

***Do policy documents related to early career teachers recognise the likelihood of failure?**

***Search for literature/policy documents related to professional learning which stems from errors or mistakes.**

Memo 5.2 Making mistakes

Teachers' stories suggested that some were working in schools where their errors were seen as an opportunity to develop and gain new knowledge about themselves or their class, resulting in a developing sense of professional identity, whereas others would try to hide mistakes, curtailing any new learning, having a negative influence on self-efficacy and professional identity.

5.2.5 Temporal self-evaluations

As teachers told their stories, many reflected on their own practice at an earlier phase or stage in their careers. Where they were able to track milestones of improvement and draw confidence from the knowledge that have been continually developing and refining their teaching, they had indicated a high point in their career, and a developing sense of professional identity.

Andrea reflected on her first few weeks in the classroom when she felt '*out of control*.'

> *But I do feel now, that I'm getting there with my lesson timing, a little bit, and I'm managing to get things done in the day. It's the little things, like guided reading. The first few weeks it just had to be given up on, because I couldn't get everything done in the day. So I was doing a guided reading session, but it was 'Get your reading books out', and I'd listen to someone read, rather*

than anything more meaningful. So little things like that, I feel like I'm getting on top of now, and getting better at it. (Andrea, NQT)

Anna was able to make the same positive comparison when she considered how her confidence had grown during her first term as an NQT.

But my behaviour management now is so much better, and my relationship with them is so much better. And we do have some good fun in the class, which is nice. Whereas ten weeks ago I couldn't, because if we did anything fun I didn't know how to manage that. And the children would spiral… So it ended up quite mundane and monotonous, whereas now I'm 'Now stop. Its fun, but we need to still have the behaviour that is expected of you in school.' (Anna, NQT)

As early-career teachers refined their skills and techniques they considered small milestones which had improved the daily experience of teaching.

I'm really proud of myself at the moment because this term I'm marking every day without letting it build up. (Michelle, ECP)

Emma recalled her second year in teaching when she had lost her confidence, and the negative impact on her sense of well-being meant that she was signed off with stress. She had struggled with managing the classroom and had felt unable to cope. She considered the newly qualified teacher that she once was to be a different person to the teacher she was during our interviews.

And you just want to go back to that person in the beginning of the career and say 'What were you doing?' But you all have to do that don't you? It's a huge learning curve.

But actually, that's actually fascinating to me now. Looking back at that person. Because that person doesn't even feel like me anymore really. I'd want to scream at her and shout at her and say 'what are you doing?!' (Emma, MCP)

Taking the time to reflect on past performance and considering the development and learning which had taken place over their career, whether that was a few months or 30 years, nurtured a sense of mastery and had a positive influence on feelings of self- efficacy and individual professional identity in all phases of career.

5.2.6 Performance evaluations

Teachers in all phases talked about instances when their teaching or role had been evaluated by someone else, and they could be left feeling either motivated or disheartened. Many of the peaks or troughs on professional timelines of teachers in their early-career phase corresponded to a particular observation or feedback which had influenced their sense of self-efficacy and professional identity in a positive or negative way.

Andrea's head teacher had a policy in school where he would arrive to a lesson, unannounced, to conduct a spot observation. She felt quite anxious about impending visits as she was aware that, in her NQT year, not all of her lessons would be deemed 'good'. If an activity wasn't going well, she would start to feel concerned that he might pop in. When he did arrive, Andrea found that she was relieved with the feedback she received, and the experience had increased her confidence in delivering maths lessons.

> *…it was really good actually. He put on it that it was a very good lesson, and he said he doesn't put that on many. It was quite a good lesson, it was a maths lesson, and maths is definitely my strongest subject. If you gave me a choice, I'd always be observed in maths. (Andrea, NQT)*

Unfortunately, Russell's experience wasn't quite so positive, and the subsequent feedback from a lesson which was *'awful'* led to a plummet in self-confidence, which resulted in him considering leaving teaching.

> *I put loads into that lesson, and it still got ripped apart … when I was at that low point, I spoke to [mentor], I'd had an awful day, and my observations had been crap and everything, and I just said 'I'm not sure this is for me.' I was down here [on timeline], it wasn't a bluff, more of a cry for help, I just knew I wasn't coping, and I thought it was going to be the first time in my life when I had to quit something.*

Russell's mentor assured him that a few unsuccessful lessons were to be expected, and emphasised areas where he was making very good progress which encouraged him.

> *Fortunately, he managed to build my confidence up a little bit, and tell me that I was actually doing pretty well. He said there were parts I needed to get better at, but he was very good at telling me all the things that I was doing well. He said that I'd built really good relationships with the kids, I'd built good relationships with their parents, so there were things that were going well. And I needed to hear that, to be reminded of that. (Russell, ECP)*

Although Sophie was regularly observed by her head teacher, the school also paid for a consultant to look at data and observe teaching within the school as a precursor to an Ofsted visit. Although her confidence in the classroom was increasing it was the first time that she had received entirely positive feedback from a lesson observation, and her sense of professional identity rocketed.

> *She said some lovely things that nobody has ever said, it was really lovely.*
>
> *Because my head teacher is fantastic, but she has got very high standards, and in an observation she always wants something more … Whatever you do, however well it's gone, there is always something you could do to improve it.*
>
> *You do know when you're doing a good job, and when the children are doing really well, you do know that. But to have someone else see that, and to say such lovely things, that makes you think 'this is going really well.' So the feedback is so important. (Sophie, ECP)*

When Justin changed schools during his second year of teaching, he was pleased to discover that each member of staff took part in a coaching program which he found to have a positive influence on his identity due to the '*incremental improvements*' which he observed in his practice. He explained that each action step following a coaching session had to be achievable within a week. He reflected on the contrast on observation feedback from his first school.

> *So it can't be what I got before, which was 'Your differentiation could've been better' and I'm like 'Alright, yes, fine.' Of course it could! Which now I just think 'How lazy were you? Giving me that sort of feedback.' Because that's not helpful, it's not constructive. It just makes the person leave thinking 'I'm crap at differentiation.' When actually everybody is. It's the sort of thing that you never get right. It's such a lazy easy thing to say 'You weren't stretching your top.' You might as well have a stock list of phrases saying I didn't really watch your lesson, but that would definitely apply. (Justin, ECP)*

Ellie said that the performance targets in school meant that the goalpost was continually being moved, which could sometimes feel disheartening.

> *So if you're being observed in a particular area, then they'll come in and say 'You're doing this well, and this well. But…' There's always got to be a 'but' in there as well. And with the children's targets you feel like you're doing the same thing. You can't say to a child any more 'That is amazing!' it's always 'that is amazing, but…' And it feels the same as a teacher. So whatever you do it's never going to be enough. (Ellie, MCP)*

While early-career phase teachers discussed feedback from leadership and mentors most often as being influential to their sense of self-efficacy and professional identity, it was equally interesting to find that observations and feedback during Ofsted inspections were cited by some teachers in mid- and late-career as critical incidents when they received much needed positive affirmation of their practice.

Having held temporary positions in different schools, Katie was pleased when an Ofsted inspector approved of her teaching and gave her lesson 'Good'.

> *It made me feel good! Because I thought 'Ofsted have seen me, and although it wasn't Outstanding…' I have no desire to get Outstanding, actually, because once you've done that once they [leadership team] will expect it continuously, and it's a lot of pressure. If I'm a good teacher, and I can see that my children make progress, and last year they all made really good progress, then I've done my job. Haven't I? …When I've had my lesson observed and they say 'It's really good' I try to trust that. (Katie, MCP)*

Working outside of mainstream schools, teaching in a referral unit, Sue felt that the school had fallen under the local authority radar, and she was looking forward to her Ofsted visit.

> *I swear to you that this is the truth, I was thrilled to bits that somebody was going to come in and see what I was doing! Because I thought I was doing a pretty good job if I'm honest, and nobody had a clue. I could have been just playing noughts and crosses with them all day really,*

as far as the outside world was concerned … and I have to say that my inspection was good, I got really good feedback, and it gave me a huge boost as a teacher. That somebody else from outside came in and said 'You're doing a flipping good job, well done.' So that for me, was a really positive experience. (Sue, retired)

For teachers working in leadership positions Ofsted's report was considered to be a test of their personal competence as school leaders, with the result either affirming or negating their efforts.

I felt like I knew what I was doing, and I knew I was on track, I knew how to run a school, I was secure as a professional. Then we had a successful Ofsted, and the feedback from that just validated it all. I hadn't been trying to get a good Ofsted, I'd been trying to run a good school. And then Ofsted come along and say 'You know how to do it' that's what it meant to me. It was all I wanted. (Ricky, MCP)

I think if anything, it gave me a degree of confidence, because I survived it and I didn't let anybody down. That was my big fear, that because I was so new to the role, that I would not be up to it. But if anything, I felt like I had arrived. I felt like I had earned my stripes along with everybody else. We got Good. We went from RI to Good … For me personally it was a positive. (Sarah, LCP)

Teachers' perceptions of how effective they were in the classroom could be influenced by the recognition of individual achievements and positive feedback. Although many teachers felt that they did not receive enough positive feedback, where it was given, whether by a mentor, a school leader, or an Ofsted inspector, it had a positive influence on self-efficacy and sense of individual professional identity.

5.3 *Aspirations*

Personal goals and aspirations for the future were important for developing and maintaining teachers' sense of identity. To consider the future was a chance to consider personal strengths and motivations and try to integrate them into possible future selves.

5.3.1 Possible selves

Russell was one of the few early-career phase teachers who had already identified a possible future as he wanted to develop his perceived strength in working with children with autism. The rewards he felt when teaching children with special needs had shaped his ambition for the future.

I'm finding that I have a real passion for it, and I love it. I love the way these children think. I'm worried it sounds patronising, and a little bit condescending possibly, but I love the way these children think, and the way that they do things, and I love the way their brain works. I just find it really interesting, but it's really rewarding as well. So that's where I hope to go, eventually.

Working in a school which had a dedicated base for children with special educational needs, Russel had discussed his ambition and had been told there could be an opportunity for him.

> *So I'd no longer be in charge of thirty children in a mainstream class, I'll be in charge of six or seven children in a resource base. Working with children with autism. So if the opportunity comes up, that's what I would want to do next year. (Russell, ECP)*

While Russell felt positive about his professional future, Anna tried to reconcile her personal aspirations of getting married and having a family with the time and emotional commitment required in a teaching career.

> *And actually my job at the moment is my life, and I don't know what I'm going to do in a year or two years' time when I don't want it to be my life. But at the moment it is.*
>
> *And if I was to have children, I'm not sure if I'd teach. It's something which I thought about yesterday, I was thinking 'I do love it', but it completely consumes you. (Anna, NQT)*

Overwhelmingly when discussing future ambitions, early-career phase teachers expressed a desire to ***not*** move into a leadership role. All teachers saw leadership as a role which would take them out of the classroom with added responsibilities, accountability and less contact with children.

> *I see our head and I really think that I don't want that. It's just that extra responsibility, and it just seems like a thankless role to me really. You spend less and less time with the children, which is ultimately why we're here. But it's just the politics of it all really, I don't want that. (Cat, ECP)*
>
> *I don't want management. I don't want anything like that. I want to be a class teacher, and that's it. (Michelle, ECP)*

While teachers in early-career considered their reservations about moving into headship, teachers in all phases struggled to see other possible options within school which could keep them motivated for a whole career.

> *I don't think it's going to be a forty year career for me, classroom teaching. I don't know whether it can be any more, which is sad, and maybe that will change, but at the moment I don't think it would be possible to just be a teacher from like 20 to 67, to just be a classroom teacher. (Justin, ECP)*
>
> *I have months when I think 'This is brilliant, and I never want to not be doing this job.' But then when something goes on at school, and there is all of the drama that you can get dragged into, I just start to think 'Why am I doing this?' … I can't see what I would be able to do, to use the teaching skills for. And I have looked on government websites, like maybe behaviour support, or something education based, but maybe out of schools… But in all honesty, I don't know. (Katie, MCP)*

But there is a part of me that thinks that I have a lot more working years in me, and I don't see myself doing this… people say to me 'Oh, you'll be a Head Teacher next', but it was never part of my plan to be a Deputy Head, it just evolved. (Sarah, LCP)

Both in mid-career phase, Louise and Nigel had considered the role of head teacher, but they had reservations as to whether they had relevant experience or whether they were ready for the role.

I'm happy with my role here, but whether I would want to be head teacher or not, I'm not sure. Because all of my experience, apart from a few years, is Early Years, so I don't really have knowledge of the whole school. I'm getting more of that, in the role I'm in now, but from a teaching point of view I'm very Early Years based, and that is what I am. So if there was a Head of Early Years Unit… I would rather go down that route probably. (Louise, MCP)

I definitely want to stay in teaching … And in the Senior Leadership Team. I love being on that, where I can make decisions, and give ideas, for the whole school. I don't know if I'd want to be a Head Teacher. I think that might be a long way in the future, if it's going to happen. I don't think I'd want that at the moment. There's a lot of pressure they're under. (Nigel, MCP)

Teachers in all phases had imagined their future selves, considering whether they would continue in the profession and any perceived benefits or challenges ahead. Although these possible and imagined selves did not influence their current professional identity, commitment to a career in teaching could be increased or brought into doubt depending whether the vision of a future self seemed consistent with teachers' personal priorities and goals.

5.3.2 Professional development

In particular it was early-career phase teachers who talked about the need for professional development which would help them to be more effective in their current role.

Justin felt that the individualised professional development opportunities he was able to access helped to develop his own practice, as he was allowed the autonomy to decide the professional development he would like.

What's quite nice is that I've never been turned down for anything. Even stuff that's only tenuously linked to education (laughs). If you send an email to [Head] saying 'This looks interesting, I'd like to go - it's £50 a ticket.' He'll say 'Yes, go. Sort your cover out and go.' So as long as you book it in advance, about three weeks in advance, you'll get cover no problem. So, you can go and do what you like. (Justin, ECP)

In contrast Anna felt exasperated when she was refused permission to be involved in a forum which she felt could help with her struggle to teach maths effectively. Feeling unsupported in her desire to become a more effective teacher she considered leaving.

And they said I couldn't go, because too many members of staff were off, and they said they don't like getting supply teachers in. And I turned up the next week, and the classroom next to me had a supply teacher in. That still hurts. That was the night when I said 'I'm definitely not staying here.' So it broke down, because they wouldn't support me in trying to better myself as a teacher. (Anna, NQT)

All too aware of the impending Ofsted visit at her school, Andrea felt that any individualised professional development needs were being overlooked.

And so all of our training is… well, the first half term it was 'Ofsted will be on Pupil Premium children' … and then this half term it's 'Ofsted are looking at greater depth.' …It's all a panic reaction, because they've heard that Ofsted are looking at a particular issue. (Andrea, NQT)

It was particularly important to teachers in their early-career phase that they were offered professional development opportunities which were relevant to their own interests and could improve individual ability and skills to make them feel more effective in the near future.

5.3.3 Generativity

Teachers in their mid- and late-career were more likely to talk about being given opportunities to use their experience and advanced skills, where their individual contribution could be valued.

Some of the teachers in mid- and late-career phases with positive professional identities and a commitment to remain in teaching, expressed a desire to be in a role where they could use their expertise to support the next generation of teachers.

I have always enjoyed having teacher training students in, and I do have a bit of an interest in that. I'd be interested in exploring that. I have a friend who works with [University name], and she goes out to see them on placements and things like that. And I do think that because I only work three days, maybe I could do that on the other days. (Julia, LCP)

I'm also really interested in students, and NQT teachers. I think that's maybe because of my own experience, maybe. But I really want to be able to be there, before it's too late. You know, be in there, giving them their support, as a mentor maybe? Or as somebody they can just come and chat to, maybe that is a mentor … I would love to do something like that. Even if it was just on my day off. I'd love to be able to go in and take these [NQT] teachers and say 'It's okay. In 10 years time, you will be alright. You will.' (Emma, MCP)

Sue recalled that when she reached age 50, she felt that she was no longer able to meet the physical demands of teaching in the pupil referral unit. Not wanting to lose her long established expertise and knowledge, the local authority had offered her a new role which would mean she could continue to contribute to the service by developing other teachers working with challenging pupils in schools.

The fact that they created a new post, and there had been nothing or nobody like it before, in order to keep me in the service, because I'd said 'I can't carry on in the PRU anymore, because it's not right for me, and it's not right for the kids.' They didn't want me to go, and so they created a post for me. Well that's pretty affirming. (Sue, Retired)

Although established and confident teachers in mid- and late-career phases knew they wanted to be able to use their knowledge and skills in a generative way, they didn't feel that there were many opportunities available since to support other teachers due to local authority services having been reduced.

I think I'd like to do an advisory type role, but the problem with that at the moment is that it's not a very secure job, whereas once you've got a permanent contract, teaching is secure.

I work a lot with advisors, and I go out to nurseries and I offer them advice. That would be something that I'd be very interested in, but not without the job security. So there are hardly any advisors who work for County Council now, they all work for [name of private company], and I know it's very up and down for them. And people tend to be more on temporary contracts, there's just not that job security with advisory roles. And I am the main bread winner at home.(Louise, LCP)

In contrast, teachers who still felt that they needed to develop their own teaching skills did not feel equipped to develop others, and preferred to focus on developing their own teaching practice.

There's stuff even now, like coaching new teachers and mentoring new teachers, its fine, but it's not really what I enjoy. You know, it's okay, doing that, but what I would rather do is just try to be a really effective teacher. (Justin, ECP)

I've never been a mentor … I've done lesson observations, but I've never been a mentor or anything. I don't feel like I'm qualified enough to do that, even after eleven years. (Katie, MCP)

While skilled and confident teachers in the middle and late phases of their career expressed a desire to dedicate time to the development of the future generation of teachers coming into the profession, most teachers in the earlier phase of their career wanted to stay focused on developing their own skills and expertise.

5.4 *Changes and Transitions*

While early-career phase teachers discussed the transition from student to teacher, and the support needed to avoid a threat to their professional identity, it became clear that other times of change and transition also gave primacy once again to their individual identity. Particular changes which teachers referred to were situational in nature; a promotion, moving house, changing schools.

5.4.1 Changing role

For some teachers, the opportunity to change role had provided a chance for professional learning and had a positive influence on their professional identity, but for others the transition to a different year group, or additional responsibilities presented challenges.

In Justin's third year of teaching he had changed school which resulted in him teaching in a different year group and taking on his first leadership responsibilities. Having gained confidence in his first two years of teaching, the change of role led to an unstable identity.

> *…So then this year, like a bit of a baptism of fire when I first arrived… It felt like a new job. It felt like I was starting from scratch. [Teaching] Year Two is a completely different job to Year Six.*

He appreciated the fact that the senior leadership team in the school realised that he would require space to adjust to the change in circumstances.

> *And that's why they explicitly said 'This is entirely new to you, and we knew that when we hired you. And we know there will be an adjustment period for you. We will stick with you, and support you while you do that.' Which is what got me out of it [the dip on timeline]*

The practical support and understanding they gave him meant that, after experiencing instability of his professional identity, he was able to return to a positive and stable sense of self in a short period of time.

> *She said 'What are the most important things to you at the moment?' And I said 'Really great teaching.' Which includes getting my planning good. So she said 'Just focus on that for now'. (Justin, ECP)*

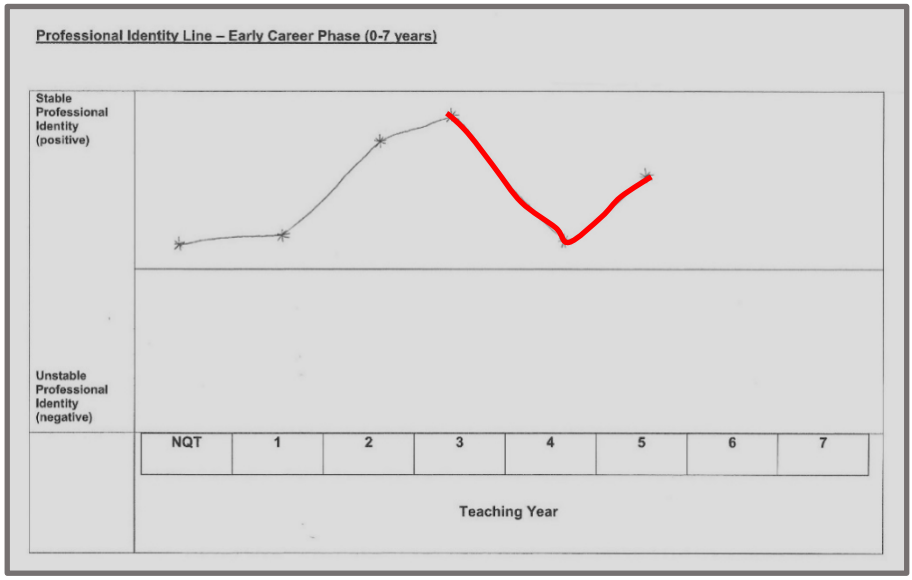
While Justin had a new role due to a change of school, Sophie experienced a similar critical incident when, just as she was feeling confident in her Year 1 class, her head teacher requested that she move into the Early Years provision;

Sophie's story: Changing role, reduced sense of professional identity, appropriate support from school, commitment to teaching sustained

Sophie was age 27 working in her early career phase, with a growing confidence teaching her Year 1 class. When the foundation teacher left, her head teacher suggested that she might like to have the experience of working in a different year group. Although Sophie thought the change might be good for her own professional development, the transition had an immediate impact on her sense of professional identity.

> *So then to go into Foundation, it was a massive change. And I didn't realise how different it would be. I was just really naïve. Over the summer holidays I read loads of books about it. There are lovely books for Foundation, loads of practical activities, but it didn't really prepare me. So it was just a really big change. (PTI)*

While her confidence had grown as she established herself as the Year 1 teacher in her second and third year of teaching, she experienced a feeling of dread as she returned to school in September, feeling like a newly qualified teacher once more.



I've never been so nervous as that first morning … It's the only way I can describe it, feeling like an NQT. But with the expectation that you've just had a really good year, and that you're now an established teacher. So it was almost harder. With more pressure on yourself, because there's an expectation of what you should be, you know, four or five years into teaching. But it feels like you're starting over again. (PTI)

Recognising that the change could present challenges, the school supported Sophie by leaving the existing support staff in the nursery, which meant continuity for the children, but they were also able to support her with the practicalities of managing the nursery.

I had the same TAs, so they knew everything inside out. And they were really supportive in that they'd say 'Oh this is how [previous teacher] would do it.' And so I was mimicking her. I took everything she did, and copied it. Because I didn't have anything to base Foundation on. But in the same way if I did anything differently they were fantastic. (PTI)

There was also a new baseline assessment being introduced to Foundation Stage, so Sophie was given the opportunity to attend a training day to improve her knowledge, and the chance to speak with more experienced Foundation Teachers.

It was a whole day of training, and obviously everyone who was there was a Foundation Teacher so just talking to them was a learning curve. (PTI)

Sophie benefitted from professional development opportunities throughout the year, and the continued support helped her to feel more comfortable in the role.

And then we went on a course, which was run by the LA for people new to Foundation … and I was moderated as well. So that was actually really useful, being moderated, having somebody come in and look at everything to make sure I was actually doing it right. (PTI)

The support that Sophie received offered her the opportunity to learn from others, and to ask questions without the fear of being judged. Returning for her fifth year in teaching, and a second year working with foundation stage children, she was feeling optimistic and her sense of professional identity was increasing once more.

> *I feel so much more confident knowing what they have got to do by the end of the year, and knowing how to get them there. How to make it a bit more exciting. Because last year … I think I was so worried about it, with it all being so new, that thinking back now, there are activities that I would put a lot more detail into. Whether it's a sound tray or a water tray or a play tray – I'll just put a lot more detail into it, to make it more exciting for the children. And that just comes from building on last year. Knowing what worked and what didn't. I just feel a lot more confident. (PTI)*

Sophie also appreciated the acknowledgement she received from her head teacher, recognising the progress that she had made.

> *I've had my meeting with my head teacher as well. And we talked about last year, and she was really positive about it. And she said 'well done', which was nice. Because she's lovely but she has very high standards. So that was really lovely. It meant a lot, because it had been a very hard year. (PTI)*

The transition from Year 1 to Foundation Stage, was a period of adjustment for Sophie, during which time she had to adapt her practice and pedagogy to a completely new environment. In recognition of this process, her head teacher offered her practical support to smooth the transition. This resulted in positive outcomes; in terms of her increasing pedagogical knowledge, developing new relationships in school, increasing her sense of professional identity and sustaining her commitment to her role.

Vignette 5.2 Sophie

When Emma was asked to move into Year Two it had a positive influence on her professional identity as, with more of a statutory focus on pupil attainment, she considered it to be affirmation of her successes in Year One.

> *And it sounds like a small change, but with the Year Two SATS and everything else, I'd been in Year Two previously, but not for a long time. And SATS had changed a lot. And we had a new Head of Year, and a younger teacher with us. And it was a real peak, in that everything was settled, [son] was growing up nicely … and I was really settled at work. And moving to Year Two and gaining that confidence from her really. 'Of course you can do it. Go for it'. That was really nice that. (Emma, MCP)*

While transitions between year groups are common for teachers working in school, these stories illuminate the importance of leadership and support during the transition from one role to another. Stories of self-doubt and reservations were told, but the teachers who were given adequate time to prepare for the new roles were able to experience a positive transition, increased confidence and a positive influence on their professional identity.

5.4.2 Changing school

A change in school context resulted in new relationships, different systems and different values, and this was often a period of vulnerability on the teachers' professional timelines as they embarked on the socialisation process into a new school community.

Following a positive NQT year, Janet remained in her first school for six years. Confidence in her teaching practice had increased and, wanting to progress in her career, she had decided that a move to a large, urban primary school with a different demographic might provide the challenge she needed.

> *I went to the school fully expecting to be able to change everybody's lives overnight, and within the first week of being there, I was told by a child to 'F off' and they ran home.*
>
> *So I'd gone from being really confident, really happy, felt I was a good teacher to, at the end of the first week, sitting in a corner sobbing because I felt that all of the things I thought I could do I now couldn't.*
>
> *And everything that I'd learned at the other school, I had to relearn. (Janet, LCP)*

Having struggled with managing some of the behaviour in his first few years of teaching, Lee decided that a move to a different school could be the positive change he needed, and he was able to make a fresh start.

> *Had I stayed at my first school, where I'd made mistakes, it would have been hard for me to draw some of those back. So moving schools for me was a positive at that time, and you can see on the graph that it went that way. (Lee, LCP)*

When teachers move to a new school everything is different. The change can provide an opportunity for new beginnings, but can also take teachers out of their established comfort zones, resulting in an unstable identity. Where school leaders and colleagues recognised the challenges faced and offered support and time to adjust, the challenge and professional development opportunities were a positive influence on teachers' identity.

5.4.3 Moving into senior leadership

Although all of the teachers in this study came forward to participate because they identified as teachers, three of them were head teachers, while a further four of them formed part of the senior leadership team in their school. For each of these teachers the transition into senior leadership represented a period of instability in professional identity.

For Cat, it was the transition from colleague to management which presented a challenge to her professional identity.

I think for me, one of the scariest things about management, although I'm kind of over it now because I've had to do it a few times, was about having to talk to staff about their practice, and about their behaviour … And that was the bit that I thought 'Oh, that's going to be so awkward that is.' You know? To have to do that with colleagues! (Cat, ECP)

The relationship with staff was also the difficulty faced by Sarah when she took on the deputy head role at a split site school, and she began to question her ability to do the job.

I've got two really strong teachers, who are challenging for different reasons. So there is no respite from that. And I keep feeling that, you know, if you give me a child kicking off and effing and jeffing, I can handle [that] any day, I can deal with that, but…

It makes me question myself. And I question whether I'm cut out for this… You know, to be a manager.

Although she felt that her wellbeing was suffering, the continued commitment to her job was due to practical reasons and feelings of obligation rather than a desire to stay in the role.

I have got to a point this term, where I could have gone. I wish I could be more maverick, and say I'm walking away because my sanity and my quality of life is a bit more important to me. But I'm staying sane and sensible, you know, I'll stick it out a bit longer. (Sarah, LCP)

On reflection, Lee realised that the most unstable periods of his teaching career were at times when he had felt disconnected from others, and was lacking a support network. One such time was when he secured his first headship and after nineteen years mastering his profession, he returned to the same insecurities that he had felt as a new teacher.

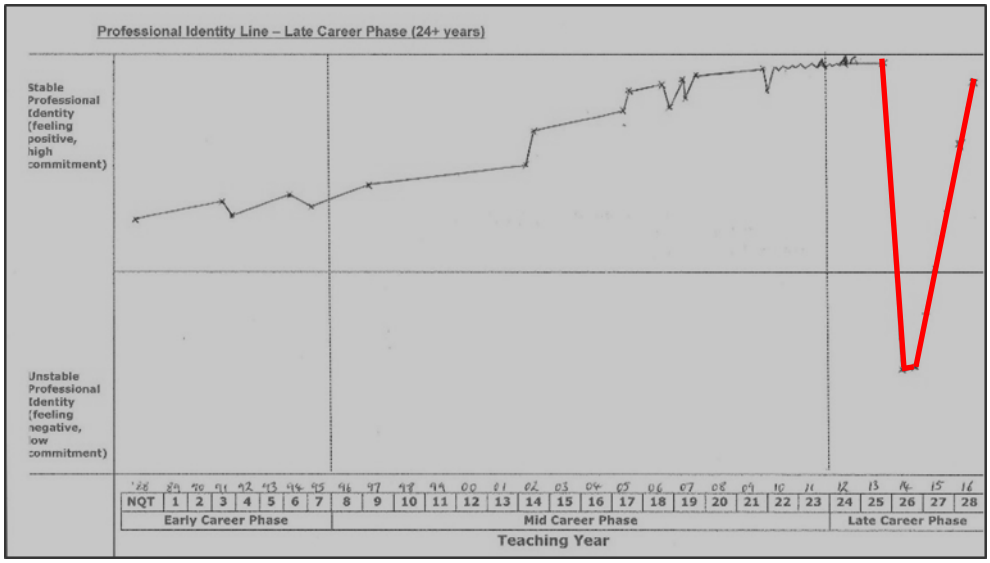
…You're in a role that you don't understand, you don't know how to do it. You don't know what the job entails. And lots of people say that you sit there on the first day thinking 'Okay. So what do I do now?'

I felt left and abandoned. Left dealing with complex issues, which I struggled to know where to go and how to deal with them. And I had nobody to bounce those ideas off, or talk through with them. So that was a really difficult time ... I had to manage everything. And that was the low point in my career. (Lee, LCP)

Having progressed from classroom teacher to phase leader, onto the senior leadership team, Alan felt excited when he was successful in attaining his first headship. The following vignette highlights the difficulties which he experienced making the transition;

Alan's story: Moving into headship, losing sense of individual identity, losing commitment to the role of head teacher

As Alan had progressed successfully from classroom teacher into middle and senior leadership roles, his professional timeline reflected a general upward trend. As a confident deputy head, aged 47, and working in his late career phase, he felt that the structural changes taking place within the local authority where he worked could offer him the opportunity to move into headship.



Changing from a three-tier to two-tier school system meant that his first priority would be to oversee the transition from a first to a primary school. For the first two years in a head teacher role, he was leading the existing first school, appointing a new staff team for the primary school, and managing the construction of the new school building.

> *I got the headship. I started, and obviously I had to be involved in everyone reapplying for their jobs again…Then the roller coaster ride here over the next few years, was the build up to preparation for the action on site, and working with architects and all of that, so we had lots of consultation with the staff about what they wanted on a wish list and things. (PTI)*

The election of the coalition government in 2010 meant that the 'Building Schools for the Future' project was halted, leading to a stressful period of negotiation when the school's future was in doubt. When the school build was granted a reprieve, work continued. As the project manager, in addition to his leadership responsibilities, Alan found it increasingly difficult to relax.

> *Even on holidays my mind would always be somewhere else, and particularly when we were building up towards the new school build etc… I was taking phone calls on the campsite. I had to be contactable, because if I wasn't everything would've stopped until I was back after two weeks. (PTI)*

Once the new school was up and running, Alan had to undergo hip surgery, which meant that he had to take leave from school to recover. During this period the chair of governors resigned, and was replaced by another person who was far less supportive of his leadership.

> *And things went wrong then. In one form or another, and I had… I had a breakdown really…*

I had been under constant pressure from these new governors, and I felt that all I was doing was writing reports for them. I wasn't leading the school forward, I was generating reports. And I was being questioned on leadership etcetera. (PTI)

Where previously Alan had a clear vision for the school, the staff, and the pupils, this turn in events marked a critical point in Alan's career and he began to question his own ability to lead the school forward.

And I got onto the carpark one Monday morning, and I just thought 'What am I doing? I don't even know why I'm here anymore. I'm not doing headship, I'm doing something else, but I don't know what that is.' (PTI)

The relentless pressures of headship had used all of Alan's reserves, and his resilience was ebbing away. His unstable sense of identity meant that he began to question his role, his sense of identity, and his commitment to being a head teacher. Alan then made the difficult decision to resign from the position.

On reflection I was probably approaching burnout, because it had been such an intense period. But there hadn't been a slow regression, it was just BAM! And it just hit me. …And then my whole identity had gone. Anyway, the trust had gone. And I decided that I could no longer work there. I'd lost my faith in the teaching profession. I'd lost my own identity. (PTI)

At the point of Alan's first interview he had taken a period of leave from his career. Having taken some time to recover from burnout and reflect on his options, he had made the decision to change his career trajectory, and had taken supply teacher work, which he thought could help to rebuild his confidence.

I registered with a number of different supply agencies, because I thought 'Well, I can teach.' It's the one thing I know I can do … So I was appointed for three days a week. (PTI)

Returning to classroom teaching felt natural for Alan, and he began to reconnect with the reasons he had chosen teaching 28 years ago, and began to once more feel like an expert in his chosen profession.

Although I had my NPQH, teaching children is what I'd trained for. I had trained to be a teacher, to work with children, and to develop children … But the more you do headship, the more you come out of the classroom, and you lose the expertise and the subject knowledge, because you're not doing it every day. (PTI)

Taking a step back into the classroom had a positive influence on Alan's sense of self. Being able to focus on the children in his class and having more time for his own family readdressed the balance which had impacted on his own wellbeing.

So that is where I was able to rebuild my confidence, as a teacher … I'm much happier now in myself, without the ultimate pressure of wearing so many different hats … my work/life balance is so much better now than it was when I was a Head. Headship is all consuming. But I've climbed out of the dip, and that's an important bit I suppose. (PTI)

Alan's move into headship, paired with unrealistic expectations from the local authority and his governing body, with no consideration for his personal wellbeing, saw a sharp decline in his confidence and sense of identity, which resulted in his '*burnout*', a lost commitment to the role of head teacher, and a reconstructed career trajectory.

**this vignette was presented in Watkins (2017)*

Vignette 5.3 Alan

For Janet, being a head teacher had been a positive experience for her from the beginning. As she made the transition into headship, her professional identity remained stable, unlike Lee and Alan she indicated that she had never once felt that she was isolated, and felt lucky to have received continued support from her colleagues.

> *It was challenging, but there was always somebody there if I needed them. It might have been a member of staff who put a Mars Bar on my chair if it was a funny day, or someone brought me a cup of tea, or my chair of governors would check that I was okay, erm… it's teamwork. (Janet, LCP)*

Having worked in a local authority role, Sue had witnessed first-hand how important it was for schools to be led by head teachers who felt supported.

> *I would go into schools sometimes, and they would be tearing their hair out. Sometimes because of the influence that one very difficult child, or family, was having on the whole school. And the way their confidence was being knocked, because they would feel that all of the staff were looking at them, and saying 'What are you going to do about it?' And it's really sad to see somebody who is trying their very hardest to run a school, but because of the shrinking of the LA, there's not a lot of support mechanisms out there … I hope there are systems put in place, where there can be systems they can call on, who are not fellow colleagues, but somebody a little bit removed. Because headship can be a very lonely place. (Sue, Retired)*

A move into headship was a critical period in these teachers' careers. As with the transition from student to teacher or the move from one year group to another, support was needed, but not always provided, to navigate the new demands which this role presents, and to avoid feelings of isolation and vulnerability.

5.4.4 Transitions in personal life

Although teachers told many stories about changes which took place in school having influenced their professional identity, stories about changes in their personal circumstances also featured as having impacted in positive or negative ways on their sense of self.

Becoming a parent was predominantly discussed by teachers in their mid-career phase, although for Russell, in his early-career, his original route into teaching had been influenced by the fact that he was already a father with financial responsibilities, and therefore needed a salaried route into teaching.

> *…the actual motivation of following the Teach First path was primarily a financial decision. There was no way, practically, that I could have afforded to have any unsalaried route into teaching. So for me, it needed to be Teach First or Schools Direct. It was the only way that I was able to do it. (Russell, ECP)*

Although returning to work after her children presented some logistical challenges, Emma felt that becoming a parent had influenced her professional identity in a positive way.

> *I totally was very different when I had [first child]. Very different. Particularly towards the boys possibly. More sympathetic, more like 'Oh gosh, this will be my little boy one day.' Suddenly very different. In a hugely positive way.*

The support and understanding that Emma received during her pregnancy, maternity leave and return to work helped her to sustain her positive professional identity and she was able to remain committed to her job.

> *…And it took a good year or so for me to get back on track a little bit, I would say. With some of the things. Because something wouldn't be mentioned for a while, and then you'd go 'What are you talking about?' And they'd say 'Oh you weren't here, you were having a baby.' And I was like 'Okay'… It took a bit of time to get back in. But it was the team really. The year group team, that keep you on track. Plan with you, and let you watch them as well, so that you can see.*
>
> *And then you start to feel better about yourself, and say 'I can still do this. I can get this sorted.' And then things settle down again. (Emma, MCP)*

Julia recalled that when she had her first child she made the decision to reduce her hours and to relinquish her position as deputy head. Although the school accommodated her choices, which she appreciated, the change in her status at school meant that her professional identity became unstable for a period.

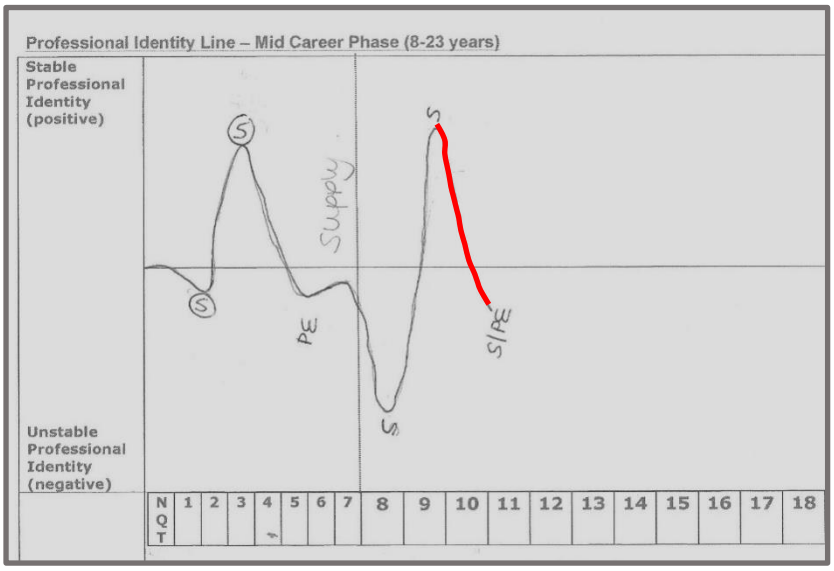
> *I did a year full time as deputy, then I stepped down from that, which I never regretted … But then I did get a little bit lost, because I'd got really young children, and I wasn't in a position where I could leap up and do everything. And then I had to adjust, from having been in that management position, to then being, and I don't mean this in a derogatory way, to being **just** a teacher. So that was strange. (Julia, LCP)*

With his wife as the primary care provider Lee felt that the time earlier in his career, when he had children the same age as those in his class had offered him a distinct advantage. He considered that his insider knowledge of the lives of his pupils and their families gave him an edge in school, and enabled him to build strong relationships with the community.

> *I was watching the same programmes they were watching, seeing the same films they were seeing at the cinema, buying the toys they were buying, listening to the same music. I understood those children in the same way that my own children were growing up. And I shared the families' experience of what it was like to have an eight-year-old or a ten-year-old. So it helped me to bond with the people I was working with. Both children and families. (Lee, LCP)*

While having children of primary school age had a positive influence on Lee's sense of professional identity and career, Katie spoke of having to make difficult choices, and feeling that she was expected to prioritise her job over her family;

Katie's story: Increased commitments in personal life, struggling with conflicting roles, reducing commitment to role of teacher



Working in her mid-career, aged 40, Katie's two young sons were both primary school age. Although she had recently worked with a charismatic head teacher and was enjoying the role of teacher, she felt that she was missing out on valuable time with her own children. The demands of planning, marking and other paperwork which had to be done outside of school hours were invading what she considered should be her family time.

> *It is really tough. I leave the house at 7am, so I don't even get to take them to school, because it's a forty minute drive to work. And I get back home between half past five and six normally. And then I'm straight on the computer. And at least one of my weekend days I'll spend working. It's really hard going. (PTI)*

Whilst Katie was working hard to ensure the children in her class benefitted from interesting and engaging lessons, she felt frustrated at having to make choices between her own children and the pupils in her class.

> *I already feel that I neglect a lot of their school stuff, and I do spend a lot of my time working. All day Saturday, normally. And all day Sunday, maybe…It is hard. Because I feel like I'm doing really good stuff for thirty parents who don't actually appreciate what I'm doing, and my own kids are missing out. (PTI)*

Katie thought that if she was able to drop her children off at school and pick them up occasionally they would benefit from seeing her as part of their own school community.

> *I would like to do one pick up and one drop off, because my [own] kids are always saying 'Why do you never come to our school?' (PTI)*

Personal relationships outside of school had suffered as she felt a social pressure to be seen to be coping with her multiple roles. Although she realised that perfection in any family home was likely to be a façade, it was clear that she was experiencing a sense of failure.

> *I don't go out. I just don't have the energy to go out any more, and I've let a lot of friendships go.*

…Which is sad, but I can't do everything, and I do think there is the expectation on women to be able to have a perfect relationship, and a perfect family, with the perfect job, and the perfect house… and my house gets cleaned properly every six weeks. Like once a half term, because I just think (shrugs). (LHI)

She also discussed the negative impact on the relationship with her husband.

We just never spend any time together. I'm just so tired. We might make plans, and get my mum to babysit, and then I'll cancel, two hours before. Because I can't be bothered to get in [from work] on a Friday night to get dressed and go out again. (LHI)

Acknowledging that she had no time for other activities outside of school, even those she thought might improve her wellbeing, she accepted the unmanageable workload as being integral to the doing '*a good job'* for the children in her class.

I don't even have time to exercise or anything. And I know that would probably really help with my stress levels, but I just can't be bothered. I work so hard, and I want to work hard, because I enjoy my job, and being with the [school] kids. (LHI)

Having no time for the other roles meant that Katie was losing the aspect of her individual identity which did not relate to being a teacher.

But I just don't know where Miss stops and where Katie begins. It all bleeds in too much really. (LHI)

As Katie found it increasingly difficult to find the time to be a parent, a friend, and a partner, her motivation reduced and she considered a career change. She felt that the family's financial commitments left her with limited options.

I keep saying I won't stick it out, and that I'm going to leave and find something else, but I think I'm trapped in a way now. (PTI)

Considering other possible career options, she had recently met up with an old colleague who had left teaching and, now running a private pre-school nursery setting, she had offered Katie a job.

And the list of pros were amazing. I'd have like four kids and I'd be room leader, I'd have much more PPA than I get now… but it was £1000 per month pay drop, and I just can't. As much as I would like to do Early Years, I can't afford to come out of school, because at the moment we need the money. (LHI)

In her mid-career with a young family, Katie was starkly aware of her dual roles, and of the difficult choices she was having to make between her personal and professional lives. As her alternative identities seemed increasingly incompatible, her commitment to her teaching role reduced, and she had begun to consider other roles which might be better suited to her personal circumstances.

**this vignette was presented in Watkins (2017)*

Vignette 5.4 Katie

When Nigel's dad became terminally ill, feelings of sadness, coupled with the responsibility of a young family, meant that he was unable to focus fully on his teaching or to develop any of his skills.

He had cancer, and I used to speak to him every day. Most days throughout the year I would walk to Tesco and go and get my food, and we would have a chat. He was really poorly. And I think that year was hard, with him being like that. (Nigel, MCP)

For Norma, a divorce and two family bereavements during her mid-career phase meant that she lost her focus, and her energy for teaching.

I wasn't probably productive, I don't think. In those… probably twelve months, when it all kicked off, I wasn't at my best. And my dad died, and my sister died as well. In the same year. (Norma, LCP)

Moving house and changing local authority proved to be a challenge for Louise as she felt that the reputation she had built in her previous school was lost.

They used different systems for measuring profiles in Early Years, and it was all a bit demoralising really. I'd go to interviews and they'd say 'We really liked you, but you didn't know about…' And because I was going to interviews in [three different counties], obviously that was three separate counties and systems anyway. (Louise, LCP)

These personal transitions seemed to highlight feelings of being isolated and alone within a school. Where these emotional and human elements were acknowledged and understood by family, colleagues and school leadership, periods of transition and change in personal lives could be successfully negotiated, with professional identity fluctuating for only a short period of time and in some cases remaining stable, as Janet and Sue both indicated.

And what's interesting, I lost my mum to breast cancer here [indicates stable point on timeline]*, but because I had support from family, and because school was settled, and I had support from school, it didn't impact on how I felt in school. Or my own identity in school. (Janet, LCP)*

So in the last five years… Even though my mum died, and even though I was diagnosed with Parkinson's, I was still on a high at work. And there were other positives, like my grandson being born, and my marriage is strong. I have an incredibly supportive husband. (Sue, retired)

Bereavement, divorce, moving home and becoming a parent, were all changes in personal circumstances which were identified as critical incidents which influenced teachers' identities, and for these teachers, were times when extra support and understanding were needed to be able to sustain a positive sense of identity and remain committed to teaching.

5.5 *Chapter Summary*

In this chapter the circumstances which build and maintain an *individual* sense of professional identity have been discussed. When an individual identity takes primacy the teachers' professional identity is related to their sense of uniqueness, based on personal beliefs, a sense of self-efficacy and future goals or ambitions. An individual professional identity took primacy for all early-career teachers as they endeavoured to establish themselves as effective

classroom teachers, while for mid- and late-career teachers their individual identity came to the fore as they navigated changes and transitions in their personal or professional lives.

Teachers' stories highlight the notion that individual professional identity can be particularly dominant during times of transition and change, when teachers might be in need of individual support and constructive feedback. Where teachers had a positive sense of an *individual* professional identity they were able to remain committed to their role, while an unstable sense of individual identity led them to question their commitment to their position.

The key positive influences for teachers in all phases with a dominant individual professional identity were role support, positive feedback and the opportunity for professional development opportunities which were specific to their own needs or aspirations, which would enable them to improve specific skills to be effective in their current or desired role.

6 Developing and Sustaining a Relational Identity and a Commitment to the School Community

The categories and codes which were discussed in the previous chapter have illuminated the importance of supporting teachers to flourish at an *individual* level. While the individual level of identity recognises the unique developmental processes (personal beliefs and values, performance and aspirations) that influence a teacher's sense of professional identity, integral to each of the participants' stories was the importance of the relationships which were formed throughout their career. Schools are fundamentally interpersonal, and teachers in all phases referred to circumstances which involved significant people and dyadic relationships which had either supported or challenged their sense of professional identity.

This chapter considers these significant relationship bonds that a teacher forms within a school and, with a focus on their influence in defining and positioning a professional identity, will consider the primacy of a relational identity. This particular form of professional identity develops, and is sustained, by a process of support and reflected evaluations from significant people or relationships. These significant relationships are influential in developing or challenging a teacher's sense professional identity, and in turn increased or reduced teachers' commitment to the school community.

The influences which teachers discuss in this chapter have formed the categories of **interpersonal relationships, pupils, school leadership** and **collaboration and**

Table 6.1 Categories and focused codes for a Relational Identity

Categories	Focused Codes
Interpersonal Relationships	Supportive relationships Colleagues as friends Mentors
Pupils	As motivation Caring Parents
School Leadership	Trust Level of support School climate
Collaboration and conversation	Shared working space Staff rooms

conversation. These**,** along with the sub codes from which they were developed, are illustrated in **Table 6.1**.

Throughout this chapter the categories and their related codes will be discussed, supported by the use of illustrative quotations as evidence. There will also be more comprehensive vignettes throughout, which will be used to emphasise particular stories, and to illustrate the relationship between the primacy of a relational identity and commitment to the school community.

6.1 *Interpersonal Relationships*

Teachers' stories suggested that their identity was being constructed, defined and sustained by interpersonal relationships within the school. Some teachers talked about these relationships in terms of their professional identity, which in turn, influenced their commitment to the school community. So significant were these relationships to teachers' sense of professional identity and commitment, that when talking me through her professional timeline, Sarah commented '*...it bothers me a little bit that this is all about people. This is all an emotive reaction to something that has happened with someone else.'*

6.1.1 Supportive relationships

During circumstances which might challenge their sense of professional identity, teachers often talked of supportive dyadic relationships as being the positive influence which enabled them to stay optimistic and committed.

As Anna struggled in the first few weeks of her NQT year, she found emotional support from another teacher working in the same key stage as her.

> *So pretty much if I've had a bad day, I can walk into the classroom. And we would seek each other out to have a chat, and we'd listen to each other… But just chatting makes you feel better doesn't it?*
>
> *Even if you're all getting things wrong, you're getting things wrong together. And you're not on your own anymore.*
>
> *…It doesn't matter what job you're in, there are going to be hard days, and there are going to be bad days, and you have to chat about that. I've no idea how I would have survived this year, if that Year One teacher wasn't there. And because she was an experienced teacher, it made me feel that it wasn't me. I wouldn't have survived without her. (Anna, NQT)*

With a positive professional identity and a strong commitment to the special school she worked in, Cat had moved into a leadership role, and spoke of the importance of the relationships she had with the other members of the leadership team. They all felt able to ask each other for help and to admit if they were feeling stressed.

We get on really well. We just sort of get each other really. There is never any feeling of one-upmanship or trying to outdo each other. We've each got our roles, and we're really good at saying 'Oh my God I've got to do this' or 'I've just had this email. Can anyone help me?' (Cat, MCP)

Having started her teaching career in a school where the members of staff have worked together for a long time, Sophie was sure that the positive culture of the school and the caring relationships were the reason why the staff there had remained committed to the school for so long.

When I got there, everybody had been there for a very long time. Everyone there is lovely, and that's the reason why I've stayed. The foundation teacher had been there for fifteen years, and one of my TAs has been there for twenty seven years now! And they've all been there over ten years…

You'd think that going into a school like this, with people who have been there so long, that it might be quite difficult, and they might be set in their ways, but everyone was just so supportive and fantastic, and they still are. (Sophie, MCP)

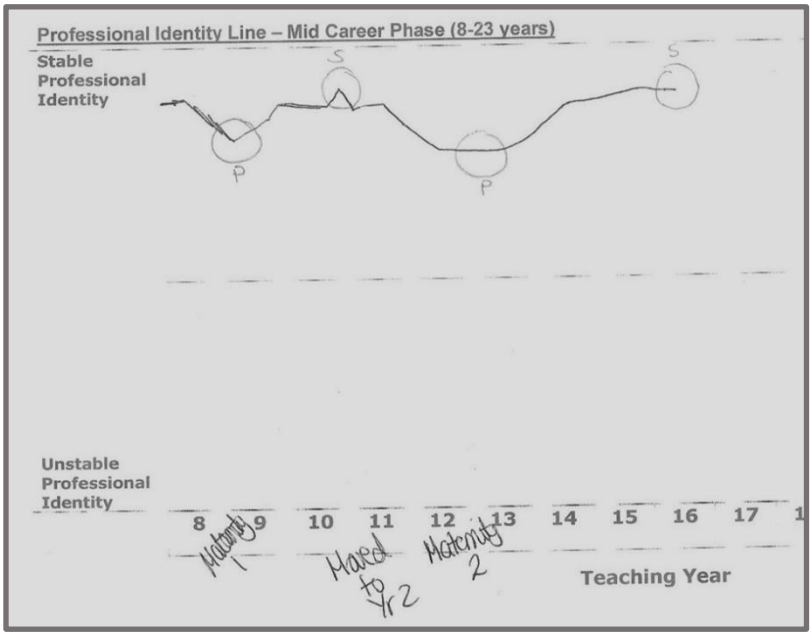
Working in a two-form entry school, Ellie talked about the positive influence that the relationship she had with her teaching partner had on her experience of school.

We work well together, because we're quite similar in personality. We've talked about other teachers who we wouldn't want to work with, because they're highly organised, and we're both quite laid back, which means we can make changes to things quite quickly. So I think we work quite well together, and it's probably why we've both stayed in Year Two… Working with someone who supports you, or works in a similar way to you is… its good. It just takes the pressure off a little bit. (Ellie, MCP)

As Emma reflected on her career journey, she acknowledged the trusting and caring relationships that she had developed with colleagues over time, believing that the support they provided had helped her to maintain a positive sense of identity and a commitment to the school;

Emma's story; Supportive relationships, positive professional identity, high commitment to school community

Working part-time as a Year 2 teacher in her mid career phase, Emma was 37 years old and had been teaching for 16 years. She still enjoyed teaching and had remained at the school where she began as an NQT. Her early years in teaching were a struggle. After a period away from the classroom, due to stress, support from her head teacher helped her to return to her role, and her professional identity and commitment had remained relatively stable since, with slight dips due to mixed emotions each time she returned from maternity leave.



Teaching in a school within an area of social deprivation, some of the challenges which the staff faced outside of the classroom could be emotionally draining. Emma believed these challenges made it essential that the staff supported each other emotionally.

> *Lots of things have happened at [school name], that make us stronger I think…the children we deal with, the families we deal with, we get to know them. And as teachers we know that we can only do that part of our job, if we're looking after each other. (LHI)*

> *I think what we try and do as a staff as well is have that openness with people.*

> *Because we deal with such tough situations sometimes, really tough safeguarding stuff. We've got to have that openness with each other really, so that we know we can support each other. (SSI)*

For Emma, support within the school came in the form of regularly checking on each other's wellbeing.

> *…Erm, and every lunchtime, every playtime, every after school, 'How are you?' You know, and we pop into each other's classroom all the time. Now, if that doesn't happen in a school, then I can absolutely see that you could shut the door and be on your own. (LHI)*

> *A couple of weeks ago everybody was really poorly, and we were texting each other saying 'I hope you're feeling alright'. It's that sort of thing as well. It's that support… I know it doesn't directly develop you, but it enables you to keep going, and to keep thinking 'Yes, I'm alright. Everything is fine.' (SSI)*

> *But as a team, it's constant. It might just be a quick chat in the loo, but we're always talking. And we're always saying 'Are you okay?' (SSI)*

Emma believed that the emotional support the staff gave to each other was the reason she had been able to remain committed to the pupils, the community and to the school.

I'm very aware of that, [it's] possibly why I've stayed. I don't think I would find [the support I get] where I am, maybe somewhere else. I just don't think I would. (SSI)

Describing her journey home from work it was clear that Emma had a strong sense of belonging which had developed from feelings of being cared for and from having a sense that she was part of the school community. She decided that her long daily journey to and from school was worth the extra time commitment.

I've passed five or six schools on my way home, and I've battled through traffic. But it's still worth it. Because it's not like… at an early stage I probably didn't feel like it was my school, but I do now. (LHI)

Emma felt that the strong and supportive relationships between the staff in her school, which had continued throughout her career, were the reason that she had been able to sustain her positive professional identity and had remained committed to what she considered to be *her* school community.

Vignette 6.1 Emma

Julia was one of two teachers, working in their mid- and late-career phases, who were on part time contracts. For both of these teachers their job share partners provided a constant source of encouragement, support and feedback.

…On a day to day basis, the person who I job share with, we support each other. Because we always have a hand over, and a chat and what have you. So if there was anything bothering me, school wise, I would talk through it with them. (Julia, LCP)

Considering his retirement, Lee reflected on his career, and noted that while he had a positive sense of professional identity, the times when his commitment had been challenged were when he lacked the supportive relationships which he needed.

And I think the strand that unites them all is isolation. It's the feeling of vulnerability and isolation. When you have got no support, when there's no-one around you, when there's no-one to turn to. You don't know who to ask, and you don't know the way forward. (Lee, LCP)

Teachers in all phases of their career valued the supportive relationships developed in school. These dyadic professional relationships often provided emotional support and an opportunity to discuss concerns or challenges which were faced within all teachers' careers.

6.1.2 Colleagues as friends

In addition to the professional supportive relationships which develop in schools, some teachers talked about colleagues who they considered to be friends. These relationships were characterised as having mutual understanding and enjoying a level of trust and openness which facilitated the discussion of experiences and feelings about events both inside and outside of school.

Following a difficult start in his first few years of teaching, Russell was pleased to have found a friend who was a more experienced teacher, whom he could turn to when the stress of the classroom felt too much.

> *I've got a real good mate who works in the school with me now … He was great last year, he was really supportive, and really helpful. He knew when I was having an off day, and he has helped me with my planning and stuff like that. We've become really good mates, and he just so happens to be in the classroom next door.*
>
> *We're always going and chatting to each other, and if I'm having a bad lesson I nip into his classroom and say 'Oh God! What do I do here?' And he does the same with me as well. He's the most important relationship that I've got at this school, because… well, he's just a good mate, to be honest with you. (Russell, ECP)*

Memo – Russell 12/01/2017
Importance of informal friendships

As Russell talked through his timeline, I was interested how the initial dip when he was ***'ready to drop out'*** which he had clearly illustrated had changed direction and turned into a peak. He explains that he has formed a strong friendship with a male colleague, who he feels he can trust enough to be open and honest about his teaching.

'…if I'm having a bad lesson I nip into his classroom and say 'Oh God! What do I do here?' And he does the same with me as well. He's the most important relationship that I've got at this school…'

I realise from this story that my own assumption has been that it would be assigned mentors who new teachers turn to for advice and support, but this statement from Russell suggests this is not always the case. The close friendship means that Russell feels like an equal, which in turn has had a positive influence on his sense of identity, and his commitment.

NOTE! My conversation with Russell has highlighted a distinction between formal mentoring relationships and supportive informal friendships with colleagues.

*** Is it these informal and trusting friendships which help to build resilience and support retention?**

*** Look at other teachers' professional time lines – Do these informal relationships feature in the lines of teachers in different of career?**

Additional note: Having looked across the transcripts, teachers in all phases talk about the importance of developing close friendships in school, and these relationships do seem to play an important part in developing resilience.

***Search for literature concerned with work friendships.**

Memo 6.1 Informal friendships

The friendship enabled both teachers to support each other, and their similarities beyond the classroom meant that Russell began to feel like a peer rather than a newly-qualified teacher, which had a positive influence on his developing professional identity.

The same mutuality existed in a friendship which Sophie had found with a younger and less experienced teacher.

> *So to start with I'd been the youngest person, I was younger by quite a bit, which didn't matter…*

Everyone was easy to get on with, but it was quite nice to have somebody else who was near my age… I mean I still got on really well with everybody, but it was nice to know that I wasn't the youngest anymore (laughs).

The informal interactions they shared at the end of the day had helped Sophie to assume the role of the more experienced teacher.

And my shared area joined onto her classroom, by a curtain. And at the end of the day she would often rip the curtain open, and say 'Oh My God!' (laughs).

So I noticed a difference last year with that, because the two of us became a lot closer, because we're both in the same situation. (Sophie, ECP)

These interactions enhanced Sophie's confidence and sense of professional identity.

For Katie, her friends at school continued to provide much-needed support when she got home. The significant relationship which Katie shared with one particular colleague provided a sounding board, where the two friends discussed personal concerns about work and family life.

…And we get home and we vent a lot to each other. We text continuously, and [husband] says 'Will you just put your phone down, you are always talking to your mates at work.' And that's because I need to speak to somebody who understands, to offload on. (Katie, MCP)

Having spent sixteen years working in the same school, Emma felt that some of the other staff in school had shared in the personal aspects of her life as well as the professional.

I mean I've been there since '99, and that's probably what's really different. And I do take it for granted sometimes, that I know the cleaner as much as I know the Head really!

They've seen me grow up almost. They've seen me get married, they've seen me have children. They've seen me cry, laugh and collapse! (laughs)

…I could honestly say that they're my friends. Because I could ring them any time of day, and that's when they're friends and not just colleagues, if you know what I mean. And they know the family, from those that have been there, a good handful that know [son and daughter] they know [husband], and that makes it friendship then doesn't it, rather than just a colleague. (Emma, MCP)

*A*s a head teacher of a two site academy school, Ricky benefitted from the emotional support that he got when he met up with other head teachers working in the same cluster of schools in a social environment.

So sometimes you just need to say 'You know what? I'm going to go for some lunch with my mates.' And we'll sit there going 'Oh my God, Parents!' and 'Why can't these teachers do this?!' (laughs) and 'you'll never guess what happened!' You can do that, and say 'Oh thanks for the therapy, see you next time.' And tonight actually, we have a cluster curry …so we're going out for a curry at half past five tonight.

But they are a great bunch. And again it's all down to the people. (Ricky, MCP)

When Norma's son was diagnosed with leukaemia she was in shock. While she was trying to come to terms with the immense change in her personal circumstances and trying to understand what the future might bring, she sought the friendship of her colleagues at work and they offered her the support which she needed.

I'd dropped him off at school, and I thought 'I'll go and have a cup of coffee with my friends.' Because I've got a really good, close set of friends who were fabulous.

They took all the teaching off me, no marking, nothing to do with school…everything was taken off me, completely.

The strong friendships that Norma had formed throughout her career meant that she was able to focus on her personal concerns about her family and let her role as a mother take primacy. When reflecting on how she has coped with difficult personal circumstances across her career Norma is clear what has been the positive influence.

It's the people I work with. Because I've worked with such lovely, supportive people. Especially here. But in my last school as well. (Norma, LCP)

For these teachers friendship relationships have provided them with a level of emotional support which is not found in all work relationships. These friendships have not only enabled them to sustain a positive professional identity and commitment during the challenging times, but for early-career teachers close friendships offered them a status which was equal with their peers.

6.1.3 Mentors

For teachers at the beginning of their career the relationship they had with their mentor had a strong influence on their sense of professional identity.

For some ECP teachers, as they reflected on the beginning of their career, they realised that they hadn't receive the level of mentoring support which they had needed.

I really struggle teaching maths, and every single week we would go through the maths, and every single week I would get it wrong. And every week, she'd tell me the objectives, but we'd run out of time when she was going to tell me how to teach it. So she was expecting a lot of me. And I thought 'That's fine. I'm employed, and I should be able to do my job.' But in hindsight, that was her job. To make sure I could do my job. (Anna, NQT)

Working in his second school, where each teacher received regular coaching, Justin felt that the mentor he was assigned in his first school where he trained through the Teach First route had let him down.

My mentor was absolutely lovely, but massively overworked. And she was just like 'As long as you're okay, then we think you're doing fine.' So she was just like 'Crack on.' And at that point I just thought 'Okay fine I'll do it.' But now, looking back, I think it's just not acceptable. It's just a waste … Because it's not acceptable to say 'I'm too busy, so I'm not going to give you your coaching meeting.' That is not ok … But I think in a lot of schools its like 'Well, I'm in charge of you, so I can decide that I've got more important things to be doing.' (Justin, ECP)

Feeling unsupported, both Anna and Justin had taken the decision to apply for jobs in different schools after their NQT year. Both reported having received more support in their new school, which resulted in an increasing sense of positive identity and commitment.

Even the early-career phase teachers who had chosen to remain at the same school felt that their mentor had been overstretched due to the amount of student teachers or other responsibilities they had in school.

Well, there were four of us who started on the Teach First programme last year, so he was very stretched in terms of the time he could give to us. Plus, he's the assistant head, so he's possibly the busiest person in this school; he deals with behaviour and things like that. So I always felt a little bit bad going to him if I'd got an issue, because he would always give me the time, but I was aware that it would be at the expense of him doing other things. (Russell, ECP)

For Sophie, the fact that her mentor was also the head teacher made her feel nervous. She felt that the two roles conflicted in some ways, as she felt that she should be able to be honest and open with a mentor, while she was aware of the judgemental nature of the role of head teacher.

She has incredibly high standards as well, which is a good thing, but when you're starting out it's quite scary. Now I've known her for quite a long time and it's a lot easier. But at first when you're trying to make the good impression it's hard to find that balance … Especially at that part, when you're still trying to prove yourself, to show that you're good enough to have been picked to do the job.

In some ways the situation caused her to be aware of what felt like conflicting professional roles as her emerging professional identity was being established during her NQT year.

But… I don't know… the way you are with the children, it feels like you're a lot of different people, all in one. So then having to speak with the head teacher about observations and reflecting on lessons, and my progress… I don't know. It's because she is, sort of, your boss. And you feel like you have to sound like you know what you're talking about, you know. (Sophie, ECP)

For Norma, it was the support she received from an informal mentor, when she was working in the mid-phase of her career, who helped to build her confidence and establish her professional identity as an English Specialist.

I think it was because she believed in me. And if I had some ideas, she would run with them, and she'd give me the responsibility, without over burdening me. Or she'd come and say 'I had a case study review with so and so today, what do you think about this?' (Norma, LCP)

The informal mentoring and encouragement at this mid-phase of career helped to develop Norma's feelings of competency and her belief that she had the potential to advance and influence the school's English department.

The relationships with peers which teachers discussed as having a positive influence on their sense of professional identity and commitment, were trusting, offered practical and emotional support, and opportunities to speak openly about their practice. During circumstances which challenged teachers' sense of professional identity, these supportive relationships helped to increase feelings of self-efficacy, build resilience and had a positive influence on feelings of commitment.

6.2 *Pupils*

When teachers talked about the relationships with adults in school, they discussed them in terms of identifying with a colleague or a peer, or in terms of support or mentoring which they received, or required, from others. In contrast, the relationship which they share with the children in school was unique in that it is not a peer-to-peer relationships, but is talked about as providing motivation and meaning.

6.2.1 As motivation

Most teachers had decided to enter the profession to *'make a difference'* to children's lives. It's unsurprising then, that they cited their relationship with the pupils as influencing the way they felt as teachers.

Both Andrea and Anna talked with enthusiasm and pride about the sense of achievement when a pupil had made visible progress.

I would never underestimate how much of a lift it gives you, when they do finally get it. And you're pleased for them, and that you've got it across, that they have understood it. Its things like that give me a really good day, and I can come home thinking 'Actually I am making a difference here, these children are making progress.' (Andrea, NQT)

But seeing the progress that the children make is fantastic. And to see them enjoy doing stuff. And the amount of effort that I put in, they give it back to me …and the buzz that I get when I've got it right, and I know that a child has had a eureka moment, or they have made progress, or just that they're enjoying it, that's just ace. I absolutely love that bit! (Anna, 26, NQT)

Working in a school for children with special needs, local to where she lived, Cat found immense satisfaction in seeing children who she had taught becoming independent and contributing to her local community.

> *I see them working in Nandos now. And for some people that might be 'who would want to work in Nandos?' But it's amazing actually. That they have managed to overcome everything, and they have got as job and they're settled. And they're not hurting their parents or their siblings, all that kind of thing. The things that other people take for granted, you know … This morning somebody came back from swimming having swam a width of the swimming pool, and it has taken three years, you know. But we got there. And that is what it's about for me. Is that a bit soppy? (Cat, ECP)*

The positive and informal relationship that Russell had with the pupils in his class, had a positive influence on his sense of professional identity. He believed that the humour he used in his classroom allowed everyone in the class to reflect on their work in a non-judgemental environment.

> *Have you seen that video on Facebook? Where there is a teacher who gives all the kids a different high five? Well, I feel like I'm that bloke a little bit. I don't have a high five for every child, but I do feel like I've got a good relationship with every one of them … I've got a sense of humour with them, which they like, I tell them awful jokes, which they like, no matter how bad they are. And I don't mind taking the mickey out of myself, you know, I don't mind admitting when I don't know something.*

Prior to becoming a teacher, Russell had worked in other schools as a learning mentor. During our first meeting he talked about his belief that to be a good teacher you have to *care* about the children, and enjoy the environment of being in a classroom.

> *I don't understand what some people are doing in teaching. I genuinely don't know why they do it, because I'm sure they could find a job that pays the same, and that's less hours. But they clearly don't have the passion for it, and they don't enjoy it. They moan about things … But you need to be enjoying what you're doing, 'cos otherwise you'll get found out. The kids will find you out very quickly, and other people will find you out. And these children deserve better. (Russell, ECT)*

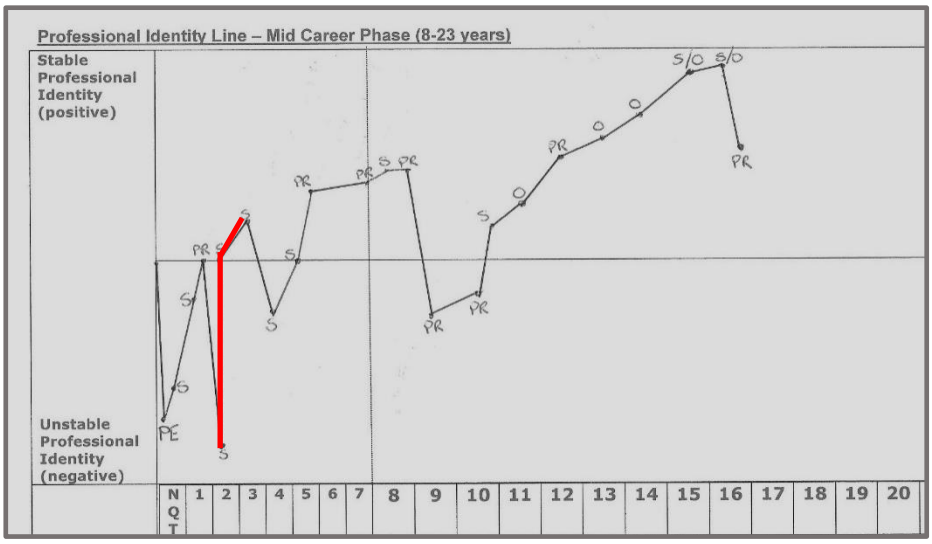
Teachers working in mid- and late-career phases also talked about the relationships they had with pupils as still providing them with motivation every day.

> *I enjoy going to work, and I enjoy the relationships I have with the children. And I love to see the children grow, undoubtedly. So, yes I don't envisage me doing anything else. (Julia, LCP)*

> *I can have great relationships with all the staff, but if I can't go in there and have a relationship with them…well that's why I get up in the morning really. So that relationship [is] first and foremost…When you shut that door and it's just you and the children, it's a wonderful job. There's no job like it. (Emma, MCP)*

Embedded throughout Ricky's career story was the significance of his relationship with the children who he had chosen to work with. During one noteworthy period in the early phase of his career he came to appreciate that the connection he made with his pupils was '*the* most significant thing';

Ricky's story: Developing relationships, increasing sense of professional identity, increasing sense of commitment to pupils in school



In his mid-career phase, Ricky was a head teacher in a primary academy school. He was 41 years old with 17 years teaching experience in various schools in England. He still had a positive sense of professional identity which he said was due to the fact that he still felt lucky to be working with children.

He reflected on a period early in his career when he worked in a school in London, in an area which suffered from gang violence. Having learnt the practical aspects of the teaching role in his first few years of teaching, working in a semi-rural school, the change of environment meant that he learnt what he still considered to be *'the most significant thing'* about teaching.

> *I understood planning, I understood curriculum, classroom organisation and all those things, and then I went to London, and it was like a different planet! (PTI)*

The majority of children were immigrants or refugees, and as a white westerner Ricky found it hard to find any common ground, and felt that the pupils in his class found it equally difficult to identify with him.

> *The majority of them were Muslim, or they were Afro Caribbean, or Somali, they had no interest in being there. They just had to go there. It was just a case of they were there, and they didn't want to be in trouble with the Imam or their parents, so they listened to what you had to say. (PTI)*

The behaviour in the classroom was *'going through the floor'*, with fights breaking out every day. The school experienced a high turnover of staff but Ricky made the decision to persevere; to give these children a chance.

I just worked at it, because if I don't go in tomorrow and I quit, and go somewhere else, which I could… then they've just got somebody else. And I thought 'I'll be here tomorrow, because that is step one.' Just go in, and be there. And the next day I'll still be there. And I worked on that basis, and I thought it couldn't get any worse than it was. (PTI)

After several months of persistence, he felt that the most important thing before any learning could take place, was for the children in his class to learn to get along together.

So I'd get into work and say 'Let's go to the Natural History Museum.' I'd throw everything out of the window, and we'd go. I'd think 'You don't need Literacy and Numeracy Hour, half of you can't speak English… You just need to learn how to be nice to each other, actually.' I had been working on the basis 'Well, they hate me...but I'm going to keep going.' And so we had this relationship where I assumed that any modicum of 'Yes Mr Smith' was a success. (PTI)

Returning from a day trip to London Zoo, Ricky needed to pop into a toilet before getting the Tube to return to school.

I left the TA and said 'Can you keep them all here please? Don't let anyone run off!' And she said 'No problem.' Anyway, I went to the loo, came back, and they were all gone!

I thought 'Oh shit!' And I thought 'This is the end of my career. But let's find them at least… at least let's find ***one*** *of them!' Anyway I was searching round, and after about five minutes they all jumped out from behind the statue and shouted 'Ha! Surprise!'*

*The little B******s! (laughs with a clear affection)*

But I realised at that point that they didn't actually hate me. I had just worn myself into the position of assuming that, but actually we had quite a good relationship. And that's when I realised 'Ah, that's what it's about. It's about having a good relationship.' (PTI)

The commitment that Ricky had made to be at school for the children in his class every day, meant that there was time for a relationship and mutual respect to develop.

Even though I didn't realise it at the time. I was giving them the chance to let them be themselves, and they respected that. (PTI)

Ricky recognised this period in his career as having been significant because he realised that each child is individual and unique, and that understanding helped motivate him to continue teaching, as he realised that the relationship he built with the children was the foundation stone of them being able to learn.

*I finally got it, and understood what it was all about. It wasn't about what Ofsted needed you to do. That school was about 'What do these children need?' Well, yesterday that child's parents were killed in front of him, in the Congo, and he was put on an aeroplane, and now he's here. So, me standing at the front, talking about long division, is not going to help him. And he is saying 'F*** off!' to me because he's upset. He doesn't need that. So what does he need? And what does that child need? And this one girl, from Somalia, who has never experienced education before, she is lapping it up.*

So I learned that you cater for individual children. You do what they need. You use all the resources available, and the time available, and you ***make*** *it happen. I didn't care how much time I was putting in. (PTI)*

Recognising the influence which he had as a teacher on the pupils in his class gave Ricky a renewed sense of pride and a feeling of responsibility, which he obviously still felt, when I met him years later, as a head teacher.

> *I suppose that one significant experience was the realisation that **I** was the difference. **I** was the difference to that class of children. And that has been true across my career.*
>
> *You get up some days and think 'I'm knackered. If I worked in an office I'd call in sick today, and I wouldn't care if they didn't pay me.' But you don't do that as a teacher, you get up and go 'I've planned all this work for these children, and I have **got** to be there.' There is nobody else who can do it. (LHI)*

Ricky's story illustrates a developmental connection between his original commitment to his class, a growing relationship with the pupils, a positive sense of professional identity and an increasing motivation and commitment to the school community.

Vignette 6.2 Ricky

Teachers in early, mid and late phases of their careers talked about the importance of positive relationships with the pupils in their classroom as having a positive influence on their professional identity, their motivation and their commitment.

6.2.2 Caring

Teachers' stories often highlighted the emotional aspects of teaching. The teachers in this study were not only concerned with the academic successes of the children in their class, but also talked passionately about the importance of their physical and emotional wellbeing.

As a newly qualified teacher Anna was beginning to understand the different circumstances in her pupils' home lives.

> *I have to spend time during the day to make sure that two of my children aren't hungry. They come into school hungry, and it's trying to make sure that… the one child who is a traveller, she asked me if she could take some fruit home, and I said 'Yes.'*
>
> *But I have to do that without the other children seeing, because they'll not understand that actually they don't need to take any home.*

As she recalled a story about the Harvest Festival she was visibly emotional.

> *And we had the Harvest Festival, but they bring food in and [one of the pupils] said 'What are we bringing this food in for again Miss?' and I said 'It's for people who don't have food, and they can't afford it. We donate it to them, so that they get food, because they've got no food at home.'*
>
> *'So is this food for me then? Because we've got no food in the cupboards.' (sighs) And yet they'd bought a tin of beans in to give to the Harvest Festival. So, that is emotionally draining, as well as physically and mentally. (Anna, NQT)*

Memo – Anna 05/12/2015

Caring/emotional aspect of teaching.

Anna told me this story about a child in her class at Harvest Festival. The child had asked if they could take some of the donated food, as there was no food in the cupboards at home. She got emotionally choked up when she told me (and so did I). The realisation of the disadvantage that some children in her class experienced had seemed to come as a shock.

'So, that is emotionally draining, as well as physically and mentally.'

As Anna told the story it reminded me of my own experiences working with children who were living in poverty, and how difficult the emotional aspects of teaching can be.

NOTE! DO NOT omit this significant emotional display from the final thesis – This caring aspect of teaching is so important

*** Is this emotional aspect of teaching recognised in the literature?**

*** How does this intensity of emotions influence ECP teachers? – Are the levels of poverty and disadvantage which some children experience a shock for new teachers?**

Memo 6.2 Caring for pupils

Using her lunch hour to set up the classroom for the afternoon lessons, Andrea found that she was being visited by children in her class finding an excuse to come in and chat. Against the advice of her more experienced colleagues, she empathised with the children who she realised preferred to be inside, in the warm.

> *But they clearly have come in to chat to you, because they don't want to be outside. And I remember not wanting to be outside in the playground when it's cold, so maybe I do make life difficult for myself.*

She also recognised that those informal chats were the only opportunities she would get to find out about the children in her class, as the school day was so full with curriculum topics which needed to be covered.

> *And also, I think that's when I get to know them a little bit as well… Because there isn't time [in the classroom] to just chat to the children, and find out about them, and what they like.*
>
> *I'm trying to do it as I go, but actually I can see that you could get to the end of the year, and not really know that much about them outside of school. Because there's no time to get to know them, and I think that's what is missing. (Andrea, NQT)*

Emma recalled her first teaching placement when she was a student, and remembers that she was also shocked at the level of poverty some of her children faced. She thought that early experience had influenced her choice to work in a school in an area of social deprivation, where she had stayed for all of her teaching career.

> *So there were some children there that really needed more before they could learn. So, they need a jumper, and they needed something to eat, and it was down to real basic need, before*

they could actually learn … because they can't do what you're going to ask them to do, until they've had those basic needs met. But to me, it was just necessity, you know?

She reflected that having learnt at university about the theories and technical aspects of delivering a successful lesson, the reality of these children's lives gave her a whole new perspective about the importance of the relationships she shared with her pupils.

I have no idea whether that's influenced me [professionally] or not, but it certainly made me realise that there was a little bit more to just 'Have I got my lesson plan ready?' and, 'Are the children learning?' (Emma, MCP)

Some of the critical incidents which other teachers who were working later in their careers described were times when they had supported children who were experiencing traumatic events in their personal lives.

So, we had a little boy who's dad committed suicide …he came back in September, and dad, the week before, had committed suicide. So of course, he was beside himself, and finding a safe place for him, somewhere in school, where he felt he wanted to do any learning, was a real challenge. (Janet, LCP)

But it was a really harrowing experience, because during the time I was there, there was a child who, within about two days, threw a chair at me, and the school were really worried about him. And unfortunately, he was being abused, and during my time there I got embroiled in the unveiling of this sexual abuse case, and so that was awful. It was stressful seeing it all. It is an emotional job. (Julia, LCP)

After being offered a promotion, and packing her things from her classroom on her last day Norma recalled the reaction of one of her pupils. She felt proud that a child in her class could think so much of her, and was visibly moved when recalling the story.

I remember one little boy [name], he didn't like school, [he] hated school … And the day I left he went out and then came running back with a little present, and he just went 'Thank you' and ran off again. And his mum came in and said 'He loved you. He thought you were brilliant. And he is going to be so sad.' And I remember it now, it was a little box, about this big (indicates small size), with drawing pins and paper clips in, because he thought that would be helpful to me in my next school. (Norma, LCP)

Now retired, Sue had spent most of her years in teaching working with pupils, '*mostly boys'*, in a referral unit for children who had been excluded from mainstream school. She was able to reflect back on her career with an obvious sense of pride.

I have spoken to some of them, because we still live in the same town. I've seen ex pupils that I taught, and it is lovely when they tell you that they don't always remember what they learnt, but they do remember how you made them feel. And that lives with me. (Sue, Retired)

These stories illustrate the caring side of the teacher-pupil relationship. Early-career teachers talked about their developing awareness of the challenges which some children face at home,

as the physical and emotional needs of children come to the fore. Mid- and late-career teachers recalled the shocking and sometimes disturbing circumstances through which they have supported particular children, and the gratification of knowing that they can make a difference.

6.2.3 Parents

While all teachers appreciated the importance of establishing positive relationships with pupils, their experiences of the wider home-school relationships were varied. Their reflections told stories of both support and challenge in parent-teacher relationships.

During Anna's NQT year she felt concerned about what the parents would think of her as a teacher.

> *The parent part of teaching was the thing I was most terrified about. Because I just didn't know what to expect… I was terrified of the parents, I spent a lot of time in those first few weeks making sure I spoke to every parent and making sure that any issues were dealt with. (Anna, NQT)*

After her initial fears, Sophie's confidence was boosted by the positive feedback she received at the end of her first year working in the reception class.

> *And the comments in the cards at the end of the year… You don't do it for that at all, but it's a lovely surprise when you do get them. And the things they put in there, whether it's because you're their child's first teacher, but it was so overwhelming. Really overwhelming. So that's been really positive. Really positive for me. (Sophie, ECP)*

Ellie felt that parents could add to the emotional load of teaching.

> *On top of building relationships with the children, you also need to build relationships with the parents… Sometimes parents will come to you and tell you about problems in home life, and I have had a parent who has started crying on me. And then it's like 'How do I deal with this?'. You're not just standing in front of the children, it's almost being like a social worker sometimes too. (Ellie, MCP)*

Becoming a mom herself had improved Emma's relationship with parents and reflecting back over her career she felt that she could now empathise and connect with parents in a way that wasn't possible for her when she was a younger, new teacher.

> *I think since having them both, and seeing it through their eyes, a little boy's eyes, and a little girl's eyes, it has made me very different in how I go about things … I think that being a mum hasn't made me a better teacher, it's just made me a very different teacher.*
>
> *So the fact that little Freddie has lost his red jumper for the 27th time, and mum is having a go at me really isn't the end of the world any more. Which, at the beginning of my career would have crushed me. I would have felt, 'I've got to find his red jumper!'*

But also as a mum you can say '[My son] loses his jumper all of the time.' You have that connection with the mums, straight away. That's different to when you are a younger teacher. (Emma, MCP)

Sue recalled an incident in her early career when the father of a pupil turned up drunk and '*swaying in the doorway*'. The experience frightened her, but also gave her a new insight into the world of the vulnerable little boy in her class.

He just walked in. And he stood there ranting and raving and swearing, and all the rest of it, and I was there on my own. Twenty two, and I was there on my own. I honestly can't remember how I got rid of him, but I must've talked my way out of it.

But what lives with me is the face of the little boy whose father it was. The embarrassment and the shame. The upset that his father had behaved like that in the classroom. Because by then I had got a rapport with the children, and he was so upset that I'd been sworn at, and shouted at by this man. And I remember once again, like all through that year, I kept thinking that I was lucky to have the parents I had. The home life I had, and the stability I had. I don't know the half of it. And in years to come I realised that I was absolutely right. I ***didn't*** *know the half of it. The things they were coping with outside of school. I had no idea. (Sue, Retired)*

This intimidation from a parent was not a unique experience.

When I started as head in 2007 there is a dip [on professional timeline] because a very aggressive parent, from a traveller background, at one point threatened to take me behind a bush and beat my brains out. So that didn't do my confidence any good! (Alan, LCP)

Unlike Alan, as Louise moved into her leadership role, she was still working in the school where she had previously been the teacher in the school nursery. She believed that it was an advantage for her that she already has strong and secure relationships with the families when she had to contact them about difficult situations.

…I can ring up the parents and say 'Hi, it's [name]' and they'll be 'Oh hi. How are you?' Because they know me. And I can say 'How are things going at home? Because we've noticed that…' And because I know the background already it's much easier to have those conversations. (Louise, MCP)

While relationships with pupils were mentioned as influencing teachers' sense of professional identity, the interactions with children's families and individual parents could also have a positive or negative influence on professional identity. Early-career teachers in particular were concerned by, and influenced by, the feedback they received from parents.

6.3 *School Leadership*

Although it may seem that the relationships which teachers have with school leadership could have been included in the *interpersonal relationships* section discussed earlier in this chapter, the frequency with which teachers mentioned this particular relationship as influencing their

sense of professional identity in a positive or negative way, warranted a separate section which could consider this relationship in more detail.

6.3.1 Trust

Teachers in all phases considered a trusting relationship with the head teacher to be beneficial to their sense of professional identity. These positive relationships featured as high points on teachers' professional timelines, but where this relationship was lacking manifested itself as a dip.

Sophie was nervous in her first school because she felt the need to establish a level of trust with her head teacher. She felt that working collaboratively had improved their relationship.

> *And now I would say that ours is a very positive relationship, and she does trust in what I'm doing, which is nice. And then there's the results at the end of the year. And again, we still moderate together as a school. So results wise, she trusts in what I've said. (Sophie, ECP)*

Following a negative experience in her early career, Janet found that moving to a new school, with a new head teacher, could provide the fresh start she needed.

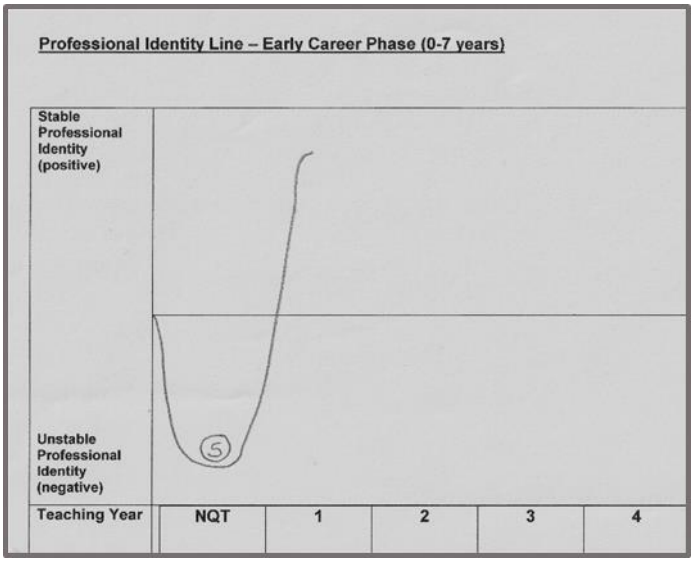
> *I went on to my next school…and the Head was incredible. I think he almost healed some of the damage that had been done before. By saying 'Go in. Have a lovely time, be creative, do what you need to with the children.' And the children learnt so much. You know, they drove so many things in that classroom, and so much of the learning was driven by the children, erm, because I had a really forward looking head teacher, who knew that if **they** were excited, **I'd** be excited, and my word would they do wonderful things! (Janet, LCP)*

Anna considered the relationship which she had with her head teacher to have had a negative influence on her confidence and commitment during her NQT year;

Anna's story: Low trust, negative feedback, reduced sense of professional identity, moved school to increase sense of professional identity and commitment

Anna had enjoyed all of her teaching placements during her B.Ed. and by the time she qualified she had received regular positive feedback from her tutors and felt confident in her own ability to teach. She was 26 years old working in Year Two as a newly qualified teacher. In contrast to her experiences as a student, she felt that the feedback she received from the head teacher during her NQT year had more of a focus on negative aspects of her teaching practice.

> *Because during university they say 'we want you to do this, this and this' and if you do it they go 'brilliant' and 'you could do this a little bit next time'. Whereas here it's 'Oh my goodness, you're rubbish at everything!' (PTI)*



Where she had enjoyed showing off her teaching practice to her university tutors, Anna felt incompetent when the leadership team observed her lessons, resulting in a fear of being observed in her own classroom.

> *They just weren't encouraging at all. They were very negative. Every observation I've ever had I've enjoyed. I've loved to show off. But there, I dreaded it. Because I just didn't know what random thing they would decide to say was wrong. (SSI)*

The previous positive self-image she held diminished throughout her NQT year and was replaced by self-doubt and frustration.

> *I felt like I was a terrible teacher in that school, all the time I was there. And there's nothing that I could pinpoint, they never said to me that I was rubbish. But they said things like 'Your marking's not good enough.'(SSI)*

Anna felt that her professionalism was being questioned, and although she was working within the school's marking policy guidelines, she felt that her word was not trusted.

> *So I'm marking ninety books each night, and they'd say 'You've not marked every piece of work.' And I said 'I only have to mark one in depth. The others I've given verbal feedback on.' And they'd say 'Have you actually given verbal feedback?'(SSI)*

Although Anna was still committed to a career in teaching, the lack of support from the leadership team meant that she was not committed to the school. As the end of her NQT year approached she made a successful application to a different school**,** and was relieved to reach the end of her first year.

> *I got to my last day and I thought 'I've survived.' …I've not succeeded, I've just survived. If I had stayed at that school, it would break me. (SSI)*

Anna was pleased to discover that the head teacher at her new school had a completely different approach to leadership, which immediately had a positive impact on her professional identity and commitment, when she was invited to join the end of year celebrations so that she could get to know the staff before starting in September.

And the Head Teacher gave everyone a kiss goodbye when she left, and I've never even shook hands with my old Head Teacher! (laughs) And she text everyone on Sunday night, to say how pleased she was with the classrooms, and how amazing it all looked. They have a staff choir that perform at Christmas, and they go to work out together. It's a different world.

I was sat with my friend and I thought 'I could actually stay at this school if I wanted to for about twenty five years!' And now, at this school I can see myself being there for a long time, and moving up, or whatever. (SSI)

In retrospect Anna felt annoyed that she was treated unfairly. Being an NQT meant that she had nobody in a senior position that she could trust to speak to, and no opportunity to voice her concerns as she realised that future career opportunities could potentially be affected if she had complained.

But I'm still angry. I'm angry because I didn't stand up for myself. It's not like me to not say anything. But there was nobody to go to. There was nothing I could do. And professionally it wouldn't have benefitted me at all to say anything.

…It was a real change of character for me. I just didn't feel like me for the whole year, all the time I was working there, I wasn't me. You know? (SSI)

Anna felt that the negative feedback from the leadership team in her NQT year meant that she lost her own sense of professional identity and with it she lost her commitment to that particular school.

**this vignette was presented in Watkins (2017)*

Vignette 6.3 Anna

A confident teacher, with a positive sense of professional identity, Julia was surprised when a new head teacher to the school didn't appear to have any trust in her established and successful teaching methods.

I understand that a new head might need to change things, but she really did throw the baby out with the bath water. And that was when we got the attitude of 'You do this, or else.' And it just wasn't working. That generated a lot of anxiety, and people were feeling very worried, because there was no reason to do half of it. There were really silly things, like you had to write in pink on the headings or in the boxes or whatever. And we would think 'Do you know what? We're grown-ups.' And is that really going to make a difference? (Julia, LCP)

Sarah's experience of a new head teacher illustrates a similar lack of faith in her ability to be effective in her role. Working as an outreach teacher supporting pupils who were vulnerable to exclusion, was a role which she had relished earlier in her career, feeling that her work had a positive impact on both young people and their teachers. But with a change of head teacher, Sarah felt that the purpose of her work was no longer understood or valued, and she experienced a period of instability which led her to consider looking for a different role.

I liked her, but I don't think she got the outreach job, and the way that I had developed it. And she came along, and then I didn't know where I was all of a sudden.

I just didn't know where I stood. I didn't know what my role was … And at that point I did think that I'd done it for a while and it was time to move on. (Sarah, LCP)

When Lee moved into his most recent headship role, he was surprised that some of the staff had not been treated as professionals by the previous head teacher.

In my first week someone came to see me and said 'I need to leave before half past four' and I said 'Why are you asking me?' and they said 'We aren't allowed to leave before half past four.' And I said 'You can leave when you want. If you've finished your job, just go.'

He believed that the trusting relationship that he had with the staff meant that they remained committed to the school, which had contributed towards his schools' low attrition rates.

We've got a very stable staff, and they're really good at their jobs, and that's because I let them do it. I'm not all over them I don't jump up and down at them, I don't monitor them obsessively, and I try to take away as much pressure from them as I can. (Lee, LCP)

Having been inspired by a course which he attended one weekend about '*depth of learning*' Nigel decided to amend his teaching practice to consider the depth of understanding rather than curriculum coverage. His head teacher wasn't convinced about the changes and, as an established and successful teacher, Nigel was shocked when he realised that his lessons were suddenly being constantly observed.

It was at that time when I thought 'I don't know if I want to do this anymore. I don't know if I want to be a teacher, because you're too… This is so subjective, you know, it's just you coming in and telling me my teaching is this...'

…if somebody else came in, they might say something completely different. That's what I didn't like about it. I still don't like it now ... If you don't like my method of teaching, it's not about your method of teaching. It's about the children's progress.

The lack of trust impacted on his professional identity and he began to feel so low that he considered leaving, but a conversation with his wife convinced him to try a different school.

I said to [wife] 'I don't know if I want to do this anymore. I've had enough.' And she said 'You need to apply for other places.' …Then I applied to [school name] and that's where I am now. Which is really good. (Nigel, MCP)

Trusting relationships with head teachers had positive influences on teachers' sense of professional identity in all phases of career, where a lack of trust had a negative influence on professional identity and resulted in low commitment to the school.

6.3.2 Level of support

Teachers in all phases talked about the level of support they received from the head teacher as influencing their professional identity. Support could be related to their professional or personal circumstances.

During her NQT year, Norma was accused by a parent of hitting a child in her class. To her complete disbelief and dismay her head teacher didn't show her any support, and immediately sided with the parent.

> *I got called into the office, and the Head and the parents were there with their daughter, saying; 'Why did you hit her?*
> *'I didn't.'*
>
> *'Then what did you do?'*
> *And I said 'I went (indicates lightly tapping pupil) Come on then, let's get on with it' and she went home and told them that I'd hit her across the head.*
>
> *I had to apologise. Even though I hadn't done it. And this was in my NQT year, so it was like (sighs) I was nervous, I was disappointed, and I was angry. (Norma, LCP)*

Following the birth of her first child, Sarah requested to return to work part time, but the head teacher was not willing to consider it. Concerned about the needs of her family she felt frustrated and contacted her union for support.

> *The head teacher, whom I had previously really got on with, thought that I would go away quietly when they said 'no', but I appealed it, and I stuck my neck out a little bit. The union got involved, and were keen to support me because there was a culture of schools saying 'no' to job shares for the wrong reasons.*

With the support of the teaching union Sarah was able to negotiate a part time contract with another teacher who was a parent and willing to job share. The lack of support from the head teacher meant that Sarah had decided that she would move to another school. On handing in her resignation letter the head teacher offered her a part time contract.

> *And then the Head Teacher called me in and said 'Oh we've got two days a week for you.' It was surreal! (Sarah, LCP)*

But the unsupportive relationship meant that Sarah was no longer committed to the school and she stood by her decision to move on.

Becoming a father early in his career, Nigel also had responsibilities at home and was frustrated that his line manager didn't appreciate or acknowledge the change in his personal circumstances.

I didn't like her at all. She was really hard to work with. And she didn't understand that I had children at home, you know, I had other things to do.

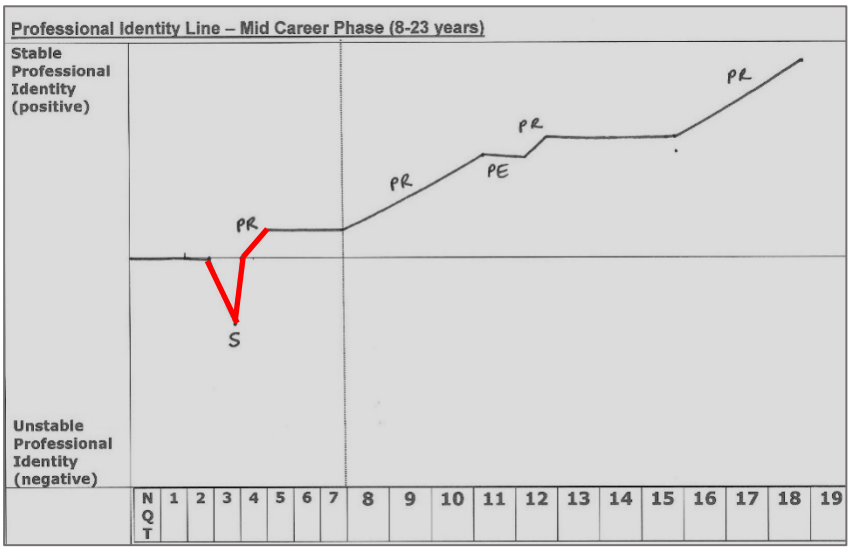
The turnover of staff at the school was high, and Nigel attributed this to the leadership team. Being on a temporary contract, he had decided to move at the end of the year as the lack of consideration of his personal life had resulted in his commitment to the school being reduced.

At the end of that year there were six jobs went up within that school, and I didn't apply. I didn't want to stay there. (Nigel, MCP)

Recalling an earlier period in her career, Louise felt that she had not received sufficient resources from the head teacher to manage the challenging behaviour of the children in her class;

Louise's story: Low support, reducing sense of professional identity, moved school to increase sense of professional identity and commitment

Aged 40 and working in her mid-career phase, Louise was an assistant head at a community primary special school. With 18 years of teaching experience, she had experienced an increasing sense of professional identity and commitment across her career.



The only period when Louise questioned her professional identity was when she was moved to a year group with a challenging cohort of children and she didn't receive the support that she needed.

I got moved into a Year Two class, with children who had very challenging behaviour, and in those days you had a teaching assistant just for literacy and numeracy. So that was mornings, and the afternoons were awful. And this dip is because I just had an awful year.

I used to go home crying every night and I nearly gave up teaching all together. It was just horrible. And the reason why that was horrible was because I didn't feel at all supported by the head teacher. (PTI)

Although she knew she needed support, as an early career teacher, Louise didn't have the confidence to challenge the leadership team, and so she made the decision to move school.

I'd only been teaching for three years, I was only twenty five, and I didn't want to say anything… now I would say something. But I think I just said to him 'I want to move schools because of the distance I'm travelling.' …I think it was just lack of… not wanting the conflict I suppose. And I wanted a good reference from him too. And lack of life experience, I mean now I would never stand for that, but I was only young, and I thought it was easier to just leave, and say that it was for a different reason. I think he probably knew because we'd had lots of conversations about me not feeling well supported, and with other staff as well, but I think it was just that. (PTI)

Fortunately her new head teacher was more supportive and she offered Louise the opportunity to develop the Early Years provision which had a positive influence on her sense of professional identity.

So I got my confidence back there. And for a few years, things just ticked along, and then I asked again to move back into early years, because I'd done quite a big stint in key stage one, so I got moved down to reception.

The point where my line goes up again is because the head teacher felt that I was doing well in reception, and she wanted me to make some changes to the way that things were set up. I was there for seven years. (PTI)

Her new class also had its challenges, and in particular a high intake of children with English as an additional language and children with special learning needs. Despite the challenges Louise was able to thrive and develop her practice in a more supportive environment. It was this experience which gave her aspirations to work in a special school in the future.

At the previous school, I'd been made to feel like I couldn't cope with challenging behaviour, but I realised it wasn't that at all. It was that I wasn't given the tools to cope with it … But at the second school I was very well supported with behaviour, and when a child attacked the teacher there, something was done about it. It wasn't 'Well, you've got to put up with it.' It was that sort of thing that was different, and it made me feel better, knowing that my practice was good, and it was more the situation and the school that was wrong, the way the school was being managed I suppose. (PTI)

Working without support in a class with children who had extreme challenging behaviour made Louise feel like a failure, reducing her sense of professional identity and her commitment to the school. Having moved to a school with a supportive head teacher she was able to regain her confidence, and with an increasing sense of professional identity, Louise felt her motivation and commitment return.

Vignette 6.4 Louise

6.3.3 School climate

Teachers felt that it was head teachers and school leadership teams who established and sustained the climate of the schools they worked in. Perceived positive climates had a positive influence on professional identity and commitment to a school, while perceived negative climates had negative influences.

The teachers working in Justin's first school had an unmanageable workload. He felt that the head teacher's expectations of the staff to work long hours were unreasonable. Although teachers were upset and angry about the expectations, he felt they were '*cowardly*' as they wouldn't stand up for themselves.

> *I did it once, in the middle of a staff meeting, and I just said, you 'When are we going to do that? Everybody here is already staying here until half past six every night, and we're working evenings and weekends. There's just not time to do that.' And he snapped back at me 'That's the job Justin.'*

The aggressive response led to Justin's decision to move to start looking for a job elsewhere, suspecting that the negative school climate also explained the high turnover of staff.

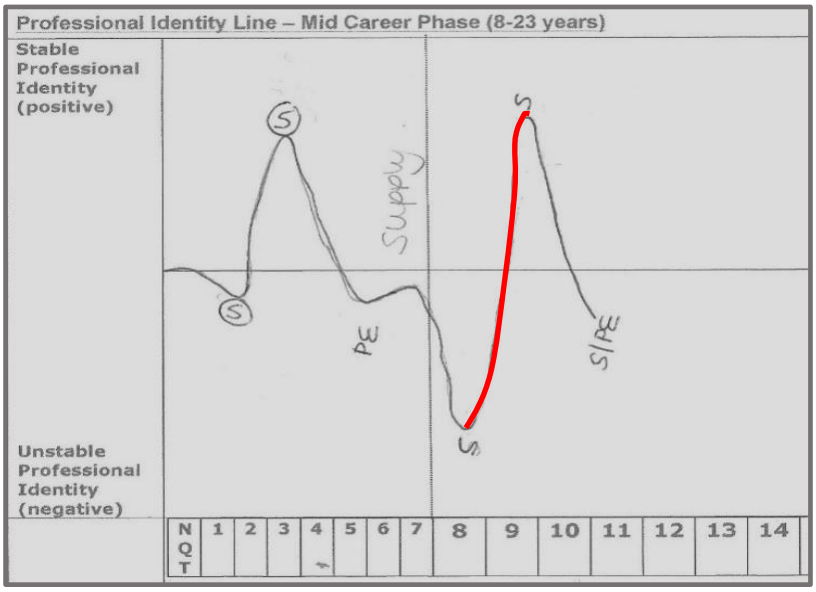
> *And they created the culture of everybody feeling like shit. And thinking 'If I don't mark all night tonight, then they will come and scrutinise my books and drag me in.' And the really strange thing was (laughs), that when I handed in my notice, they were like 'What? This is completely out of the blue!' And I was like 'Really? Is it?!' And my Head Teacher was like 'Where has this come from?'*
>
> *And I was like 'Well, first of all...It's now May, and this is the first conversation we've had since October' …It's just breath taking. How can you not be aware of that? I'm sure they were good teachers, but they were terrible, terrible managers. (Justin, ECP)*

In contrast, the positive climate which was created by Katie's head teacher boosted her sense of professional identity, and she felt committed to working with him;

Katie's story: Positive school climate, increasing sense of professional identity, high commitment to head teacher

Katie was aged 40 with 11 years of teaching experience. She works in a community primary school as a Year One teacher. She's describes her career so far as having '*more negative experiences than positive*', and so was excited when she finally found a school with a head teacher who created a climate where she felt she was able to thrive.

> *Then I got a job at a school in [town], and I absolutely loved it there because I got on really well with the head teacher. (PTI)*
>
> *But he [points to high point on timeline] the head teacher at [school name], he made me feel really… He made me feel like I was part of the team …And he was just really calm, and nothing seemed to faze him at all. He never got worked up, even when there was an Ofsted, he just stayed calm and he was always approachable. (PTI)*



Having moved between supply work and temporary contracts, Katie was pleased that this head teacher took the time to observe her teaching when she was placed in his school.

> *I liked him as well, because I actually only went in to do a days of supply, and he just dropped in to do an observation of me, then he called me back and said 'We'd like you to do a long term supply with us.' So it was probably the first time that somebody had watched my teaching, and said they wanted to give me a job because of it. So I went, and when I walked in and I met [name], who is the head, and I have never worked for anybody like him before. (PTI)*

For the first time in her teaching career Katie felt that she was valued within the school community. Her confidence and sense of professional identity began to increase. She was also relieved that his focus was on teaching delivery and outcomes for the children rather than planning and resources.

> *But he was also like 'Ofsted will never ask you for your planning, so who cares whether your planning is typed up beautifully and really detailed?' They won't give a monkey's about that. They just want to know that what you're doing will impact the progress of the children. That's it. So he would say 'Don't change displays just for the sake of it. If it's not impacting children's progress and their learning what is the point of doing it? It's just more work for you.' So he said 'Don't play the game for Ofsted. You have got to do what is right for the kids.' (PTI)*

The head teacher's attitude had a positive influence throughout the school, and Katie felt that each teacher was empowered because he treated them as professionals.

> *And that is where he gave us the trust, the professional trust to make our own judgements, as to what was right for our class. And it doesn't matter that my Year One class don't look the same as the other Year One class. (PTI)*

Just as Katie's confidence was growing, and she felt that she was thriving, the head teacher was taken ill, and was replaced by a head with completely different values.

> *But then when he was off, everything was like a cookie cutter … Everyone had to do the same displays, and the same this, same that. And I'm just thinking (sighs). And the senior leadership team will say 'Well Ofsted will want this.' And I will say, 'Well, actually no, they don't.' And this team don't like it that I will stand up and say that. (PTI)*

Hoping that he would return after his illness, Katie was '*gutted*' when he made the decision to resign.

> *He's left now, we're going back in September with no permanent head in place. But he was amazing to work for. He gave me the freedom, and an amount of trust that I've never experienced anywhere else. He was like 'Is it working for your kids?' 'No.' 'Well, why the Hell are you doing it then?' (PTI)*

Although the school had some challenges, Katie was able to stay positive because of the school team, and the encouraging atmosphere.

> *And again, this is a really poor, and deprived catchment in [town]. They come into foundation stage way below national averages. Last year I had a child come up who was working at 36 months, and I teach Year One. It's a tough school, it really is, but the staff that they have put together are so nice. But he… he just made it fun. He's all about the kids. And it doesn't matter what Ofsted say, or what the government say, if it's not right for his kids, he won't do it. (PTI)*

Katie missed the '*spontaneous and fun and crazy, and enjoyable'* atmosphere that his leadership had created because it was a climate in which she thrived. She remained optimistic that in the future she might be able to work for the same head teacher again.

> *But I'm waiting… Because he has promised us that if he gets another school he will contact a couple of us and bring us over. I don't know if that will really happen, but it would be **so** good. (PTI)*

Katie shared the same ethos as her head teacher. The strong relationship they shared and his positive feedback made her feel like a valued member of the team. His leadership and the school climate he created meant that her professional identity moved from being negative to being positive, and her commitment to the head teacher was evident in that she was prepared to move school to work with him again in the future.

Vignette 6.5 Katie

For most teachers the relationship they had with the head teacher had a significant influence on their sense of professional identity. A supportive and trusting relationship, where individual skills were recognised and valued, increased feelings of efficacy and teachers commitment, while a poor relationship, where teachers didn't feel valued could lead to feelings of frustration, and a decision to change school.

6.4 *Collaboration and Conversation*

Although opportunities for collaboration seemed scarce for most teachers, the occasions where they were able to make connections while working alongside a colleague were cited as having a positive influence on their professional identity. The staff room was also considered to be a space where teachers could interact, though in a less formal, more sociable way.

6.4.1 Shared working space

Norma remembered her first years of teaching as working in a collaborative space where she was able learn from a more experienced teacher's practice. Facilitated by the open plan design

of the school building, the collaborative experience had a positive influence on her developing sense of professional identity.

> *And then we had a central area, where both classes could see us, and we would team teach. So I would do the beginning of the lesson, and then they'd do this bit. And they'd prepare this bit, and I'd prepare that bit. And the whole class, the sixty children, would do the same activity, and we would go round each other's classes…*
>
> *I really enjoyed it. Because it was watching somebody else with more experience, but it was nice to think that they trusted me to do it as well. And so it was a really good way to develop my own classroom, and team teach at the same time. (Norma, LCP)*

Although team teaching with another teacher as Norma experienced had only been experienced by some late-career phase teachers, all of the teachers in this study shared their classroom space with at least one teaching assistant. This shared familiarity while working together was positive experience which teachers in all phases referred to.

Anna felt lucky that her teaching assistant was enthusiastic and felt they worked well as a team.

> *She's brilliant, and she's as enthusiastic as I am. So she's there because we want the children to enjoy, to have that love of learning, and to just learn so much more …and she's quite happy to go for changes, so she's quite happy to give things a go, so we're kind of on the same page.*
>
> *And, luckily, [she] comes into work early and stays late often, she doesn't get paid for it, but if she didn't do that I don't know what we'd do, because I would have no opportunity to tell her, or to talk to her about stuff.*
>
> *And I might ring her on an evening and text and stuff like that, but that is a real luxury, because she loves her job as much as I do. (Anna, NQT)*

Sophie had a new teaching assistant who was also a qualified teacher, so she felt that she was benefitting from their shared practice.

> *I think that sometimes, the way people are rubs off on you. So I find myself doing things that she does… She was a teacher before this, and then she had her own child, so she's been out of teaching for a while, but she's just so enthusiastic, and so excited about everything that we're doing. It's really lovely. And she likes to add a bit of detail, to make things more exciting for the children. So it works well. If I've set up a role play area she'll say 'Oh, could we maybe put this in?' So yes, it's a really positive start to the year. (Sophie, ECP)*

Emma recognised that working alongside her teaching assistant meant that she had both practical and emotional support. The relationship they shared meant that Emma could rely on her support, even if she was having an '*off day*'.

> *I think it's built up over time, and she just knows me. And so being with her 'Leave me be' she will just give me that space, and she'll deal with the practical things so that I don't have to worry*

about them. But also just 'You know, I'll do that for you, don't worry about it.' And sometimes she'll teach for me. If I need it. If I just say 'Look, can I just have them one to one.' And it's not necessarily emotional, but she'll say 'Yes, no problem.' And she'll take the class. So it's having the flexibility really. And the not questioning me support. That's the best thing. (Emma, MCP)

The opportunity to work collaboratively with another adult, whether it was a teacher or a teaching assistant was considered to be a positive experience for teachers working in all career phases.

6.4.2 Staff rooms

The staff room in school was acknowledged by teachers in all phases as a shared space which could offer the opportunity for much needed informal social interaction.

Both Andrea and Anna worked in schools where the teachers didn't have time available to spend in the staff room, which meant that lunchtimes were often spent alone in the classroom, which increased their feelings of isolation.

You rarely see a teacher in the staffroom… So I tend to just grab my lunch from the fridge, then I sit and I eat. (Andrea, NQT)

I could go a few weeks without seeing some teachers, even in the same building. So we have lunch…I tend to go to lunch straight away, when the bell goes, and then I come back and I set up for the afternoon. But I try to, at least once or twice a week, wait and go for lunch roughly about ten to one 'til quarter past, because that's when the Year Three and Year One teacher go for lunch. And the Year Four teacher, well, I think they just don't eat! (Anna, NQT)

In her fifth year of teaching, Sophie recalled that she didn't have time for lunch breaks in the first few years at school, as she had used the time to prepare for her afternoon lessons, but she was now able to appreciate the shared space.

…We're not one of those places where everyone has certain seats, I know that on placements there were schools where teachers or TAs would group together, and you hear stories where the staff room is not a very nice place to be, but our staffroom is about a third of the size of this room, because it's really small everyone is really cramped together, so we're all in there at lunch time. (Sophie, ECP)

Julia's many years of experience had told her that the staff room environment was a good indication of the school climate. She had noticed the difference in the use of shared spaces when an unpopular head teacher had been leading the school.

And again, something which is really interesting, is the staff at lunchtime, which is a huge indication…For twelve months you would go into the staff room and it would be empty, but now every lunch time you can't find anywhere to sit. Because everybody is in there.

I think that's because everybody is feeling more comfortable, and more at ease with being in there. We're all having a chat, and finding out about what's going on with others.

She felt it was beneficial for teachers to take time away from the classroom to chat with each other, as she had often taken advantage from the shared emotional support and banter.

It's definitely important. Because you can sound off. And that gives you support, because you can have a laugh about the funny things, and a vent about the nightmare things! Last Thursday we got back and within an hour one of mine had projectile vomited all down the corridor!

And everyone said 'Julia has driven them to vomiting already.' And it's an opportunity to have that…to share the highs and lows I think (laughs) It can be very varied this job! (Julia, LCP)

Opportunities to share time with other teachers were appreciated and recognised as having a positive influence on daily lives in school. Only one teacher had experienced team teaching, and she felt it had been a beneficial experience in the early years of her career. Teachers who were working in their early-career phase during this study appreciated the chance to work with a teaching assistant in the classroom, but were often spending their 'free' time in the classroom, preparing for lessons, and so weren't always able to benefit from the shared social time with other teachers.

6.5 *Chapter Summary*

The relational dimension of teachers' professional identity which has been highlighted in this chapter illuminates the notion that professional identity is constructed within the social setting of a school. The relationships within the school community are what makes a school, and teachers' perceptions of the relationships they build, and sustain, in school influence their feelings of motivation and commitment to significant dyadic relationships within the school or the whole school community.

It is of interest to note that in circumstances where the teachers' professional timelines were characterised by a dip, due to circumstances or contexts which had influenced professional identity in a negative way, often linked to a negative individual identity (e.g. feelings of isolation or inefficacy in early-career, pressures of work/life balance in mid-career, or a change of role at any phase), it was often a particular supportive relationship that returned the line to a peak, and in turn increased motivation and commitment.

Teachers in all phases where a relational identity took primacy were motivated by opportunities to form friendships with their peers, to develop and maintain strong relationships with their pupils, to work alongside other teachers and the chance to build significant relationships within the school community.

7 Developing and Sustaining a Collective Identity and a Commitment to a Shared Ideology of Primary Education

The previous two chapters have identified categories and codes which illustrated the circumstances which can influence teachers' sense of professional identity at an *individual* and *relational* level, with consideration being given to teachers' sense of professional identity in terms of the individual developmental processes, along with the significant dyadic relationships which develop within a school. For some teachers a sense of a *collective* professional identity was formed through the feeling of belonging to a broader group, whether that was the culture of the school in which they worked, or shared beliefs and ideologies of primary education. These teachers' sense of professional identity and commitment seemed to be motivated by their identification with the ethos and culture of their school. Teachers in all phases referred to situations during which the accepted norms or tenet of schools, local authorities, academy trusts or other higher level processes within primary education, had either reinforced or conflicted with their own beliefs and sense of professional identity.

The significance of the sense of group membership was evident in some teachers' stories, and these feelings of wider social bonds did not necessarily require the close dyadic relationships which were discussed in the previous chapter. At this *collective* level, a teacher's sense of self develops, and is sustained, from a feeling of belonging, and this feeling is influential in supporting or challenging their collective professional identity, which in turn increases or reduces teachers' feelings of commitment to particular cultures or shared ideologies of primary education.

The influences which teachers discussed, and which are reported in this chapter have formed the categories of **feeling connected, school characteristics, climate of Primary Education,** and **the bigger picture.** These**,** along with the sub codes from which they were developed, are illustrated in **table 7.1**.

Throughout this chapter the categories and their related codes will be discussed, supported by the use of illustrative quotes. As in the previous chapters, there will also be some distinct vignettes throughout, which will illuminate individual stories, and will illustrate the relationship between the primacy of a collective identity and a commitment to a particular culture or beliefs in Primary Education.

Table 7.1 Categories and Focused Codes for a Collective Identity

Categories	Focused Codes
Feeling connected	Identifying as a collective Shared values and visions Autonomy Managing behaviour in school
School characteristics	Socio-economic status Special school Religious character Academies
Climate of Primary Education	Performance and accountability Feelings about Ofsted Labels from Ofsted
The bigger picture	Sharing good practice Leaving a legacy

7.1 *Feeling Connected*

Some of the teachers gave accounts of their career which suggested that their identity was no longer being constructed in isolation or within dyadic relationships, but within circumstances where they perceived themselves to be combined with other professionals in a collaborative endeavour. These teachers' stories were told within the context of having a shared sense of professional identity, which was illuminated throughout by the use of the terms 'we' and 'us'.

7.1.1 Identifying as a collective

In contrast to earlier periods in teachers' careers where they had a focus on developing their own skills and sense of efficacy, teachers who displayed a collective identity did not feel that their successes or challenges were a result of their personal strengths or weaknesses, but associated them with a collective self-definition. For these teachers the beliefs and values of the school in which they were working transcended their individual identity.

Emma referred to the challenges the school faced from the wider community. She had recently been confronted with the fury of an intoxicated and aggressive parent, but reflected on the

reason why the distressing situation had not had a negative influence on her sense of professional identity or on her commitment.

> *You know, as a team, **we** don't ask questions, **we** just do… that's what **we're** like at [school name]. Because **we** deal with such tricky parents, **we** have to be. There's always somebody behind you. You know. I always know that. I always know that if I opened a door, and there was somebody screaming in my face, I turn round and there's somebody right behind me.*
>
> *You know. There's that sort of ethos here. That whatever **we** think of each other, and **we** actually quite like each other... But whatever is going on in school, at the end of the day **we** show a united front.*

Throughout her career, Emma had remained in the same school. Her stories gave a strong sense that she felt it was the right place for her, and her sense of professional identity has remained stable by her membership in the school community.

> *It's like buying a house or buying a car isn't it… you know where you fit, you know what you want, and you know what you fit in to. And those of us who have stayed a long time fit into the ethos of the school really. Because it is a very welcoming school really.*
>
> *And staff aren't…**we** don't have certain cups, **we** don't have certain tables, **we** don't have certain car parking spaces…That is just not important, it's just making sure that everybody is supported really.*
>
> *I'd probably be lost somewhere else. (Emma, MCP)*

Lee discussed the school strategies which encouraged pupils to find solutions to both social and academic problems. Rather than talking about his individual approach, he spoke in terms of his affiliation with the school.

> *So for instance, **we** use peer resolution strategies for problems on the playground, or with their learning. **We** don't offer children solutions to their personal problems, **we** say 'You need to go away and think about that, and maybe have a chat with someone over there for five minutes… Just talk through some ways forward, find out some solutions and then tell me what they are.' Not my solutions, not my answers, they need to resolve their own problems. So **we** do that socially, but **we** also do it academically.*
>
> *So if a child can't do a maths problem **we** say 'Have you asked any of your peers? Peers who were able to solve it. Chat to them, see how they worked their way around it.' So **we** turn peer to peer all of the time, and **we** ask **our** children to dig inside themselves to find the resilience, the resolve, the determination and the strategies to move forward. It is good. **We're** a good school! (Lee, LCP)*

Memo – 06/07/2017

Collective level of identity

Having just attended a symposium on identity in London organised by British Psychological Society and listening to Prof Constantine Sedikides and Dr Vivian Vignoles speak about different levels of identity formation, I am thinking of my emergent categories in a a different way. They are beginning to look more like a developing model.

The language several teachers have used clearly places them as seeing themselves as part of a community;

'And then our catchment is basically that tower block (indicates outside), which became problematic… because we're a free school, and new, and wanted to set up to serve the local community, and we've done well as a school… I say 'we' I only joined in September!' (Justin)

'You know, as a team, we don't ask questions, we just do… that's what we're like' (Emma)

'So we turn peer to peer all of the time, and we ask our children to dig inside themselves to find the resilience, the resolve, the determination and the strategies to move forward…We're a good school!' (Lee)

These teachers are in different career phases, but their professional identity appears to be constructed through collective actions and beliefs. Teachers who use this collective language seem to have a shared purpose, and are committed to that purpose.

NOTE! Consider the different levels of teacher professional identity and their relationship to commitment.

***Teachers with this salient collective identity appear to have a more positive professional identity and express a commitment to shared beliefs.**

*** Is this collective aspect of identity recognised in educational literature?**

*** How does this level of identity influence commitment?**

*** Could teacher professional identity be reconstructed by drawing on these levels?**

Memo 7.1 Collective identity

While Emma and Lee defined themselves in terms of the behaviours of the group and seemed to have internalised the character and values of the school, Anna's account of her school's engagement with families indicated a clear distance between the school and her own professional identity. The language she used revealed that she felt excluded from the decision to encourage parents into school.

> *I think **they** do try hard to include the parents at **this** school. So **they** have workshops for the parents, and have what **they** call a Family Friday, so where the parents come in and read with **them**… (Anna, NQT)*

The language used in each of the teachers' stories offered an insight as to whether they felt that they were an insider of the wider school community (group member), or whether they sat outside of the group as an onlooker (outsider).

7.1.2 Shared values and visions

Teachers in all phases gave consideration to their own personal ideas about teaching, and how they might match, or be at odds, with the ethos of the school they were working in.

Andrea could not envisage herself establishing her career longer term in the school where she was completing her NQT year.

> *I'm not in the right school. Because the school that I'm in, love the phrase 'You've got to hold the child to account' and it just goes against everything that I think about teaching. That is their favourite phrase 'Hold them to account.' And I'm like 'Really?'*
>
> *…I suppose I approach this job with that maternal aspect, and nurturing, I don't want to crush their confidence. I want them to do well, and I'm fairly strict with them, but I feel that's in a nice way, not in a punitive way. I guess I'm more carrot and they're more stick! (Andrea, NQT)*

Following a change in head teacher, establishing a new relationship took time before a mutual trust developed and Julia began to understand the vision which was driving the new ways of working in school. Strong and regular communication had allayed any earlier reservations that she had felt.

> *And it is quite clear that the children are very important to him, and them [the children] moving forward. And while we are all working together, we are allowed to be an individual within that as well. Your skills, or anything that you are particularly interested in, or particularly good at, it's being pulled out more.*

She talked about the positive influence of having a shared vision across the school where each teacher had begun to feel valued for their individual contribution

> *You know, there are people who are really good at music and drama, so those people are being used for that. Whereas before everybody was trying to have a go, and now it's like 'Speak to so and so about it.' And we're open to that. We've got a really good team spirit now, and everybody feels valued for what they do, and that makes a huge difference, to how you feel. You feel part of the team. (Julia, LCP)*

Although not working in one particular school, Sarah's previous role working for the local authority in the support services meant that she felt part of a wider team of professionals who shared the same beliefs as her.

> *I really liked that job. I really believed in the Outreach Service, behaviour support in schools. It took me back to the reasons I'd gone into teaching, in a way. To make a difference, and to be*

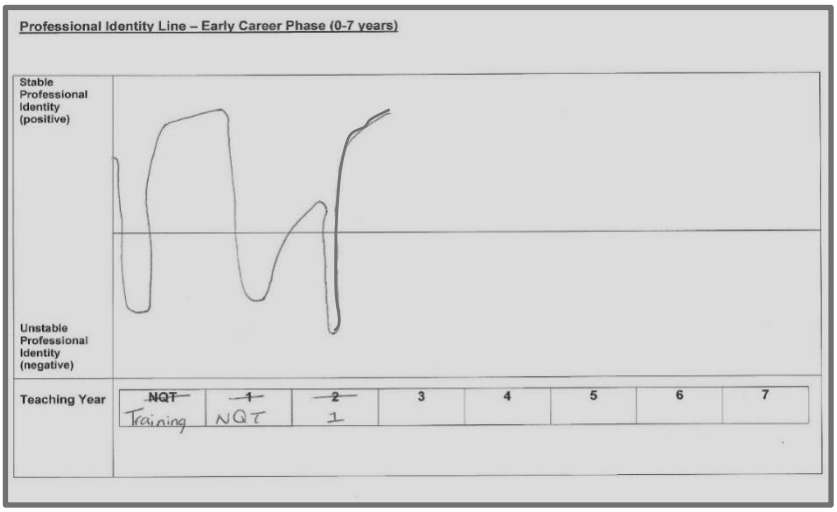
part of that team of people who were all pulling in the same direction to make the difference. So the children come to you and you give them something, whatever that might be. Whether it's traditional learning 'I've taught you to spell' or whether it be a life lesson. I really liked it. That was a good time. (Sarah, LCP)

This positive influence on her professional identity led to her pursuing a promotion as the deputy head of a pupil referral unit, due to an increased commitment to working in a context where she could have a positive influence on the experience of vulnerable children in school.

As Justin talked about his initial decision to teach, and discussed the circumstances which were portrayed as peaks and troughs on his professional timeline, it was clear it was important that his own philosophy about education and teaching needed to be aligned with that of the school in which he was working;

Justin's story: Shared values, positive sense of professional identity, high commitment to social justice in Education

Justin was 28 years old and, due to the school led route of initial teacher education with Teach First, he had been teaching in a classroom for 3 years. He was a class teacher and Head of Year 2 in his early career phase. At the point of our interview, he had recently moved schools and was feeling positive about his career. His sense of professional identity and commitment was strongly associated with the values of Teach First.



Justin explained the reasons he chose teaching as a career as he considered his options in the final year of his undergraduate degree.

I just logged on to The Times 100 graduate schemes, and thought 'I'll apply to the top 20' …As I was going through I saw Teach First, and I hadn't heard of it before and I looked at the website, and looking at the website I thought 'Wow! This looks like it was written for me, this really clicks.' So the main appealing factor was the mission, the overarching mission statement, the social justice side of it.

But it was also attractive. The prestige was very attractive. The fact that they're very exclusive, I think that made it more attractive to me. (LHI)

Having been assigned to a school which was not of his own choosing by Teach First for his initial training, Justin felt that much of the heavy workload the staff had to bear was due to a lack of vision coming from the school leadership team.

Erm, in terms of strategy, everything was reactive, There was no real joined up vision. No coherent values or beliefs or pedagogy across the school. But every teacher slogged their guts out. Which seems to me that's not the way to be in a school. It shouldn't have to take slogging your guts to get the results, if you've got a coherent strategy, with people on board, then, you should be able to work reasonable hours and still get good results.

When Justin completed his NQT year he decided to seek out a school which he felt was more aligned with his own attitudes about education. He described the reasons he chose the school.

There were a few things attractive about this school, and one is that it was new, and I thought it would be really interesting to work in a new school … it's quite exciting being at a school which is still forming its identity and forming it's culture, and being a part of that. Also because it was Outstanding and the staff are obviously really talented. (LHI)

Working in a school where many of the staff were Teach First ambassadors, made Justin feel that everyone had similar values and a shared vision for what makes an Outstanding school.

So, we recruit into the Teach First community quite heavily, especially now that so many people have done Teach First. My line manager was Teach First five years ago, four years ago maybe.

…One of the benefits of this school, and this is difficult because it's not really replicable, is that they've just recruited like really good people. Really good people. Everybody here is incredibly well educated, incredibly aspirational and incredibly committed. And I think a big part of that is that the school has a very strong mission, a strong vision which is shared. (LHI)

Central to Justin's commitment to the ethos of the school was that he felt that he had a significant role to play, and he felt that his contribution was valued as an individual within the school team.

And the leadership are really effective at making you feel like, every person, like you're a really important part of achieving that vision… When I first started, one of the first things they said was 'you don't need to be a super hero teacher here. There are no super hero teachers, everybody is good.' So everybody works together. (LHI)

When Justin talked about the catchment area of the school, he made an thought-provoking observation about the way he included himself as being part of the decision making process, even though he has been at the school for a relatively short time.

*So **we** ring-fence a proportion of places for children on free school meals. About 35% to be reflective of the makeup of the local area. And then **our** catchment is basically that tower block (indicates outside), which became problematic… because **we're** a free school, and new, and wanted to set up to serve the local community, and **we've** done well as a school… I say **'we'** I only joined in September! (laughs). (LHI)*

While he embraced the advantages of feeling connected to a homogenous staff team, he also acknowledged that there could possibly be longer term retention issues with the school staff.

The nature of the people that work here is that everybody is under 30, everybody is really well qualified, and everybody is ambitious and aspirational, erm… and the nature of that cohort of people… If they

want to work abroad, they want to work abroad. And they're at that stage of their life when they can … If you recruit this demographic of, like super well qualified people in their mid-twenties, then you are going to haemorrhage staff. (PTI)

Justin acknowledged that he did not see himself as staying as a classroom teacher for his whole career, nor did he wish to move into a head teacher role, but he would like to continue to make a difference within Primary Education in some way. He talked about peoples' attitudes within the profession towards a teacher who wants to leave the classroom.

I always think it's strange that teaching will vilify anybody that leaves, Teach First especially. I think maybe because it's more expensive to train somebody through Teach First.

But people get very upset when somebody does Teach First for two or three years and then leaves. Maybe it's because people are so proud of their profession that they feel it's a bit of an insult… (PTI)

With a professional identity which was strongly connected to the Teach First mission, Justin's commitment was to an ideology which prioritised working towards social justice for young people, but for him, that did not necessarily mean a lifelong career working as a classroom teacher, but could mean pursuing other roles within Primary Education.

Vignette 7.1 Justin

Teachers' own philosophies about teaching and primary education, and the ways in which they aligned with, or descended from, the school ethos and culture were influential in building and maintaining their collective sense of professional identity. Teachers' sense of individual professional identity was also influenced in a positive way by a feeling of shared endeavour. A positive professional identity was maintained by the collective aims and values of the group to which they felt personal beliefs were aligned.

7.1.3 Autonomy

While some teachers identified as being a member within a collective group, they also spoke about the need to retain their individual sense of identity within the school. Having a sense of agency and the opportunity to make decisions about their pupils' learning was mentioned by teachers in all phases.

Andrea felt frustration at the rigid directions imposed by the head teacher at her school. As a mature entrant into teaching, previously working as a school nurse, she was used to arranging her own diary and making independent decisions regarding her working day.

…You have to submit the timetable and you're not allowed to stray from the timetable. So if he [head teacher] picks on a lesson to come and watch you, unannounced, and you're not doing that particular lesson, then he's not happy.

Even if you could say 'The reason I'm not doing it is because they were really into this, and I didn't want to stop them.' No, you're meant to be doing maths now, and that's that. You're meant to be doing this now, or that now. It must be a long time since he's been a class teacher I think … You can't always do it like that, and yet he's saying we've got to. (Andrea, NQT)

In contrast, Russell felt able to adjust the timetabling of his school day to accommodate lessons which he felt were relevant and beneficial to his pupils' social development.

I don't think we do enough religious education in the school. I'm not religious, but I think it's really important… especially with everything that's happening in the world at the moment, that we educate the children about different religions. Educate them about different religions, and about why other people might do certain things, or wear certain things. I'm doing a lot of that with my class at the moment, and that's because I want them to be well rounded people, when they go on. Because they live and grow up in an area where they might have a lot of negative influences on their lives, and people telling them that all of their problems in life are down to immigrants, or Muslims or something like that. And I want them to hear at least one voice which is saying 'actually it's not.' So, that's what we're doing a lot of at the moment. (Russell, ECP)

As an established and confident teacher, working in her mid-career phase, Emma felt that a school day should be flexible to ensure the children have the best opportunity to learn, and she stressed the negative impact that an inflexible approach could have on the learning needs of her pupils.

If our class isn't getting it… and that's the head telling us that as well… If they're not getting it, you stop. It does not matter what that plan says. You stop, and work on it. Because otherwise, you're not going to get any progress at the end of the year. That is clear. The experience we have tells us it is clear that doesn't work.

And if that is not coming through to younger teachers, it really should. Because you're not doing yourself any favours by planning from now 'til Christmas. Yes, know what's coming up, I know we're going to write a crime story, and I know we're going to do The Snowman and I know where I'm heading… But how I get there will be how the children want to get there. Or how they ***need*** *to get there. (Emma, MCP)*

Having already spoken about her positive NQT year, Sophie considered the freedom she was given in that early period, along with necessary support, to have been a positive influence on her professional development.

You'd think that going into a school like this, with people who have been there so long, that it might be quite difficult, and they might be set in their ways, but everyone was just so supportive and fantastic, and they still are. In that they would go along with what I wanted to do. (Sophie, ECP)

Justin attributed his increasingly positive sense of professional identity to being treated as a professional who was best placed to make decisions about his pupils.

> *I'm allowed quite a lot of autonomy and a lot of freedom, and it's made clear that my views and my opinions, and my ideas are really valued … So [in] any meeting there's a really good culture.*
>
> *I know it sounds a bit business talk, but there's a really good culture of what they call 'pushback' here, which is that any meeting you go into with a manager, they will ask what you think first. It feels like a genuinely professional conversation. They might present you with some data, so if my reading data is crap for the term, it won't be 'Have you seen this data?' because yes I have obviously, I gave it you… It would be 'I've noticed this…what do you think is going on? What's the best way to address this? Can you tell me a bit more about it?*
>
> *…People like to feel that they have autonomy. It gives people that purpose. And makes them feel like they enjoy what they're doing. (Justin, ECP)*

Justin's belief that a sense of professional agency helps to retain the staff working in his school, is supported by Katie when she says that the regime imposed on her by the head teacher is one reason that she has considered leaving the profession.

> *I'm sick of the pressure, and I'm sick of them telling me exactly what to do… Like;*
> *'You need to do this.'*
> *'Why?'*
> *'Because I don't want to change the policy.' And at times like that, I would do anything but be a teacher. You know. (Katie, MCP)*

Being allowed a degree of autonomy regarding teaching practice gave teachers the sense of being valued as an individual within the collective group. The opportunity to initiate or to change an activity in the classroom, or to make decisions about teaching had a positive influence on teachers' sense of collective and individual identity, while the restriction of any sense of agency created frustration, an unstable sense of professional identity and a reduced commitment.

7.1.4 Managing behaviour in school

Early-career phase teachers, where there was a focus on *individual* identity development, had talked about behaviour management in terms of personal skills and strategies which needed to be learned (see chapter **5**). In contrast, teachers who identified as having a collective identity considered '*behaviour for learning'* to be an important aspect of the school culture. For these teachers positive pupil behaviour in school was seen as a collective endeavour.

Although Justin appreciates that the rules in school *'might feel really strict',* he stresses that he cares deeply that the children are in an environment where they are able to learn, and he believes that the school rules enable this

We do Teach like a Champion. Everybody does those techniques for behaviour and routine. Children walk in single file down the corridors in silence. We're like, it's like hot on discipline and routine.

At the start of the year we practice just handing out whiteboards on the carpet. We've got it down to seven seconds, and I always expect it in seven seconds, and I always expect it in silence. And then we can get on with whatever the lesson is that we're doing.

I've been in classes before when it's whiteboards out, and there are whiteboards being thrown all over the place, and it takes about three minutes…And that's three minutes of lost learning for them.

Although people might come in and think 'this is a Year 2 classroom, and the kids are sitting in silence, this is awful' everybody is like… Well, we're doing our job here. (Justin, ECP)

In the pupil referral unit, Sarah talked about the behaviour policy in terms of the staff team supporting children to make good behaviour choices

We try to strike the right balance between still educating excluded children, in the traditional sense of the word, and providing what they need to help them. So their wellbeing, the therapeutic, behavioural and emotional support. (Sarah, LCP)

Having supported staff working in many different school settings, and experienced both rewards based and punitive styles of behaviour management, Sue believed that positive or negative school climates were created by the school leadership

…There were some schools that just felt warmer, kinder, and calmer. And it was so much easier to feed children back into those schools, than the schools where there was a lot of shouting, a lot of criticism, and a lot of negative feedback. And I think sometimes that teachers didn't even appreciate that it was happening … I'm sure that it comes from the top. The total ethos of a school. (Sue, Retired)

Teachers did not feel comfortable working in a school where the behaviour management strategies were not conducive with their personal beliefs and style, and where they felt the practices were ineffective

You know, I can't bear children being shouted at. I just couldn't work anywhere, or have a teacher in my school, where they would just shout at children. I couldn't cope … You flinch don't you? You just have that feeling when you hear it. And you think 'who is the little person who us being screamed at here?'

It doesn't work. But just, why would you do that? (Janet, LCP)

After some changes to the behaviour policy, Nigel's school had set up a new style '*behaviour chart'* which he had not had the opportunity to collaborate on.

Every child has six sun shines to start the week, and each sunshine, means five minutes of golden time. They said 'If you write their name up on the board, if you give them a warning, then if you have to tell them again, they lose a sunshine.'

Nigel felt that the new system was focused on negative aspects of behaviour, and he felt that he wanted to create a more positive classroom environment.

So in the end, what I said to my head was, 'We don't give anything to the children who are always doing the right thing.' And so we gave them the certificate. And now in this school, all the children who still have their six sun shines every day, they have a gold sticker that goes on their chest on a Friday as they leave school.

So they go outside, and see their parents with this gold sticker. And I think that's brilliant. Because it's telling them that [they've] been brilliant all week. It's a bit deflating for the ones who've lost a sunshine, but… That's life! (Nigel, MCP)

Being able to contribute to the evolving behaviour policy meant that Nigel's own personal beliefs were acknowledged, and he was able to continue his own positive style of behaviour management within his classroom. Teachers with a collective sense of professional identity saw behaviour policies and systems in school as being a shared undertaking, rather than an individual responsibility.

7.2 *School Characteristics*

While some teachers talked about a sense of belonging which was influenced by the school culture and a staff team who shared the same values, others talked about an identification and commitment to a particular type of school, or a particular school community.

7.2.1 Socio-economic status

As teachers discussed their career journeys they often referred to the perceived advantages or challenges which they related to the local community, and the levels of deprivation faced by pupils of the school.

During her training, Anna's school placements had all been in small village schools which were *'quite middle class'.* When she was offered her first job as an NQT working in a school with a high proportion of pupils facing social disadvantage, she was concerned about the range of pupil needs which she would be faced with in her first year.

I wasn't really too happy with my decision that I'd made, with this particular school, because it's completely out of my comfort zone. So, they were large classes, they were children from more deprived areas, lots. I've got roughly about a fifth of my class are special needs, on the SEN register. And erm, I kind of started on a low before I even got here. (Anna, NQT)

While Anna struggled to survive her first year and later moved to work in a different school, Russell had remained in the placement which was allocated to him by Teach First. He felt lucky to have found a school where he could easily identify with the pupils and their families.

> *It reminds me of the school that I went to, and the area that I grew up in. Many of these children have the same sort of background as I had at school, and when I speak to their parents they remind me of my own aunts and uncles, and I feel at home in this school. (Russell, ECP)*

Supporting the idea that being able to relate to the school community contributes to a sense of collective identity, Lee talked about what he considered to be the *'high point'* of his career, working as a deputy head in a school which resonated with his own life.

> *I was teaching full-time, and a full time leadership role as well. I just loved it. Partly because of the school. The school reflected my own lifestyle. Very middle class, aspirational parents, and my own children were the same age as the children I was teaching. I felt like part of the local community, it was a village school … I had a great time, I loved it, and they loved me. (Lee, LCP)*

Being the son of a vicar, and being involved in a close church community, with a '*sheltered upbringing'* Alan had a contrasting experience in the middle phase of his career, when he moved to a school where he was teaching children with a very different background to his own.

> *And that school was a very different demographic, from the Church School in the leafy suburbs, where I had been for my first school. It was very working class, predominantly white, with very strong stereo types coming through, particularly from some of the lads. So it was an eye opener for me.*

Experiencing doubts as to whether he had made the right decision to move to this new school, Alan decided to speak openly and honestly about how he was feeling with the other staff. He benefitted from their guidance and learned new strategies from more experienced teachers.

> *They said to work through it, and it was the right advice … And again, for the next two or three years my confidence grew as I became a more established member of staff. And seeing other teachers in the same environment, I picked up skills and expertise from them. (Alan, LCP)*

Teachers in all phases talked about children in schools with high levels of deprivation coming into the classroom cold and hungry. At the school where Sue had begun her teaching career pupils and families were experiencing high levels of poverty, in circumstances which had previously been unimaginable to her. Before any learning could take place, the children needed their physical needs met.

So very quickly we got into a routine of they would put a jumper on when they came to school… And I used to buy big long packets of digestive biscuits, and give them digestive biscuits to take out at morning break because they were hungry.

Sue felt that her work as a teacher in this school gained a deeper significance than the technicalities of passing on curriculum knowledge, and she experienced a deeper sense of the difference that she was making to this particular community, resulting in her profession taking on a new meaning to her.

Because right from the beginning, although it was a tremendous shock, I didn't hate it at all. It was almost like a mission, you know, like being a missionary. It was taking some care, and erm, some love I suppose, because it was so rewarding. (Sue, Retired)

Each of the teachers who had made a choice to work in challenging contexts revealed the same sense of calling and fulfilment.

I think, when you work in a school like that, every day is so different, you know. And if you've got a child that comes in after a really bad weekend, it's about being able to make their life a bit better for them, during the week maybe. And seeing that, it's very rewarding. And working with the parents, and trying to give them the tools and the support that they need.(Louise, MCP)

The extent to which teachers sense of professional identity and commitment was reduced or increased, when working in particularly difficult or challenging contexts, seemed to be heavily influenced by the approach of the head teacher, and the culture of the school. Lee reflected on the support that he received from the staff team when he was working in a demanding catchment area in his early career.

I worked in one school in [place name], which is probably the toughest school I've ever worked in, with the toughest children I've ever worked with, and I was their twentieth supply teacher!

It was only mid-October, because some supply teachers only lasted 'til half past ten in the morning. I did a day there, and the head said 'Do you want to come back?' and I said 'Yes.' And he said 'Okay. Brilliant.' I stayed there for about a year and a half. I really enjoyed it. It wasn't easy, but I was getting positive reinforcement about me, and my delivery, and the way I was in general. (Lee, LCP)

Similarly, Katie appreciated the way her head teacher acknowledged that *'it's a tough school'* by visiting each class after registration to remind the children of the school expectations.

And then he'll come back round at about five to three, and he'll say 'Have you had a good day?' He checks with every teacher to make sure that everything is okay. Sometimes he might just wander through without talking, and I like that. I like that he's not just sat up in his office ignoring what is going on in the class. Because it is a tough school, and the kids need a lot of reinforcement of the rules, and what we are expecting all of the time. (Katie, MCP)

Teachers in all career phases talked about ways in which the school community and local neighbourhood had influenced their sense of professional identity and their level of commitment. While some teachers identified with a community, made predominantly of more advantaged pupils, which reflected their own lives, others found teaching in contexts which deviated from their own personal experience to be far more rewarding. Support from leadership and the staff team was particularly important to teachers working in these challenging schools.

7.2.2 Special school

Two of the teachers, Cat and Louise, were working in schools for children with special educational needs, while other teachers had far less experience of working in special schools.

After completing a college course in Childhood Studies for two years when she left school, Cat was offered a job as a teaching assistant in a special school.

> *I ended up working in key stage four, with children with special needs. They were sixteen years old, and I was only eighteen at the time, they were fifteen and sixteen year old lads, and girls, with quite significant needs, thinking on my first day 'What have I done?' And then I found that I absolutely loved it.*

She loved the feeling that every small step was being celebrated by everyone in school, and the positive atmosphere and ethos drew her in.

> *…And every small step of progress was celebrated, like it was the most amazing thing, which it was. I thought the adults were a bit bonkers (laughs), they'd be cheering and whooping, and I thought 'This is brilliant!' It just had a real family feel to it really. And that just got me hooked. And then I worked across the various key stages, and it was the same. It was irrelevant which age group you were working with, it was consistent across the whole school, the feeling of family and nurturing and everybody is an individual and is as important as everybody else. I just loved that. (Cat, ECP)*

Although Louise had begun her teaching career working in nursery settings within mainstream schools, she had been offered the opportunity of a promotion, working in a special school, to share her Early Years expertise. She described her first year as a *'learning curve'.*

> *Because even though I'd worked at a school where there were lots of children with additional needs, this school was a whole different ball game…*
>
> *I'd dealt with similar needs before, but it was a completely different way of doing things. For example, I would say that I'm always very good at giving children the time to think, once I've spoken, but they need a lot more time here than they ever did in mainstream. So, it's just about adjusting your practice.*

Apart from learning new skills as a teacher in special education, there were unexpected advantages which were related to smaller class sizes and fewer administrative tasks.

> *It was also a massive change, because I'd worked in a mainstream nursery with fifty two children, to a class of nine children. So I could suddenly do all of my reports in one weekend. It was amazing! (laughs) My workload was completely different. (Louise, MCP)*

While her positive experience has meant that Louise has remained in special education for eight years, Norma's experience during her teacher training placements confirmed that mainstream school was where she wanted to work.

> *We had to go to a unit for hearing impaired, and for sight impairment, we went to a special school, and I hated it. I hated [working in] special school. I just sat there and watched all these children in wheelchairs, with head gear on, bouncing around, you know, having no communication skills… and feeling so desperately sorry for them.*

The news Norma received on her return visit was confirmation that she did not have the right temperament to cope with the harsh realities of working with such vulnerable children.

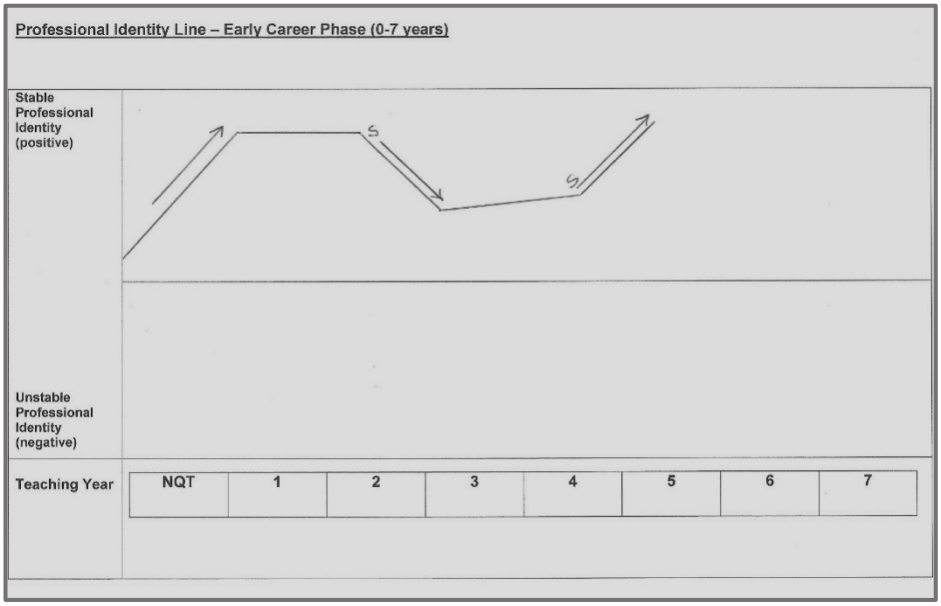
> *And going back… I think we went every two weeks... going back a fortnight later and saying 'Oh where's so and so?' and they said 'she died last week.' And I just felt that I couldn't cope with that. So special needs, I have great respect, but it's not for me. So that made my mind up quite early on. Special Needs wasn't the route… (Norma, LCP)*

Due to her previous nine years of experience as support staff in the school, Cat already felt a sense of belonging at the when she qualified as a teacher;

Cat's story: Sense of belonging, positive sense of professional identity, high commitment to the shared values of Special Education

Gaining her Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) at age 29, Cat had progressed from teaching assistant to classroom teacher to become a key stage leader, and then assistant head. Having already worked as a higher level teaching assistant, doing cover supervision and planning lessons before she began her teacher training, Cat was encouraged by her head teacher to study for a degree in Education on a part-time basis while she continued to work at school.

> *I was a grade 4, so I did do quite a bit of teaching, but I didn't have the piece of paper, nor indeed the degree… They kept saying 'When are you going to do your degree?' and I'd say 'Well, it's not that easy for me.' So in a jokey way, lots of other teachers and senior leadership had been on at me for some time about it. (LHI)*



And then I decided to do it, and some of the modules started at like 2 o'clock in the afternoon on a Wednesday, so it was a full time course, but for one evening a week at university, so I needed release time from work … So they didn't pay for the course, which was fair enough, but they did pay me the time to go to university. So I didn't lose any of my salary, it was a big help. That's how they supported me really. (LHI)

Cat was then supported by her school to train through a salaried school based route.

And it's where you spend your time in two different schools, and you do the majority of your training in schools. It was salaried, because I knew I couldn't afford to give up… well,

I couldn't do a PGCE, I couldn't afford to. Because I still had a mortgage, and all those things that come with having to grow up.

I'm sure there are lots of people who would be brilliant teachers that we're not getting through, because they're not able to make that commitment, financially. (LHI)

Due to initial teacher training requirements, she was released to spend time working in a mainstream school. The experience gave Cat the chance to reflect on the different philosophies of the two types of education, and she felt convinced that working in a special school was the right choice for her.

The thing that was most noticeable was the drive for standards and attainment in mainstream. It's the pressure they are under, but it was really a case of 'Right, we've taught this today, so we're doing this tomorrow.' And I'd be thinking 'But they haven't got it.' You know, half of them hadn't got it! I couldn't understand that mentality really, you know, 'We've got to do it, because so and so says.'

There was a lot of talk about coverage, and not necessarily enough talk about depth of learning. That was a big difference. Whereas here, we just keep plugging away until they've got it (laughs).(LHI)

The mainstream school culture which was concerned with league tables and tests did not support her own beliefs about education.

> *I was also in a Year Two class, so it was SATs year, so it was all about teaching to the SATs and all that kind of stuff. But I'm not being judgemental about that, I know they have to do it in mainstream, I get that, but it just… it was hard really, because I noticed that the children who were most vulnerable and needed the most support, had the least time with the teacher.*
>
> *But again, that's how it is in mainstream, but it's a big difference.*
> *The celebration of achievement thing was still there, but it was just all a bit more… mainstream! (laughs). (LHI)*

Cat returned to finish her training in the same class where she had previously been a teaching assistant. As she began talking through her career time line she commented that she felt her teaching career '*began much earlier than on this chart*' due to her previous experience working in special education.

> *I'd already worked at this school for a long time, so I didn't have to go through the whole 'I'm new, and I don't know how anything works here.' I had planned lessons before, I'd got established routines, you know, I was already doing it all really, but without the piece of paper. And so I started high. (PTI)*

Already feeling like a well-established member of the school, Cat did not experience the 'dip' which was referred to by all of the other early career phase teachers as their individual identity took primacy in their NQT year.

> *And then my line just goes up and up really. All of my observations were outstanding, my team was really supportive, it didn't really feel like I was an NQT to be honest. I don't know if that's a good thing, but it was for me, I was already part of the gang really, and it wasn't the feeling of being the new person who doesn't know what I'm doing. (PTI)*

Cat had internalised the beliefs and values of Special Education during the years she had worked as a teaching assistant. The encouragement and support that she received from the school leadership and staff team, as she worked towards QTS, meant that her sense of professional identity started, and remained, positive, while her commitment to the philosophies of Special Education increased.

Vignette 7.2 Cat

Russell felt that there should not be separate schools for children who have special educational needs, and that in an ideal world these children should go to mainstream school which had adequate provision, support and sufficient adjustment for their individual needs. He considered the school he worked in to be an excellent example of inclusion, which benefitted everybody.

> *…We have a big resource base… which is children with autism or special educational needs, which is fantastic because they integrate into all of the mainstream classes.*

So the children here will grow up having seen children who might make noises, or rocking, or kicking off, and they're so tolerant, because it's the norm to them. I love that about this school. (Russell, ECP)

Working in special schools did not suit every teacher, but some teachers felt their own beliefs about education aligned with special education, where celebrating every individual success was encouraged, and creativity in the curriculum to meet the pupils' diverse needs was embraced. This philosophy offered some teachers a sense of freedom from the relentless standards agenda of mainstream education.

7.2.3 Religious character

Four of the teachers were currently working in schools with a religious character. Although none of these teachers had specifically sought to work in this type of school, they did think that the school culture was influenced by the associated faith.

Ellie did not identify as religious, and she recalled that she had originally been employed on a supply contract at her current school, but was told by the previous head teacher that she could not apply for a permanent job due to her not being a practising Catholic.

So she said 'I can't offer you the job, because I know you're not a Catholic.' So she never even gave me an application for any jobs that came up. I suppose it could have been classed as discrimination.

When there was a change of head teacher, the new leadership team were keen to employ Ellie as a permanent member of the team. Although she was not Catholic, she had embraced the school ethos, and saw her teaching practice as *'not just about teaching maths and English.'*

I think it's also about teaching them how to be a good human being … so it's very much based around being a good Catholic. Are you being kind? Are you being a good friend? That kind of thing. So I see my role as making sure these children grow up as good people. (Ellie, MCP)

While Ellie was able to accept and support the values of her school, as she did not consider them as being unique to the Catholic faith, some teachers were adamant that they would never work in a school with a religious character as it was against their personal beliefs.

I don't agree with trying to force beliefs on children. I'm not at all religious, and its one thing that I don't do … I did actually look round a Catholic school once, and I thought 'I can't work here.' It was too much, for me, for my own personal beliefs. And I don't think they would have wanted me there anyway (laughs). I'd have been like 'I'm not going to say that! What are you on about?' So it's… something I feel strongly about. (Louise, MCP)

Russell felt passionately that children from all different faiths, and none, should receive a good religious education, so that they could learn to respect each other's beliefs, and to not be separated by them through a school system which selects children based on faith.

> *I'm not at all religious. Never been christened, never went to church … I'm not religious, but I think it's really important, especially with everything that's happening in the world at the moment, that we educate the children about different religions, and about why other people might do certain things, or wear certain things.*

With his pupils living in a multicultural, multi-faith area, he was trying to introduce an understanding and a level of tolerance, so that the children could grow up to be *'well rounded people'*, promoting community cohesion.

> *We have a girl in our class who is Muslim, and she's bringing in loads of things each week to do a bit of show and tell with us. And it's really interesting. The kids are loving it. (Russell, ECP)*

When Lee became a head teacher at a Church of England school he felt that the diocese officers had provided him with much-needed mentoring sessions, which he had not received at the school where he gained his first headship.

> *I must say that when I came here, I came to a church school, and I had a really good, erm, support mechanism. The diocese offers you a mentor, it's basically a coach.*
> *They nod occasionally, and they ask you to find the answers in yourself, you know, they ask you to describe problems and to say what you've thought of doing, you tell them the answers over time. And he was fantastic, I just loved that I had a whole day just talking to somebody and finding the answers to all the problems I had. It was great. (Lee, LCP)*

Although personal views about religion could be considered to be an aspect of an *individual* identity, the culture and ideologies of the schools with a religious character were seen to influence some of the teachers' collective professional identity and commitment. Two teachers strongly believed that religious organizations should not be associated with children's education, and those teachers were resolute that they would never work where religion influenced the school ethos.

7.2.4 Academies

The increasing academisation of primary schools was a subject which some of the teachers had strong opinions about. Of the twenty teachers, only four were employed by academy schools, but other teachers, predominantly in mid- and late-career phases expressed opinions about the changes to the structure of primary education.

In the time between my second and third meeting with Anna, her school had converted from a community first school to an academy school. Apart from the fact that she felt that the implications for her salary should have been explained clearly to her, as she had *'technically changed employer'* she did not think the change had impacted on her professional identity in any way.

> *So, paperwork wise, it was a bit frustrating. But actually, nothing changed in school… Teaching wise, there was no impact. Day to day wasn't any different for us. The children changed their uniform, and we had some whinging off parents, but apart from that, no difference. (Anna, ECP)*

Some teachers were in schools which were considering moving to academy status, and they felt uneasy about changes in their terms and conditions of employment, and felt concerned that the nature of academies might have a detrimental impact on the school ethos.

> *They can do what they want with the pay system, academies. And we will be a multi academy trust, so there will be four schools all joining together to become one trust, and I don't know… because I don't want the school to be run like a business. Because running a school shouldn't be about how you can save money should it? It should be about giving each kid what they need. But I suppose I will have to go with it, and see what happens.*

Katie was hoping that the head teacher might take advantage of the freedoms allowed to an academy school to have a positive impact on the staff.

> *But then he also said to save us money he would let us have two weeks holiday in the school year if you can come in and run a summer school class for two weeks. And I liked that.*
>
> *I like that they are flexible enough to be able to do that, but I think you need to have the right managers. And they're bringing in business managers, who are not head teachers who have had the experience. (Katie, MCP)*

The possibility of business managers running schools as opposed to head teachers was not inconceivable to Justin, who believed that a strong leader might actually give more autonomy to teachers and position them as the experts in the school.

> *You could have got somebody in who was an incredibly good manager who came in and said 'We think you're absolutely ace. What do you think about this? Can we do this? This is our strategy, what do you think we need to do to make it? I do not know at all how you would get the reading from 43% to 50%, but you're the teacher, what do you think? What do you need to do that?' I think that could be a healthy relationship. Because that's what they would be good at.*

He thought that outcomes for children and young people in schools should be the most important focus, and did not feel *'precious about clinging on to a particular structure'.*

The ends justify the means to a large extent. In terms of if this gets kids really super results, then the fact that I would rather have a head teacher who has been a teacher for 30 years, well it's selfish. Because what you're effectively saying is 'I'd rather kids got worse results and keep a model that I'm comfortable with.' I wouldn't. I'd rather have the kids getting good results.

Working in a free school, Justin believed that the structure of schools was irrelevant to most people, *'once kids are in, and they're learning.'*

… There is already the narrative of school turning into a business, which people are very cross about. With academies, and free schools in particular, people, and again, I'm a bit flabbergasted by it, when people get irate about academies and free schools - I'm like 'It's just a school.' We try to deliver a transformational educational experience for kids, and make sure that all of them leave with everything they need for a life with choice and opportunity. Like every school does. (Justin, ECP)

While the teachers working in their early-career phase seemed relatively comfortable to accept academisation as an inevitable feature of the evolving education system, which they considered did not particularly have an impact their day to day practice, teachers in the later phases of their careers seemed to be generally more sceptical and opposed to the changes.

As a head teacher, Lee felt strongly that schools should not be in a situation where public money could be '*syphoned off*' to the financial benefit of individuals

I know of one head and his wife who have five salaries coming in from the public purse, from the academy chain that they run. I think it's wrong.

He felt that the reforms have fractured what should be a national education system into pieces, and taken away fair pay and conditions which were hard won by national pay bodies

There are schools near here where you can be a teacher without qualification, you can be a head teacher without NPQH, you can go on a 51 week a year contract, on a different pay rate, on different terms, where you have to come in at 8 in the morning and work 'til 6, you could be working 51 weeks per year that they require you to work.

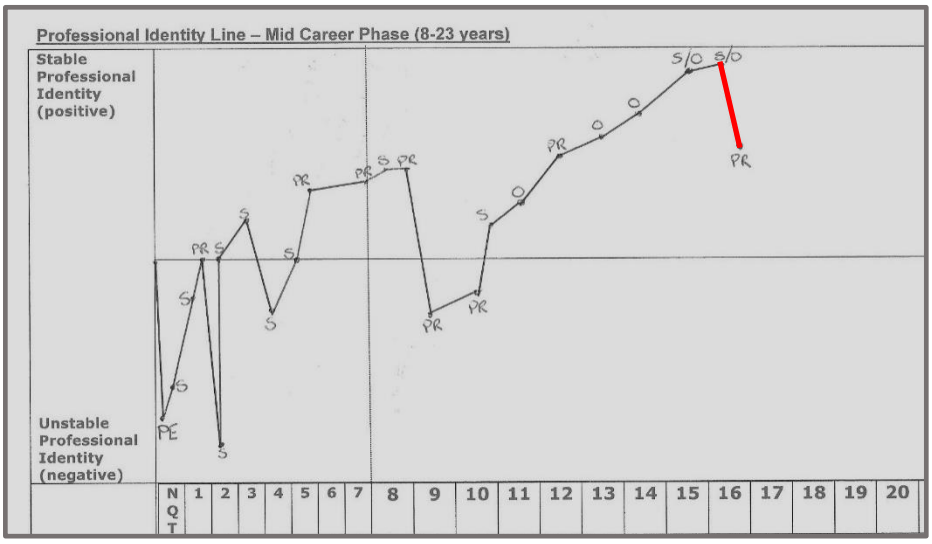
He also believed that the support systems which were in place for schools through local authorities had been systematically removed, and in the academy system schools were now expected to organise and fund support between themselves

So I've been to head teachers' meetings where you get mates round the table, and 'because you're my mate, and he's my mate, and she's my mate, we'll work together'. But what happens when you leave? How's it sustainable? How's it ever going to work? It's stupid … And we're left to our own devices, as it were, to try and crawl through the next few years, I just think it's not right. (Lee, LCP)

In the previous chapter Ricky's story focused on the importance of the relationships which he built with the young people he worked with, and the continuing positive influence which those relationships had on his career. In the following vignette he discussed the influence that structural changes to primary schools were having on his sense of professional identity during his late-career phase;

Ricky's continuing story: Changing primary school structures, reducing sense of identification and commitment to the academisation of primary education

At age 41, working in his late career phase, Ricky was the head teacher of a primary academy. His new position in school felt far removed from the teaching profession which he had entered 17 years previously.



Well, we're an academy here, and my God! The amount of back office administration that is added to the organisation is phenomenal! I cannot get over it. I'm the Accounts Officer, Returning Officer, Director, Head Teacher, I'm the Pensions something or other… I've got all these different titles. I've got a Business Manager here who knows it all. She'll come to me and explain it, and say 'So that's why you need to sign this' and I accept it, because I trust her. But there's so much business, I barely get out to see any children at all! (PTI)

He sometimes felt overwhelmed by the magnitude of the responsibility of running a school in a way which was more aligned with a business model

I don't think anyone understands the amount of legal obligation that you have as an academy. You're a listed company, and you've got liabilities. As a director I'm a stakeholder in this. You've got trustees who have to commit to the organisation. So when they say 'Oh yes, academies, it's the way to go' they're just skirting over the enormity what you have to go through to get there. (PTI)

He considered academy status to have been miss sold to schools who were told that they would save money by converting

…They say we have the freedom on how to spend it, but there are so many legalities which are tied up with auditing that you've got less freedom in some ways … You could be more flexible say with pay.

So if we wanted to I could say that all the teachers will be on a flat rate, and will get a bonus based on performance and contribution. So if you want to run a club for a year, I'll give you an extra thousand pounds. Or if you achieve the outcomes for your pupils consistently you'll get an extra two thousand pounds. And that's a business model, but nobody is in this [job] for the money. (PTI)

Ricky felt strongly that the academy agenda *'perpetuates the business model',* encouraging leaders who would make decisions which were motivated by self-interests, which he felt could have a detrimental impact on both the staff and pupils in a school

They can be really successful in terms of running a school, because their results might be really high. But they are awful people. They're the ones driving the biggest flashiest cars, they are the least available in school, they're never interested in the children, and they're interested in doing less with the organisation and expanding, but not for the right reasons.

His personal philosophy was that the education system should encourage collaborative working between schools, rather than what he perceived to be the emerging competitive structures

…And fundamentally I believe that is what we should do in schools, because it is a school. If you want to go into business and sell some crap to people, then go and do that. You might be really good at that, but don't use the platform of a school to further your own success. That makes me quite cross.

Ricky felt that the reforms and changes to the school structure which he was witnessing first hand as a head teacher did not support his own ideas about collaborative working environments. Although his professional identity and commitment were still high, his reservations about changes in the structures of primary education were shown on his professional timeline as a dip.

Vignette 7.3 Ricky

For early-career teachers working in classrooms the structural reforms which are taking place in primary schools seemed to be broadly accepted as a necessary change, but the teachers in mid- and late-career, and particularly in leadership positions were far more sceptical. For these teachers, they were beginning to question how their own beliefs fit with the primary education system in which they were working.

The issues which were raised and discussed regarding different characteristics of schools, illustrates that different working environments and the underlying ethos, which was often driven by school leaders, could either support or challenge the individual beliefs of teachers.

7.3 *Climate of Primary Education*

Teachers in all phases commented on the culture which is prevalent in primary schools. They referred to education policies which they felt had resulted in continuous testing, school league tables, performance management; performance related pay and the continual threat of Ofsted labels.

7.3.1 Performance and accountability

Some of the teachers commented on the impact that primary education reforms and, more specifically, the focus on performance and accountability had on their sense of professional identity. Although this was not necessarily represented by a particular critical incident on teachers' timelines, the standards agenda in education and primary schools was something which ran through the narratives of teachers in all career phases.

As a mature career entrant, after having previously been a school nurse, Andrea volunteered in a local school to gain some work experience before beginning her PGCE, and was shocked when she discovered the expectations of primary aged children, with '*no let-up in the day'* for the mixed Year 1/Year 2 class.

> *I couldn't believe when I first started there, couldn't believe how it was at school. It wasn't like I thought it would be … So the Year One children have just come out of Reception, but they're having to work at the pace of Year Two children, because SATs are obviously a big deal in schools.*

Andrea was astonished at the breadth of knowledge which such young children were expected to learn. She considered herself to be bright, but she spent the first few days feeling bewildered at the elaborate ways that grammar was being taught.

> *I didn't know what a conjunction was … I had to come home with a list of things to look up (laughs). The kids knew more than me! And they knew all these words, like when they do phonics 'oh it's a split digraph.' All these things. I couldn't believe how much they knew! And I couldn't believe the pace at which things move on a daily basis in a classroom. I was really shocked by that.*

Working in her NQT year she was still surprised at the curriculum and the key words that all of the children had to learn and remember at age seven.

> *I mean our topic at the minute is the Stone Age, and I'm trying to teach them words like Palaeolithic, and I still don't know what that means, even though I'm doing the lesson… It's some era of the Stone Age. And I mean, they can't even say it, let alone spell it!*
> *Why are we teaching them that? But there's no control over that. (Andrea, NQT)*

This narrative of standards and an increasing pressure on staff and children to perform ran through the stories of teachers in all career phases, but particularly for those working in year groups where statutory assessments were being carried out.

Ellie experienced feelings of increasing rivalry between schools, instead of a sense of alliance, which she would have preferred.

So in Year Two and Year Six, you do feel like there's a lot of pressure on you, because you're aware of the national grading, the percentages, so you know that you've got to be up there. And you also know that children are all individuals, and some children just might, for whatever reason, they just won't get there. And I've got to get a certain percentage to meet the national standards, because if you don't… I've spoken to other teachers who feel like they're doing such a rubbish job, because they haven't got near the national standard. And it's always, whenever you speak to another teacher, it's 'What are you doing in your year? What percentages have you got?' It's quite competitive in Year Two at the moment. It's almost like we're in competition with each other. (Ellie, MCP)

Justin had worked in Year Six in his first school, and the strategies which were being encouraged by the leadership team before the national tests had felt unethical to him, but as a new teacher he did not feel that he had any authority to question them.

They were asking me in January saying 'These three children are not going to make Level 4, so no resource should go to them now. But you can target these children on the 3/4 boundary. These children are Level 5 already, so they're not getting any resources.' It was very sad to me. But there is only a certain number of times that you can object, and err... [there was] very little learning, very few lessons. Just drilling, and practicing test questions. (Justin, ECP)

Working in a primary school which claimed to embrace pupil led learning and creativity, Anna felt frustrated that she was expected to change pedagogy in her Year Two class as SATs approached.

So you're in this system of 'creativity', working in a year group where nobody tests for creativity! …And then it comes round to February, and they say 'You've got to get results in the SATs.' So I've got to change the way that I'm teaching, because then you're teaching rote learning, teaching them to remember, rather than teaching the fundamentals. I ended up teaching to the test. (Anna, NQT)

Some teachers felt that the high stakes accountability and school league tables could have implications for recorded levels of pupil achievement. In Nigel's previous role as a Year 3 teacher he faced the additional challenge where he suspected that his pupils' achievement levels had been inflated at the end of the previous school year.

And what's happening is that other classes are moving them on too quick, because they need to achieve this level, they want to get to this level. They tick a box [which says] they got that level. They go to Year Three and they haven't got a clue. Haven't got a bloody clue! They'd come to me when I was in Year Three, and I'd see them and go 'There's no way they're that level.' You could just see it. (Nigel, MCP)

Lee had a similar experience when his new class moved up from a teacher who was considered to be knowledgeable and effective by the other staff and parents at the school.

She didn't falsify test results, but she ensured that certain children achieved very highly in tests. Without cheating. But by repeating the test and coaching them, then repeating and coaching them … And then I was the next class, and I was asked to manage that situation by the head who didn't want to manage it. I found that really challenging.

The situation influenced his own professional identity because he was not comfortable to focus solely on tests and, as a result, was then perceived by others as underperforming

From week one my results looked poor. So I was struggling to make any progress. And I had to work with the parents to tell them what I thought, and what I refused to do was dump that teacher… I took it on the chin really. And I accepted the blame, from her, and just worked with it. (Lee, LCP)

Memo – Ellie 04/11/2016

Pressure to perform.

Ellie talks about feeling as if she is in competition with teachers from other schools because of the national tests.

'***And it's always, whenever you speak to another teacher, it's 'What are you doing in your year? What percentages have you got?' It's quite competitive in Year Two at the moment. It's almost like we're in competition with each other.***'

Other teachers have talked about this feeling of competition rather than co-operation between schools. Nigel mentioned instances where pupils' levels of achievement had been recorded too early, due to pressure to perform.

NOTE! Revisit Anna's transcript as she talks about teaching to the test and being asked to be creative in a school where children are not assessed on their creativity

*** Is this pressure to perform that is felt by some teachers recognised in the literature?**

*** How is this performance culture experienced by other teachers? How does it influence their commitment to the profession?**

Additional note - Lee 06/07/2017 - Lee also mentioned colleagues who had felt the need to enhance children's test scores by coaching them to perform in tests, and as a head teacher he actively resists participating in a culture which he feels prioritises data above children.

*** Seek literature re performance culture in schools (include Ofsted/SATS)**

Memo 7.2 Performance culture

In contrast, for Louise, the foundation stage curriculum felt similar to her own ideas about learning, so she had not experienced the same levels of frustration and tension as those working higher up the school.

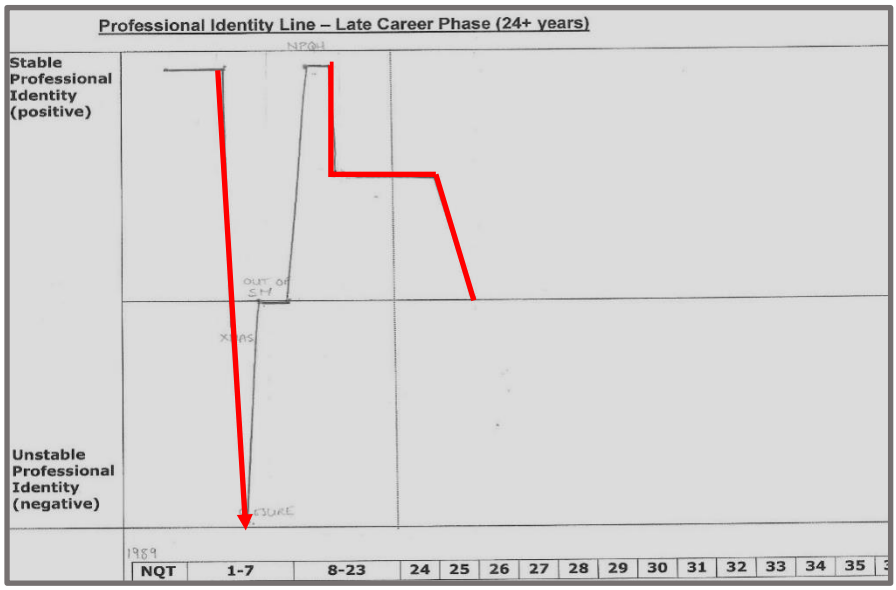
I think because I've been in Early Years the majority of the time, there hasn't really been anything that has happened where I think 'That doesn't sit comfortably with me.' If I'd stayed in key stage one or key stage two I think that would be different, because I am very anti the idea of testing children within an inch of their lives. I don't agree with making Year One children do a phonics test, I think it's ridiculous. There are much better ways of assessing what children know and what they don't know. (Louise, MCP)

Janet's story illustrated the increasing tension that she had experienced between her own beliefs about primary education and the continued government focus on a performance and standards agenda throughout her career;

Janet's story: Conflicting beliefs, reducing sense of professional identity, moving to a new context which aligns with her own beliefs about Primary Education

Janet was 49 years old and, working in her late career phase. Having been a teacher for 26 years she had progressed from the classroom, to a deputy headship and then had been a successful head teacher for the last eleven years of her career. She described the reason for the decline in her professional timeline as being related to the feeling that her own values and beliefs were no longer aligned with the reforms in primary education which she had seen implemented by successive governments.

Her own philosophy about Primary Education was that learning should be fun and child centred.



I think to start with, we have to be in a position where children want to learn. So they have to be happy to come into school. Because if they don't want to learn, they're not going to learn. So you can, I don't know, blast and drum whatever you want to into a child, but if they're really not engaging with it, and they're not inspired with what you're wanting to do, I don't believe they'll get there. So for me, it's absolutely that; children wanting to be in school, learning, with their friends. Exploring, finding new ideas and new things. (LHI)

In the early phase of Janet's career she had the experience of working in a school which was put into the category of Special Measures. She felt that the contextual challenges faced by the community were not recognised by Ofsted.

> *...and we had a really very poor demographic. Poor in terms of…from the monetary sense. So we had children who came in who were really struggling, with families who were really struggling. And for them to come into school, and be confident, and want to learn, and to have eaten breakfast…was incredible actually. But I just felt that there were times when we were in a position where we felt they had to jump through hoops to get to certain places. (PTI)*

This period in her career was represented by the first downward trajectory on her professional timeline, because she felt that the children's individual developmental needs were being overlooked.

> *I would have loved to have given them more time. Time to explore and find out who they were, and what they wanted to do … And I didn't feel that we could give them that time, because the school was going through a process, and it had to go through the process. So the children had to go through the process too. And that for me, wasn't what teaching was all about. I think the impact of this [points to dip on timeline] has been great actually. On my vision for the profession. (PTI)*

Janet felt that as a younger teacher, she had been naïve to the external influences on education and how it might affect her own career.

> *I had no perception of the impact of politics on teaching up until that point.(PTI)*

Growing up with a mum who was a teacher, and always having wanted to be a teacher herself, Janet identified this experience as the first time that she began to question her career choice.

> *I think it did me some damage actually. Because you then lose a certain amount of trust. I think I'd been brought up to believe that teaching was fair, and schooling was fair. And that if you worked hard, and did the right thing, things would be okay.*

She was then invited to work at a different school, with a head teacher who held the same beliefs about primary education.

> *He came to see me, he saw me teach in the other school. So he knew what the journey had been, but that was absolutely his belief, that teaching had to be driven by the children. And that they had to want to know certain things, and to drive that themselves. And he employed, I think, people that he saw believed in that [ethos] really. (PTI)*

Having had her faith in, and vision for, primary education restored by a head teacher with a likeminded vision, Janet began to apply for leadership roles, where she felt that she could lead a team and make a difference within a school culture that she believed in.

She recalled her headship in a rural village school where they had tried to engage the community, and to encourage pupils to have enquiring minds.

> *You know, we had chickens, and we had fruit and veg beds, and the children worked with those, and they collected the eggs and, you know, they were just interested in what they were doing. And it was driven by them. (LHI)*

She found it increasingly difficult to adhere to the performance agenda of the government while keeping learning across the primary curriculum broad, creative and engaging.

But there is a conflict there, I feel, at the moment.

I think the challenge for schools, and for leaders, is to enable that excitement and interest, but also drive children through to get the standards that we're now being expected to reach. And that is a concern for me. With regard to where nationally we are driving. It really is. (LHI)

Janet felt that the continual focus on performance was allowing important relationships, which she considered to be central to learning, to be neglected. She believed strongly that the relationships and wellbeing of staff and children should be the central focus of any education policy.

I think again that… there is such a pressure to get standards and standards and standards, that… policies forget about people. And the bottom line is, that if you're happy in your work, and you feel supported, you will give it everything anyway. (LHI)

After eleven years of successful headship, Janet began to feel that there were restrictions on how much she could achieve for the children and their families, within the constraints of government reforms.

[There were] restrictions with regard to budget, size of school, and national expectations. We had a lot of children that were SEN … We had a lot of children who were quite damaged, where parents had brought them to the school because they felt that we could do things for them. And we were doing really well with those children. But not well enough for Ofsted. (PTI)

As her own philosophy about primary education seemed to get further away from central and local government policies, she began to consider other roles that she could move into, where she could use her vast experience and continue to make a difference to the lives of children and their families.

I think there is an issue over where Heads go, and what they do if they get an early headship. So if you've done eleven years as a Head, and you're not fifty, what do you do? I didn't want a bigger school, because that's not about people. And it wouldn't have been me, I'm not a corporate person like that.

I had options here of other things I could have gone into. So I could've gone off to be an Ofsted inspector ... Over my dead body! (laughs)

Following one final successful inspection, Janet resigned from her head teacher role.

We'd had an OFSTED in the January, and we came out with 'Good', which was the first Good that the school had ever had, but we had 'Outstanding' for behaviour.

So at that point, I thought it was time for me to go. (PTI)

During my final interview with Janet, she was embarking on a new management role, working in a university, supporting students and schools on the initial teacher education programme.

I felt that I would be in a position to inspire, hopefully, trainees [and] nurture schools … so that really was my rationale for coming here. Because I felt that there was an impact that the university could have. (SSI)

As government reforms seemed to put increasing distance between Janet's own philosophy about primary education, and the environment in which she was working, her sense of professional identity decreased. While she remained committed to her values and her desire to make a difference to the lives of young people, she decided to move to a context where she felt her own beliefs would contribute to the success of the university and, as a consequence, to the success of schools.

Vignette 7.4 Janet

Some teachers were concerned that the focus on performance, particularly in English, Mathematics and Science came at the expense of other subjects, and actively narrowed the learning opportunities for children in school.

During her career Sue had always been aware that, as a young person, she had enjoyed enrichment opportunities which not all children were fortunate to experience. She strongly believed that the arts could bring joy to the disadvantaged children at her school.

I have been exposed to beautiful music, and beautiful words in poetry from when I was very young, through home and through school. But I wanted them to have the opportunity to have a taste of that.

They spend loads of their childhood in school, so let's make it a happy place, and let's make it fun. And share with these children some of the beauty that there is in learning. For example, poetry, music, literature, and spiritual things. Things that they might never otherwise get the opportunity to be involved with. (Sue, Retired)

Early-career teachers seemed to be more likely to feel they were unable to cover the whole curriculum during contact time throughout the week, and felt disappointed that they had to prioritise the subjects which were tested at key stages in their teaching, and did not feel able to spend time sharing their own passions of sport and arts with the children.

I've been trying to get us some more funding for PE and things like that, because I think it's really important … I think statutory guidelines are that we should do two hours per week of PE, but I don't know that that's actually the case. Because there is such an emphasis on literacy numeracy, literacy numeracy. (Cat, ECP)

One of the other early-career phase teachers at the school asked Anna how she fitted all of the curriculum subjects into her week.

She said 'When do you teach Music and Art?' And I said 'I just don't.' At the moment, and this is really poor, the nice stuff, and all those foundation subjects, are not being taught at the moment … I play the guitar, and I haven't picked it up with the kids. (Anna, NQT)

The standards agenda which is prevalent in primary education made teachers feel obliged to conform to a culture which was dominated by pupil (and teacher) performance, league tables and tests. For most teachers in all phases of career, this experience did not feel congruent with their beliefs about primary education and had a negative influence on their professional identity and commitment.

7.3.2 Feelings about Ofsted

Throughout the interviews there were mixed views about Ofsted. While some teachers had cited individual classroom observations from Ofsted as affirmation of their own practice, having a positive influence on their *individual* sense of professional identity (see chapter 5), other teachers felt that the principles of a national inspectorate had a negative influence on their school, or on primary education as a whole.

After twenty seven years in teaching, Norma had seen the introduction of Ofsted, and viewed it as damaging to the profession she remained passionate about.

I think it has ruined teaching. I know that we have to be accountable, but there are ways and means of doing it. And I've seen people just go completely to pieces, on the thought that 'They might come into my classroom, they might find a piece of work that I've made a mistake on.' They might see something that was just on one of those days! And that doesn't matter, your whole career can go up. You know, the school can plummet on that twenty minutes. And I think that's an unacceptable pressure on anybody.

Working in her late-career phase, she was able to make the comparison between schools inspections which had previously been conducted by a team from the local authority, which she felt was a more supportive process.

They used to pop in 'How's so and so… What are we doing about this? It's not looking so good at the moment. How can we help you?' There's none of that. Unless, if you're really bad, then you get the help… but by that time it's too late. Rather than, having that help all the time, readily available. (Norma, LCP)

Late-career phase teachers, and particularly those in leadership positions were more concerned about the '*high stakes'* of an Ofsted inspection.

It's not nice to be in a system that is so punitive. Because the damage that it can do is too much, I think. The fact that they can go into a school, and can turn a community from a happy, close

knit community to a dive community overnight. It can send house prices down. It's tremendously powerful, and it haunts you that it's always looming.

And Ofsted would do really well to say 'You know what? We're going to say that it's Good, or it's not Good. And that would take an enormous amount of pressure away from everyone. Because you'd say 'Okay, we're a Good school, how can we prove we're even better? Well, we'll go and get Investors in People, or a Green Flag, to show how good we are at eco, and we'll get an Arts Mark Award. Those are the things which demonstrate your quality. Ofsted should really just be there to say 'You're meeting those standards, thank you very much, we're very happy' or 'you're not, and we need to do something about it.' I think that would help enormously … It would put less stress and strain on schools. (Ricky, MCP)

Inspections were considered by mid- and late-career teachers to be subjective, as during their careers they had experienced different teams of inspectors who had each worked in different ways.

I think I've had three here now, and it's very much down to the individuals. Sometimes they don't know anything about Early Years, so you're just telling them about everything that you're doing, and they're not really questioning you at all. But then you might have another inspection with someone who has been working in Early Years for twenty years, and they're questioning and challenging everything! So the experience you have is very different depending on what team you have. So even though they might all have the same criteria, you don't get the same experience. (Louise, MCP)

For some late-career phase teachers, the developments they had seen in the inspection framework during their career had made them feel more optimistic about the future role of Ofsted.

The very first one we had at [school name], they came in and it was very focussed on observations of the lesson. But you'd got no opportunity to discuss with them. And now they tend to go from one lesson to another, to see that they can see the same sort of, you know, learning behaviours, and things going on. And the team we had a year ago were much more approachable. In the past they came in, and they didn't even speak to you. So it's better. (Julia, LCP)

Almost all teachers thought that the process of school inspections could be improved, although some did acknowledge that it is *'miles ahead of where it used to be'.* Most mid- and late-career teachers had concerns about the '*high stakes'* impact on teachers and schools.

7.3.3 Labels from Ofsted

The Ofsted rating of the schools in which teachers worked, was an influential factor for some teachers' sense of collective identity.

Anna clearly positioned herself as an individual outside of the school staff when she talked about the impending Ofsted visit and the schools' potential ratings. She likened the situation to being in a rugby team.

> *I can only be as good as the team that I'm in. And actually, this team, and this school aren't great.* ***They're*** *not. From other places that I've worked… Maybe it's the same in all of them, because this is my first teaching job, but* ***they're*** *not brilliant.*
> *And I think* ***they'll*** *be lucky to get Good at Ofsted. And I don't want to be in a school that's lucky to get Good. I want to be in a school that's reaching for Outstanding, you know. (Anna, NQT)*

While Anna had no desire to continue working in a school which was not working towards being Outstanding, Emma, who had a strong sense collective identity, talked about the measures the staff team would take to rectify a poor Ofsted rating.

> *I think as a staff, it really is something that* ***we*** *would be 'Oh my goodness!' Everyone would take it extremely seriously, and* ***we*** *would work to the nth degree to make sure everything was perfect. But* ***we*** *know, at the end of the day, that* ***we're*** *a Good school. And that I think makes the difference. (Emma. MCP)*

Louise joined her school when it was in 'Notice to Improve', but the category did not discourage her from working at the school, because she could see that external influences were impacting on the rating, and she felt that this would be an opportunity to share her Early Years experience and make a contribution to the collective endeavour to make improvements.

> *It didn't bother me, when I got the job. The school had just gone through a whole restructuring. There used to be three schools, and they amalgamated them all to make one school. So it was obviously a tricky time for people...*
> *And I think I felt that I could add something to the school, and that was what the head teacher wanted me to do, because I had a lot of Early Years experience. So that didn't faze me.*

In the six years when she had worked at the school they had evolved and the most recent Ofsted rating was Good with elements of Outstanding.

> *…We got Ofsteded again in the third week of September, in this academic year, not all of the nursery children had even started here yet. And we had some Outstanding elements again, but they pretty much came in to check that we were still Good. That's what they were here to do.*

Although the school felt that they should have been rewarded with an Outstanding rating, Louise was secure in the knowledge that the school were on the right track, and she felt that sense of professional identity was increasing in synthesis with the school improvement.

> *But I can see what massive progress the school has made, because I've gone from there to there [indicates low to high on professional timeline]. (Louise, MCP)*

Like Louise, Lee felt that the Ofsted rating was not a true and full representation of the school that he was leading, as he believed that measures for success are often dependent on different agendas.

> *We'll never be an Outstanding school, ever. The governors know that, the staff know that. What I tell parents is that we serve a number of masters; we serve the government, we serve the diocese, we serve the Church of England, we serve [county], we serve our children and our community and our parents. And in all of those that we serve, the key for us is our community and our children. That is our context … We're comfortable with that, and we won't accede to someone else's agenda, because they don't know what we need. We do. (Lee, LCP)*

Justin began his teaching career in a school set in an area of social disadvantage. The intensity of the work required to improve the school's Ofsted rating from 'Requires Improvement' to 'Good' placed the staff team under considerable stress. He felt that the school had poor leadership with no vision, and the improvement was founded on *'sheer man hours*' which he felt was not sustainable long term, and directly related to the exodus of teachers at the end of the year.

> *With Teach First that's part of the mission part, what you sign up for. You are going to get placed in struggling schools and I'm really proud of getting the 'Good' after two years. And everybody worked so hard for it. Seventy five percent of the staff left that year.*
>
> *So we got the 'Good', we were Ofsteded a month before summer, and we got the 'Good', but we'd lost seventy five percent of staff! One of which being me, obviously … Staff morale was incredibly low. (Justin, ECP)*

For some teachers the Ofsted rating of their school was influential to their sense of professional identity and commitment. Where teachers' personal beliefs and values aligned with that of their school, the Ofsted category seemed to have less of an influence on their sense of professional identity, but where teachers positioned themselves as being outside of the school collective, a negative Ofsted category could have a negative influence on their professional identity and on their commitment to the school.

7.4 *The Bigger Picture*

Teachers who identified as having a collective professional identity were most likely to talk about, and to be concerned with, the broader structure of primary education than the immediate context in which they were working. These teachers talked about the positive influence of opportunities to work collaboratively with others, and were motivated if they felt they could contribute more widely to the profession.

7.4.1 Sharing good practice

Opportunities to share good practice had a positive influence on teachers in early-, mid-and late-career phase, but teachers with a collective sense of identity in particular gained a great sense of satisfaction from working alongside colleagues and teachers in other schools.

The staff working in Cat's special school had developed an outreach programme to share their approaches to supporting children with SEND in local schools. She believed the collaborative effort had a positive influence on the children and the staff.

> *So I'll go into mainstream schools to support them with behaviour, and it might be learning needs, things like that, [supporting] teachers or TAs really … We might get a phone call saying 'Can you send somebody?' They'll tell me whatever might be the issue, and then I'll go and do a little observation, and write a report with some strategies.*
>
> *I realise that it's not very nice to have anybody watch you, but what I try to say is 'I'm not here to watch you, I'm here to look at the child, and have a think how we can best meet their needs.' And so far so good, they're normally really positive about it. (Cat, ECP)*

Having recently decided to step out of his headship role and return to classroom teaching, Alan was negotiating changes in his career trajectory. These changes meant that his individual identity had taken primacy during the period when I interviewed him, but he recalled a particular high point of his career, before becoming a head teacher, when there was an initiative for '*beacon managers'* to network across schools.

> *I went into schools to support them with middle leadership issues, have discussions, and look at action plans, and ways forward to develop the teams. So it was an interesting process, and I developed good leadership skills, and it gave me the bigger picture across the authority and other schools. That was a really good experience for me. (Alan, LCP)*

For experienced teachers who had a positive sense of self-efficacy, the chance to collaborate and share their ideas, knowledge and expertise with other teachers had a positive influence on their sense of professional identity.

7.4.2 Leaving a legacy

Teachers at the later stages of their career were beginning to consider the impact that their work may have had, or might have in the future for pupils and other teachers.

Nearing his retirement it was important to Lee that he was able to leave with '*some pride*' and his '*head held high*'

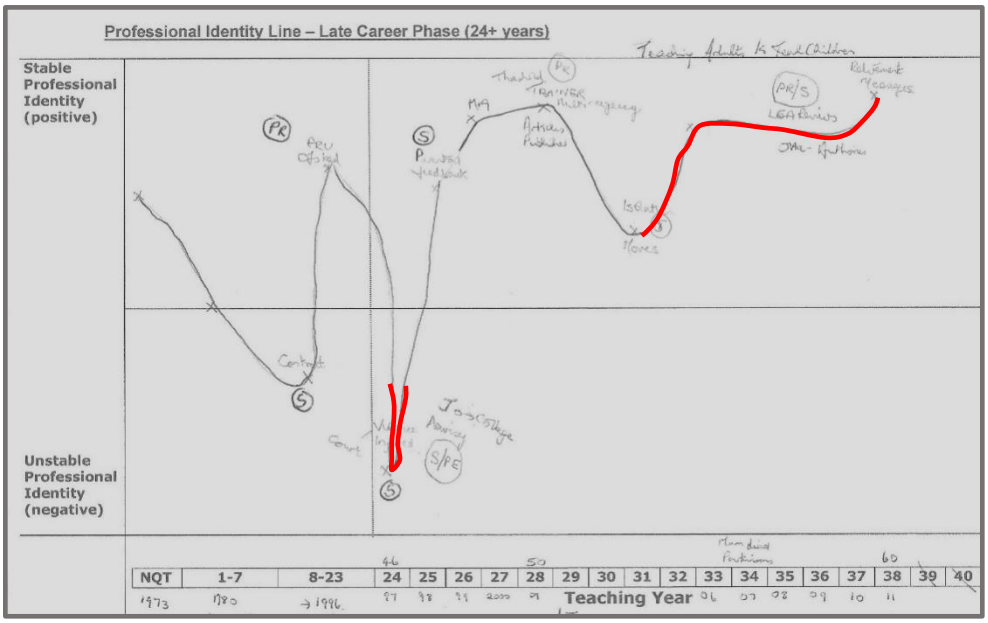
> *I want to leave the school in a strong position, that's sustainable for the future, with people and systems that work. And then someone else can come in and take those on … I don't want to*

spend my retirement regretting that I got it all wrong. I want to retire thinking 'Yes, I did alright there. I did a good job.'(Lee, LCP)

As the only retired teacher in this study, Sue had completed her career and had been able to maintain a positive sense of professional identity. Her reflections highlight the circumstances which enabled her to sustain her motivation into the later phase of her career;

Sue's story: Collective identity, opportunity to be generative, sustaining positive sense of professional identity, retiring with sense of integrity

Sue was 63 years old and had retired when I interviewed her. Having been a teacher for 38 years she had begun her career in a school of low SES. Feeling a sense of fulfilment from working with children who needed extra support with behaviour and social skills, she had later worked in a pupil referral unit teaching and supporting children who had been excluded from mainstream schools.



There were only two incidents earlier in her career which had resulted in an unstable sense of professional identity and a reduced commitment. The first was due to being given a temporary contract, and the other was an isolated episode when a pupil threw a table at her

Believe it or not, it was quite a large table, and he was so out of it, that he had the strength of a much older, and bigger child, he picked it up and threw it at me. And I hurt my neck. It was a bit like a whiplash injury, and I had to go to hospital, and then I had to go back in the next day, and face it all again.

Because I knew that if I didn't go back the day after I'd been to hospital and got the collar on my neck, if I didn't go back then, I probably wouldn't have gone back at all. It's a bit like if you have a car crash, you've got to get back behind the wheel as quickly as you can, because otherwise you lose confidence. So that was a big drop … So that could have been a drop out time for me, I guess. (PTI)

Not wanting to lose a valued member of staff, the incident spurred on the team at the unit to make some improvements to the school policy and the entry criteria that schools had to fit before sending a pupil to the referral unit

> *Because before that, once the child had come into the PRU, they were quite happy to lose them, and forget about them completely. Almost cross them off the register. And that was impractical, but also unhelpful to the child, because they didn't belong with us, they belonged at school. So things started to improve quite a bit.*
>
> *And it made a big difference. We made our own lives… not easier… but more focused. So we were all clearer about what it was we were trying to do with these children. Because the pressures from outside are so enormous. (PTI)*

Having relished the opportunity to make a difference to vulnerable children, and having felt a sense of *'mission'* throughout her career, Sue described a change which happened around age 50, when she felt that her increasing age was beginning to influence her professional identity

> *I hadn't got the physical energy to do what I had done in the start of my time in the PRU, when I was playing with children at break time and I had the physical energy to keep up with them, you know. They were very demanding physically, as well as emotionally, and behaviourally.(PTI)*

At around the same time Sue also felt '*interested in working in a bigger field'*, so she approached her line managers to see if there might be any opportunities to share her expertise with the teachers, who were supporting the same vulnerable children, working in mainstream schools

> *I was lucky that they were also thinking along those lines. For them, it was probably financial really. If you're out influencing the schools, you'll get less call for the PRU places, which are very expensive. (PTI)*

The role evolved, and Sue was able to employ some staff and build a team of advanced practice teachers and teaching assistants who were supporting children and staff across the county

> *We put on conferences, and did some really big stuff. [We carried out] local authority reviews, we got international speakers for conferences, and we started to get quite a name for ourselves really. Not only in [name of county] but outside of it too.*

The opportunity to collaborate within a multidisciplinary team, and the feeling that her work was having a positive impact on the wider teaching profession, gave Sue a positive sense of collective identity, as they all worked towards the same goal

> *To be honest, I was amazed that these people who I had put on a pedestal, like educational psychologists, who are very clever people, I was amazed that I could keep up with them, and that they valued my opinion, and wanted me to be part of it. And it was the same when I started working with the inspectorate, because they were then saying to me 'It would be really good if you would come on the next LEA review' … I liked it very much.*
>
> *I felt very valued. And the EP teams are very good at emotional literacy, and they knew what people needed to do a good job. And the feedback they needed. They were very careful to put theory into practice, which was good. (PTI)*

The opportunity to support other teachers had a positive influence on Sue's professional identity, as she developed a sense that her knowledge and experience was contributing to the wider profession.

It's a bit like a brotherhood, you know. If you can say 'I know exactly where you're coming from, I've been there.' (PTI)

This opportunity to share her expertise and to be generative, along with the feedback she received on her retirement, helped to sustain Sue's positive sense of professional identity.

So I finished my career on a high. I loved my job, I genuinely loved my job. All the way through really. I had a great time … And I put the chart going off the scale when it came to retirement, because of all of the messages I got, and all of the lovely feedback I had. The letters and the cards, those things were just wonderful … I shall always treasure those, no matter how much I clear out my loft, they're not going anywhere (laughs). (PTI)

Reflecting back on her career, Sue had a clear sense of satisfaction that her work would continue to make a difference to both pupils in school and to the next generation of teachers.

I do believe my career made an impact, and for that I'm really grateful. Doors opened for me, that I couldn't have opened myself, partly by happenstance, and partly by financial decisions being made, way above me … I wonder if my career had finished at fifty, and maybe I'd gone to Marks and Spencers to work instead, I wonder how positive I would have felt, looking back, without those last ten years. (PTI)

Sue talked about her aspiration for the future of schools and teaching rather than for herself. She hopes that, as teachers are being expected to work until they are older, school leaders will use the expertise of experienced and capable staff to support new teachers who are entering the classroom.

I cannot see anybody being fit enough at sixty five, seventy to teach a class of children. But I can see team teaching being valuable, working alongside a younger teacher, and setting an example, and passing on experience. But also, doing some of the work that takes you away from the classroom, when you're a young teacher. So you know, some of the planning, and preparation, and reporting, attending meetings, and that sort of stuff. That could be done by a senior teacher, and the younger teachers could be doing the face to face stuff.

I truly hope that's what happens in the future, because if you're asking somebody who is sixty nine to teach a class of year ones, all day, for a whole week… there's no way, in my opinion, that you'd ever have the energy to do that. (LHI)

Turning to the issue of staff retention, Sue was certain that education policies which would enable and encourage new and experienced teachers to work alongside each other, sharing their strengths and supporting each other with challenges, would go a long way towards keeping professional identity and commitment high

Sometimes the obvious is so bleeding obvious that people don't think it! (LHI)

At retirement Sue was in a unique position, within the participants of this study, to be able to reflect on her whole career. Her positive career story highlighted the importance of continued professional development opportunities for teachers in their mid- and late-career phases. For Sue, it was the chance to work collaboratively with other professionals and to share her vast knowledge and expertise with the next generation of teachers, which meant that her professional identity and her commitment remained high until the day she retired.

Vignette 7. 5 Sue

As teachers gained experience and knowledge, they began to consider the broader aspects of primary education, and were likely to gain a sense of satisfaction from roles where they were able to contribute to the development of other teaching professionals. When offered

these advancement opportunities, teachers in later career phases continued to feel a positive sense of professional identity, and a sustained commitment to having a positive impact on the experiences of children and staff in primary schools.

7.5 *Chapter Summary*

This chapter has illuminated the *collective* dimension of teachers' professional identity where a sense of a self was built and maintained by identification with, and commitment to a particular school culture or a preferred vision about schooling and primary education, rather than to a particular teaching role or to significant relationships.

The teacher stories in this chapter suggest that a collective professional identity is built from shared understandings and a sense of belonging, whether to a particular school or to the wider teaching profession. When the culture of the school in which a teacher works is congruent with their personal beliefs and values they are more likely to feel an increased sense of a positive professional identity, which is related to an increased commitment to a collective endeavour which supports their own philosophy about primary education. If school, or wider primary education policies, do not support personal beliefs and values, teachers may retain a strong sense of their individual professional identity, but pursue other career options which might enable a sense of belonging in a different context.

Teachers in all phases with a strong sense of collective professional identity seemed to be motivated by opportunities to work collaboratively with others and to carry out a role in which they felt able to contribute to future generations of teachers or to have a positive influence on the broader profession of primary education.

Note: Some of the stories in this chapter overlap with extracts from the interviews which related to building an individual or relational professional identity. This cross over illustrates that the three different levels of professional identity (individual, relational and collective) do not necessarily evolve in isolation from each other, but are nested within a complex and multidimensional professional development process.

8 Discussion of Findings

This study has taken a grounded theory approach to increase understanding of the key influences on primary teachers' professional identity and to develop an understanding of how professional identity relates to commitment during different career phases. There are seminal works which have influenced our understanding of teachers' career trajectories (Day et al., 2007; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993; Sikes, 1985), and a growing research base concerned with teachers' professional identity (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijard, Meijer & Verloop, 2004; Izadinia, 2013). This study has sought to extend the existing literature by viewing a teacher career through the lens of professional identity and its relationship to commitment.

This chapter will relate the categories which emerged from the interview transcripts back to the original research questions. The significance of the findings in this study will be addressed and considered in relation to the existing literature on teachers' lives and careers, professional identity and commitment, while also considering any historical, contextual or political influences. The discussion will draw on well-established theories and literature from both social and organisational psychology which has informed and supported the evolving theoretical model. When answering the research questions, I will argue that, for teachers working in all phases of career, professional identity and commitment are closely associated, with the findings suggesting that different levels of identity (individual, relational and collective) are integral to different foci of commitment (role, school community, and ideological) respectively.

Responding to the Research Questions

This study sought to investigate two key questions which will be responded to in turn.

8.1 *Research Question 1: What are the key influences on primary teachers' sense of professional identities at different phases of their careers?*

The findings from this study support previous assertions that teacher professional identity (TPI) is dynamic, complex and evolving (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Henry, 2016; Trent, 2010) and is influenced by 'competing interactions between personal, professional and situational factors' (Day et al. 2007, pp 106). While the absence of a singular, specific and widely accepted definition of TPI has previously been noted (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Izadinia, 2013), this study suggests that a simple, one-dimensional definition could not sufficiently represent the complexities of TPI, as identity is not a singular construct and therefore, to appreciate the

complexities of identity, a more nuanced understanding should be developed (Bodenhausen, 2010).

The developing theory draws on an understanding of identity construction which is well-established within social and occupational psychology; the notion that there are three fundamental levels of identity - individual, relational and collective (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001) - whereby individuals either perceive themselves as distinctive and independent social agents, as related to significant others, or by internalization of meaningful group membership, with different levels of identity being elevated in different contexts (Gaertner et al., 2012). Much of the previous research which has focused on the development of teachers' career and professional identity has tended to consider them as singular and unique individuals, with an inclination to neglect the view that individuals also form a self-concept in terms of their relationships with others, and by the meaningful groups to which they belong (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

The categories which emerged from the data in this study recognise the development of the individual teacher, while also acknowledging the social nature of schools, where individual teachers are nested within a work team, within a school community, but also within the broader context of national educational policies and political ideologies. Therefore, this discussion will acknowledge the individual, interpersonal, and social-structural contexts of developing and maintaining a professional identity, with three fundamental levels of inclusiveness being discussed (individual, relational, collective).

To aid the understanding of the key influences of professional identity development, while developing an alternative model of teacher career, as is viewed through the lens of identity, this research question will be responded to and discussed under the headings of individual, relational, and collective identity development (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001), illustrated in **figure 8.1**.

The influencing factors for teachers working in early-, mid-, and late-career phases (Kington, Reed & Sammons, 2014; Kington et al., 2014) will be discussed under subheadings which relate to the broad categories presented in the findings chapters.

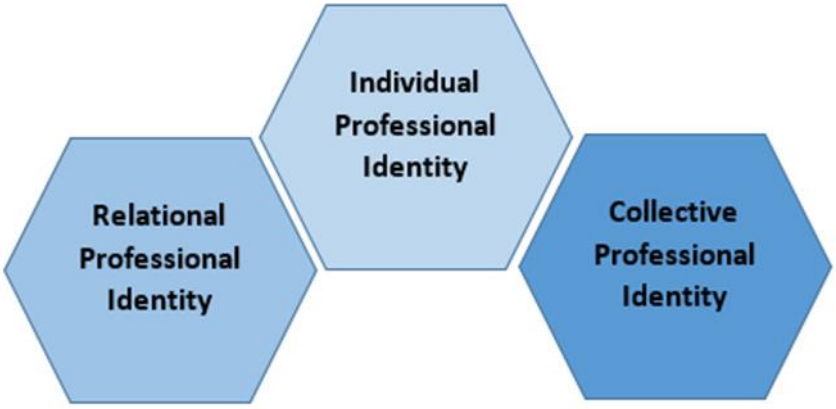


Figure 8.1 Three levels of professional identity

8.1.1 Individual Professional Identity

The stories told by the teachers in this study are consistent with the ways in which individual identity has been defined in social psychology; being related to aspects of personal development (Erikson, 1950, 1959) such as life stories and memories (Klein, 2001; McAdams, 2006), self-efficacy and self-evaluation (Bandura, 1989; Sedikides & Gregg, 2008), personal beliefs and goals (Marcia, 1966; Waterman, 1999), and as connected to visualisations of future selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Where an individual level of professional identity (IPI) was dominant in teachers' self-construal, it was due to critical events or periods in teachers' careers or specific events when the central focus was to establish or maintain a sense of purpose and feelings of self-efficacy, or when they were considering and working towards future aspirations or goals (Sedikides at al., 2013).

The factors which were identified as influencing teachers' sense of individual professional identity will be discussed under the categories which emerged during analysis of ***beliefs and values, self-efficacy, aspirations,*** and ***changes and transitions*** as illustrated in **figure 8.2**.

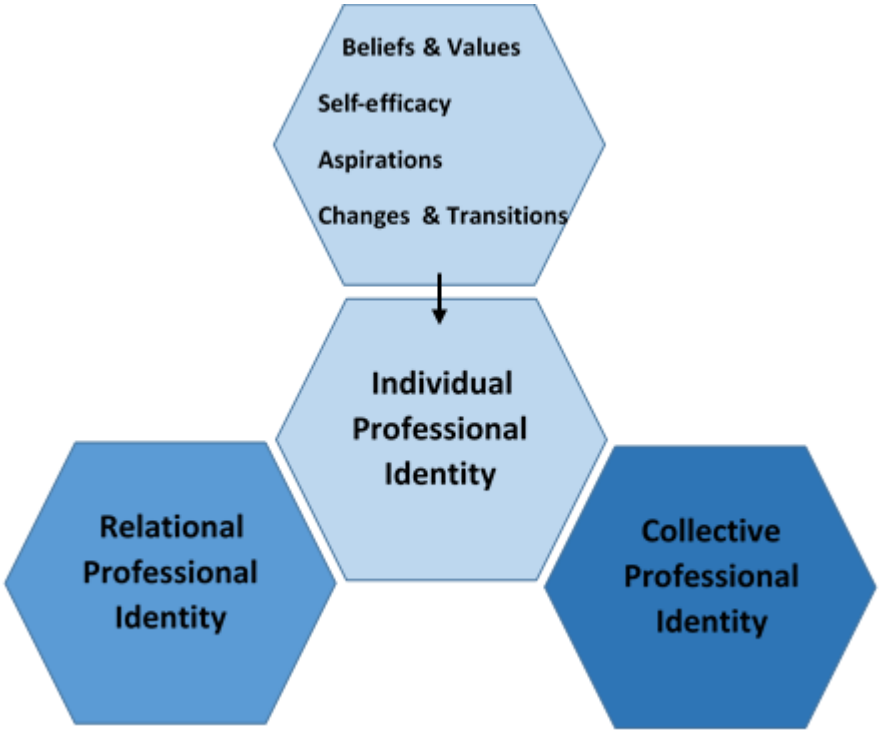


Figure 8.2 Key influences on individual professional identity

8.1.1.1 Beliefs and Values

Consistent with broader identity and career models which assert that young adults endeavour to consolidate individual values and beliefs to establish a meaningful work role (Erikson, 1950; Levinson et al., 1978; Super, 1957), early-career phase (ECP) teachers discussed what they each considered to be the purpose of teaching. Most ECP teachers had already developed personal beliefs and values concerned with what, or who, a teacher should be which were related to their recollections and early experiences of school. These findings are well aligned to previous studies which suggest that personal memories of school inform teachers' early philosophies (Chong, 2011; Flores & Day, 2006; Miller & Shifflet, 2016), with the teachers in this study viewing 'good' teachers as being primarily ethical (Tateo, 2012) and caring professionals (Hargreaves & Goodson,1996). While most ECP teachers' in this study believe that primary education has a broader public purpose and '*not being just about teaching them maths and English' (Ellie)*, one teacher (Justin) felt that he would be failing the children in his inner-city school setting if they did not succeed in the core subjects of maths and English and was willing to sacrifice music and art in order to improve the '*crap life chances'* of his pupils. As a Teach First practitioner, Justin's personal values were consistent with what Friedrich et al. (2015) describe as a 'crusade for justice' (p.5) when referring to the mission of the umbrella

Teach for All[3] network. Although there were some differences in personal beliefs about the primary curriculum, and varying opinions as to whether the arts and social skills should have parity with literature and numeracy, all of the early-career phase teachers were motivated by the desire to make a positive difference to the lives of their pupils (Day et al., 2007; Dinham & Scott, 2000; Hunter-Johnson, 2015). For some ECP teachers the difference was considered to be through improving life opportunities through education (McIntyre & Thompson, 2015) while others prioritised affective characteristics such as kindness and caring (Miller & Shifflet, 2016; O'Connor, 2008). This divergence in ECP teachers' core values and beliefs about education and teaching on entering the classroom suggests that, while many teachers feel a sense of 'calling' (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997, 2003), the conception of what makes a 'good' teacher is not only influenced by prior experiences (Cherrington, 2017; Hong, Greene & Lowery, 2017), but can also be influenced by the increasingly diverse nature of routes into teaching. It is interesting to note that the sample of ECP teachers in this study included teachers who qualified through the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Teach First (TF) and Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) routes. In contrast, the sample of late-career phase (LCP) teachers all qualified through the B.Ed. route, apart from Lee who qualified through a PGCE route (as originally his choice had been to work in secondary education).

8.1.1.2 Self-efficacy

Connected to the desire to make a difference for the children in their class, was the teachers' need to feel efficacious in the classroom. Early experiences in the classroom were broadly congruent with the conception of the career entry phase described in previous models of teacher development (Day et al., 2007; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993; Sikes, 1985), with the induction year represented as a challenging period where continuous support and feedback are required. Although Day et al. (2007) make a distinction between identity and role, with Tateo (2012) conceptualising teacher identity as 'the means by which individuals reflexively and emotionally negotiate their own subjectivity, differently from the concept of role' (p. 345), most ECP teachers in this study referred to the practical and functional aspects of their teaching role when discussing fluctuations in feelings of self-efficacy. Building on the work of Bandura (1997), Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007) describe teacher self-efficacy as 'individual teachers' beliefs in their own abilities to plan, organize, and carry out activities required to attain given educational goals' (p.612). Bandura's seminal work proposed the four main sources of self-efficacy as being vicarious experiences (when a task is modelled by

[3] Teach for All is an international organization which promotes a model of teacher education with a driving mission to confront the 'complex challenges facing children in disadvantaged communities'. For further info: https://teachforall.org/

another who is deemed to be similar), social persuasion (interpersonal support and encouragement) and physiological states (psychological or physical arousal), along with mastery experiences (perception of own past performance).

While quantitative methodologies, concerned largely with the consequences and the power of self-efficacy, have tended to dominate in teacher efficacy research (Labone, 2004), the teachers in this study discussed in detail the circumstances which they felt influenced their own self-efficacy beliefs. For teachers where an individual level of professional identity was dominant, their sense of self-efficacy tended to be construed by an awareness of skills which were in deficit, rather than by the acknowledgement of feelings of expertise or mastery.

The findings suggest that ECP teachers' sense of self-efficacy was influenced by their initial teacher education (ITE) experiences, with most feeling unprepared for the multitude of tasks which they had not yet mastered on entering the classroom. Justin felt disillusioned in his first year, considering that Teach First might '*over-sell the impact that you are going to have'* as he began to appreciate the complexities of educational inequality, which he recognised could not be resolved by him alone. As self-efficacy can be related to perceived capabilities to perform a specific task (Bandura,1982; 1997), it seems that the overriding mission of Teach First to address poverty and educational disadvantage after his six-week induction training might be too great, resulting in reduced feelings of accomplishment (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017a). This decline in a sense of self-efficacy during the induction phase was not unique to Justin, as four other teachers from a range of initial teacher education programmes also experienced the well-documented downward trajectory during the induction period (George, Richardson & Watt, 2018; Hoy & Spero, 2005). The importance of a smooth transition between teacher preparation and in-service learning has previously been emphasised (Beck & Kosnik, 2017) with a recognition that, unlike during initial teacher education, the focus in the classroom turns to the transmission of information and improving school results (Ball, 2000; Lemov, 2015), which some consider being 'to the detriment of theory and analysis' (Hodson, Smith & Brown, 2012, p.181). Consistent with research from various countries (e.g. Beauchamp & Thomas, 2011; Trent, 2013) which acknowledges the challenges experienced when entering the classroom and during the first few years of teaching (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009), the induction period in particular was identified as demanding, with highs and lows experienced in the classroom (Schmidt et al. 2017) resulting in a transition period similar to that which has been described as a *reality* or *practice shock* (Goddard et al., 2006; Valenčič Zuljan & Marentič Požarnik, 2014; Veenman, 1984). However, the findings from this study also suggest that while ECP teachers might attribute feelings of being overwhelmed to the inability for '*any course [to] prepare anyone' (Anna)*, for the classroom realities, the real issue might lie in the expectations which are being placed on newly qualified teachers to be performing

professionally at the same level, and meeting the same Teacher Standards (Department for Education, 2013), as their more experienced colleagues, without adequate support.

The specific task of managing challenging behaviour in the classroom was mentioned often by ECP teachers, generally with a sense that they had low self-efficacy in this area. As the complexity of managing multiple relationships in the classroom was an area where ECP teachers lacked experience and often lacked support, it seems significant that, true to the expectations in the Teachers' Standards[4] (Department for Education, 2013), they felt personal 'responsibility for promoting good and courteous behaviour both in classrooms and around the school' (p. 12). It could be argued that it is the expectation to take individual responsibility, which leaves teachers who struggle with managing the behaviour of a particular class, or a particular child, feeling as though they have failed, unable to cope alone. The finding that perceived behaviour management skills has a strong influence on ECP teachers' sense of efficacy supports previous research (O'Neill & Stephenson, 2013; Smart & Igo, 2010) and suggests that further support and developmental opportunities for working with more experienced teachers, so that effective strategies can be observed and learned (vicariously), would be beneficial during the induction period. It is also of interest to note that when beginning teachers talked about managing pupil behaviour, they talked in terms of techniques which needed to be learned, or a specific strategy which they were expected to employ to make them more effective as a teacher, in contrast to research which acknowledges the importance of teacher-pupil relationships in managing behaviour (Kwok, 2017; van Tartwijk et al. 2009). Most ECP teachers viewed classroom management as an instructional rather than a relational skill, and with a fear of failing to meet the national standards, NQTs felt apprehensive about admitting to being unable to 'manage classes effectively' (Department for Education, 2013, p.12).

A further influence on feelings of self-efficacy which can be related to performance standards is the experience that all ECP teachers have of making mistakes and lessons which do not achieve the original aims. There is a growing body of work in organisational literature, acknowledging that errors at work can be an opportunity for learning and professional development (Goodman et al., 2011; Reason, 2000), with assertions in much educational literature that making mistakes should be understood as an inevitable part of the learning process for students (Zander, Kreutzmann & Wolter, 2014). While teachers in mid- and late-career recalled their entry into the classroom as being a '*steep learning curve'(Julia)*, they felt fortunate that they had not had to focus on the measurable outcomes and performance

[4] Teacher Standards were introduced into schools in England in September 2012, and are used to assess the performance of NQTs during their induction year.

measures, considering it to be an unrealistic expectation that an NQT should achieve the same level of proficiency as a more experienced teacher. It has also been argued by Spicksley (2018) that, rather than performing at the same level as more experienced teachers, early-career teachers have recently been positioned in education policy as the *best* generation of teachers, who are characteristically talented and capable, with an implicit message that they should be outperforming their experienced colleagues.

In keeping with organisational literature, the findings from this study suggest that school cultures can limit or increase the opportunity for 'error-related' development (Billett, 2012), and that ECP teachers can experience professional growth and an increased sense of self-efficacy in an atmosphere of psychological safety (Putz et al. 2012), where mistakes are acknowledged as inevitable, and teachers feel able to ask for help and admit to failure, without feeling judged (discussed further in next section). Hobson and Malderez (2013) refer to the conflicting role of induction mentors, who are expected to both develop and evaluate beginning teachers as 'judgementoring' (p.90), arguing that many schools 'fail to take the mentoring of student and NQTs sufficiently seriously or to recognise its importance to beginner teachers' development' (p.99). Anna's perception that admitting to any mistakes to induction mentors would be '*giving them ammunition to make life even harder'* suggests that within an increasingly performance-driven school culture, the persistent focus on individual accountability, performance and standards could have resulted in the unintended consequence of newly qualified teachers attempting to conceal anything which might be classed as a failure or an inability to 'meet the standards *consistently* over a *sustained* period in their practice' (Department for Education, 2013, p.6, emphasis added). This situation is concerning, as the decision not to disclose any mistakes or '*car crash' (Emma)* lessons for fear of receiving a poor performance assessment, could have a detrimental effect on professional development opportunities and result in spiralling feelings of low self-efficacy (Devos, Dupriez & Paquay, 2012). Bandura (1995) notes that while people need positive appraisals to increase feelings of efficacy, 'efficacy builders' (in this case mentors, school leaders and policy makers) should 'avoid placing people in situations prematurely where they are likely to fail often' (p.4), which raises questions about the performance standards which apply to teachers 'regardless of their career stage' (Department for Education, 2013, p.5).

Although newly and recently qualified teachers are able to reflect on some small achievements and incremental steps of progress which they make with particular tasks or particular children, they are unlikely to have such a wealth of mastery experiences available to them as more experienced teachers (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). For mid-career phase (MCP) teacher Emma '*looking back at that person'* when considering the progress she had made since her early days of teaching felt like her identity had evolved so much over time *'that person'* was

almost unrecognisable, supporting the notion that a sense of self-efficacy develops from increased knowledge, skills and feelings of professional mastery over a period of time (Chiong, Menzies & Parameshwaran, 2017; Kington, Reed & Sammons, 2014). References to perceived self-efficacy from MCP teachers in this study were related to a more generalised sense of efficacy, rather than being task specific, which suggests that as teachers become more confident in their own ability to be successful in particular tasks, they develop a more generalised sense of self-efficacy (Chen, Gully & Eden, 2001) in their ability to attain broader educational goals. Day et al. (2007) also refer to perceived effectiveness in relation to a teachers' assessment of their past performance, so the finding that performance evaluations and feedback from others was critical in developing a sense of self-efficacy for ECP teachers phase is not surprising (due to having less past performance experiences to draw from than long-serving teachers), and supports previous research which suggests that the school culture and quality of feedback can have a positive or a detrimental effect on developing self-efficacy beliefs (Devos, Dupriez & Paquay, 2012; Izadinia, 2016).

Feedback from others can also influence feelings of self-efficacy for mid- and late-career teachers, with findings suggesting that more experienced teachers' individual successes or improvement are not always acknowledged by school leadership: *'I was doing a pretty good job if I'm honest, and nobody had a clue' (Sue, LCP)*, which can have a negative influence on their sense of professional identity. In contrast to earlier research which has found that primary school teachers experience feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt following an Ofsted inspection (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996), teachers' stories suggest that the opportunity to receive acknowledgement of 'good' practice from Ofsted inspectors can have a positive influence on sustaining mid and late career teachers' positive sense of professional identity. So while Ofsted's capacity to promote school improvement has previously been questioned (Jones & Tymms, 2014), the findings of this study suggest that while expectations to meet Teacher Standards (DfE, 2013), performance targets and to improve school data are often prioritised by school leaders, there are teachers working in all phases of their career who do not hear enough positive feedback about their teaching successes and achievements. The appreciation of the individual feedback which was given to the teachers by some Ofsted inspectors illustrates the possibility that, for too many teachers, positive affirmation of their daily work is too often lacking. Given the findings of this study, it could be due to this 'dearth of meaningful feedback' (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007) which means that, for some teachers, a professional conversation with an Ofsted inspector provides one of the few opportunities to receive positive feedback and affirmation of their teaching practice.

8.1.1.3 Aspirations

Associated to the view that self-efficacy influences professional identity is the finding that teachers who were able to imagine a positive vision of a future or possible self (Oyserman & James, 2013) were motivated by their personal aspirations, and the feeling that they might integrate their personal strengths and interests into a future role. For example, ECP teacher Russell's ambition to teach children with special needs acted as an incentive and was one factor which had helped him to stay positive about his future as a primary school teacher. Hamman et al.'s (2013) work supports this finding, asserting that that 'possible selves are important to the formation of identity among new teachers' (p.330). While two of the ECP teachers (Justin and Cat) were already in leadership roles within the school, they both expressed a reluctance to become a head teacher, considering it to be a demanding and '*thankless role'* and were in agreement with the other teachers in this study, who wanted to focus on developing their classroom practice, increasing their skills and to continue *'teaching children'*.

This short-term vision, focused on practical concerns related to teachers' current teaching, supports work which has been conducted in social and organizational psychology which considers the temporal nature of possible selves (Kivetz & Tyler, 2007; Trope & Liberman, 2003) and suggests that aspirations for the short-term future are likely to be more contextualised and pragmatic than an imagined distant future which is likely to be linked to beliefs about personal values and perceived potential. Teachers who were working in their early career primarily discussed professional development needs which were linked to visions of short-term future selves, and sought learning opportunities which were directly relevant to improving their current practice. Only one ECP teacher (Justin) identified his future aspirations as being about a distant future, seeing his role of teacher as a job within a broader career in Education rather than a vocation in itself (Super, 1957), with his vision being to move into a role where he might influence educational policy and practice. This future aspiration, which was linked to his personal values and beliefs around social mobility, supports the notion that distal future thoughts are based on an idealistic self (Kivetz & Tyler, 2007). As a Teach First teacher, Justin's desire to move into a broader educational role is also consistent with Elliot's (2018) study where he addresses the nature of this particular induction programme, along with the changing discourse around what it means to be a teacher (i.e. encouraging high calibre teachers to move into influential positions). McIntyre and Thomson (2015) also note that the Teach First website does not identify as initial teacher training, but as a 'Two Year Leadership Development Programme' (Teach First, 2018a), which implies that classroom teaching will be a temporary position and candidates will be moving quickly towards a more aspirational version of themselves.

More experienced and confident teachers, predominantly working in mid- and late-career, expressed a desire to share their knowledge and skills to benefit the next generation of teachers by considering possible mentoring roles, rather than leadership roles. This aspiration reflects Erikson's (1950, 1959) life stage of generativity, during which individuals gain a sense of personal enrichment from guiding and mentoring the next generation, and acts as a reminder of Sikes, Measor, and Woods' (1985) assertion that teachers are human, and as such 'they are subject to changes which are associated with ageing' (p.56). Hudson (2013) acknowledges the occasion to be generative as an opportunity for growth stating;

> *'Mentoring professional development must be a priority for education departments. Investing in teachers' professional development to become well-informed mentors can build system capacity on two fronts, namely: mentors can more effectively educate their mentees, and mentors can build their pedagogical knowledge by engaging with their mentees.' (p. 781)*

Friesen and Besley (2013) considered Erikson's (1963) concept of generativity in relation to teachers, however, their study only considered generativity in terms of the teacher/pupil relationship, for student teachers, rather than the mentor teacher/ECP teacher relationship for mid- and late-career teachers and, perhaps for this reason, had mixed results. Given the inadequate levels of support which ECP teachers report, along with McAdams (2001) assertion that 'generativity is a critical resource' (p.396), it seems that school leaders and policy makers might be missing out on the opportunity to capitalise on this developmental life stage. Although Erikson's generativity stage refers to midlife, teachers desire to be generative in this study could not solely be attributed to age, due to career changers such as NQT Andrea (aged 45), who was focused on the practicalities of the classroom, or MCP teacher Katie (aged 40) who was still trying to establish her own feelings of efficacy, and did not feel '*qualified enough to do that, even after eleven years'.* Although the desire to be generative was expressed by teachers who had an established and positive sense of professional identity, who were predominantly in mid and late career, it also included one ECP teacher (Cat, aged 34). It is of interest to note, that all teachers who expressed a personal desire to be generative told stories which gave primacy to a collective self-construal (this will be further discussed in section 7.1.3).

8.1.1.4 Changes and Transitions

While the key influences on an individual identity were largely discussed by teachers at the beginning of their career, for those with a few years' experience in the classroom, growing confidence and a positive sense of self-efficacy and identity (Day et al. 2007), changes and transitions such as a move into another year group or a change of class meant that an individual self-construal took primacy once again. This phenomenon is similar to that

described in Fessler and Christensen's (1992) model where they state that teachers in later stages of career might return to the induction phase 'when shifting to another grade level, another building, or when changing districts completely' (p. 41), along with other models which acknowledge that an individual's career trajectory is not always linear (Huberman, 1993; Super, 1980). Although transitions across year levels and schools are common for teachers, and it is acknowledged within the literature that 'effective management and teaching in one context is not the same as effective management and teaching in another' (Thrupp & Lupton, 2006, p. 312), research on the impact of these transitions on professional identity appears to be scarce. However, in line with the findings from this study, recent work conducted in primary schools in New Zealand highlights potential professional development opportunities which a change of year level can offer, while also acknowledging the increase in workload due to changes in practice and different curriculum (Carlyon, 2015; 2018), along with the need for appropriate and focused support as teachers transition between 'communities of practice' (Wenger, 1999), to safeguard against feelings of isolation.

Moving into a leadership role appears to be a critical period for mid- and late-career phase teachers, which brings about a shift in identity, with their sense of individual professional identity (IPI) becoming prominent once more. Although these promotion opportunities are usually the result of previous success in teaching and senior leadership, moving into the first headship role can leave teachers feeling '*left and abandoned'(Lee),* with an established identity being '*lost*', and personal wellbeing suffering (Watkins, 2017). Some head teachers feel unprepared and isolated as they move into their new role, despite the fact they may have completed the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH)[5]. The reported stories of new heads who felt unprepared and alone supports findings from previous literature (Male, 2006; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Tahir et al., 2017), which recognises the challenges of this 'initiation phase' (Day & Bakioglu, 1996), as comparable to the initial shock experienced by those in early career, as they transition from student to teacher. Although the heads in the present study identified as being teachers, the contemporary role of headship presents challenges of increased accountability and individual responsibility for school improvement, positioning the role as '*a very different job'(Lee)* to a classroom teacher, along with additional standards to 'guide' best practice in school leadership (Department for Education, 2015). This change in role, in addition to feelings of isolation, typically have a negative influence on teachers' sense of professional identity during the initial transition to headship.

[5] NPQH is a school leadership training programme which was introduced to UK in 1997, but has since been accused of having a 'limited construct of headship which under-emphasised context' *(*Kelly & Saunders, 2010, p. 139).

While promotion-related transitions were primarily discussed by mid- and late-career phase teachers, there were some teachers in their early-career who were performing leadership roles within their school. This situation appears to be increasingly common, perhaps due to the increase of management roles and a 'higher demand for leaders' (Elliott, 2018, p.2) within the evolving school structures in England. The experience of these teachers illustrates the increased occasions of fast-tracking into leadership during ECP, demonstrating how teacher career trajectories are evolving, differing from previous models which consider leadership roles to predominantly be a feature of mid- and late-career (Day et al. 2007; Sikes, 1985), and those models which focused on teachers who remain located in the classroom (Fessler, 1992; Huberman, 1993).

For most teachers in this study the changes and transitions in their personal lives, which were identified as being critical events or experiences, influenced their sense of individual identity as they attempted to negotiate the tensions between their personal and professional roles. This influence on individual identities supports the assertion made by Day et al. (2007) that 'personal factors (personal level), such as health issues and family support and demands' (p.69) are one aspect of shaping teachers' professional lives. For those teachers who were also parents, 'traditional' family roles were predominantly the norm, with the female teachers in this study taking primary responsibility for care-giving roles within their family. The enactment of traditional gender roles means that where male teachers report becoming a parent as being an incentive to progress in their career or as being '*driven by the need to earn more' (Lee)*, female teachers seem to experience work-family conflict more acutely. Having adjusted to the identity change during a period of maternity leave, female teachers negotiate different ways to manage the separate, and sometimes conflicting, roles of being a teacher and a mother, and the very real challenge of making sure everyone is in '*the right place at the right time'(Emma)*.

Although the conflict of domestic and work tasks and responsibilities might not be unique to teaching (Haeruddin & Natsir, 2016; Treister-Goltzman & Peleg, 2016), there is currently a political acknowledgement within the UK that the unrealistic workload which relates to lesson planning, marking and data administration needs to be reduced (Department for Education, 2017) as an increasing number of teachers struggle to find a satisfactory work-life balance. It is interesting to note, that where older female teachers discussed having had a choice to work part-time when raising their children, a new generation of parents are now much more likely to be in dual-earner or single-parent households (Palmer et al., 2012), struggle with higher housing costs, and be less likely to consider reducing their hours to be a financial option. These social changes mean that a new generation of teachers may have less choice to be flexible with their working patterns, leading to a situation where these excessive administration

tasks begin to encroach on relationships outside school (Watkins, 2017), having a negative influence on teachers' sense of wellbeing.

Where some transitions and events can be anticipated, (such as choosing to move school, or becoming a parent), there are also more unexpected changes (such as illness or the death of a close relative) which were experienced predominantly by teachers in later career phases. The work/life tensions experienced during mid-career phase (Day et al., 2007) were clearly illustrated when Norma reflected on being a teacher in her mid-career phase; as she indicated to her professional timeline she said '***everything really happened in there'.*** When she elaborated, she meant that many personal changes (divorced, remarried, becoming a mother, son diagnosed with a life-threatening illness) had happened alongside professional changes (increasing confidence, becoming involved in mentoring NQTs) during this period. These significant life transitions can be unsettling (Jetten et al., 2009), and influence teachers' sense of individual identity, as their alternate roles as parents, sons, daughters, partners and friends take priority over the role of teacher.

8.1.1.5 Summary of an individual level of professional identity

For teachers who present as having an active *individual* identity, the question 'Who am I?' is answered in terms of the individual attributes which they bring to their role, such as their personal beliefs about what it means to be a teacher. Other key influences on their individual identity include a sense of self-efficacy, aspirations for the future, and life transitions which can be related to professional or personal circumstances. It is of interest that teachers who orientated towards an individual level of identity typically spoke of their individual limitations, rather than of their individual strengths; a dip in an individual's professional timeline denoting a negative sense of individual professional identity can be related to Erikson's (1950, 1968) *identity diffusion* during times when teachers sense a lack of purpose, experience feelings of self-doubt and low self-efficacy.

This section of findings, presented in isolation, could represent a depressing overview of teachers' professional identity, suggesting that all teachers lack support, experience an absence of affirmation from others, feelings of low self-efficacy and have difficulty adjusting to identity change. However, to be clear, the findings of this study do suggest that ***at times***, ***all*** teachers ***do*** lack support, experience an absence of affirmation, feelings of low self-efficacy, and have difficulty adjusting to identity change. The dips which have been carefully drawn on each teachers' professional timeline provide a clear illustration in support of this argument (see **appendix G**).

Teachers' stories which relate to periods when their individual identity takes primacy are often related to circumstances which present challenges and tensions, with an awareness of shortcomings (Pillen et al., 2013c), negatively influencing their sense of professional identity. Although it is predominantly teachers in their early-career phase, (when a primary focus on developing individual skills and strategies to be successful in the classroom is required), who are orientated towards an individual sense of professional identity, there are critical incidents or critical periods for teachers in later phases of their career, when a sense of individual identity takes primacy once more. It important to recognise that the dips on professional timelines for teachers in all phases relate to circumstances which challenge their capacity to sustain a positive professional identity, and typically represent a situation where social support and interaction are lacking; teachers' stories which give primacy to an individual identity are more reflective of feelings of uncertainty and isolation than of autonomy and uniqueness.

The findings related to the primacy of teachers' individual identity appear to sit in contrast to my original ambition, stated in the introduction to this study, to draw on the principles of positive psychology (Luthans 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), with a focus on positive influences on professional identity. However, to fully understand the strategies and circumstances which enable teachers to sustain a positive professional identity, it is equally important to acknowledge and discuss the circumstances which challenge teachers' sense of professional identity, and not to paint the 'rosy picture' which Izadinia (2013) attributes to student teachers being 'ignorant of difficulties and challenges that are an inevitable part of the identity formation process' (p.709). Teachers in early-, mid- and late-career can find their sense of professional identity diminished during challenging times, and while the findings support the established view that the development of a professional identity is important for teachers in early career, it is equally important to recognise that established mid- and late-career phase teachers can also experience difficulties in sustaining a positive sense of professional identity, equally influenced by feelings of low self-efficacy and doubts about the future, which are often due to life-transitions and identity change.

The section that follows considers the importance of relationships within school and argues that significant relationships play a fundamental role in the development and maintenance of a professional identity, with positive dyadic relationships helping to build resilience and provide motivation for teachers in all career phases.

8.1.2 Relational Professional Identity

It has been argued that a person's identity also reflects an interpersonal dimension which is developed and influenced by relationships with significant others (Baldwin, 1992; Chen

Boucher & Tapias, 2006). As teachers discussed their professional stories, they each mentioned, to a greater or lesser degree, significant relationships which had been instrumental in the development of their professional identity, either in a positive or negative way, supporting Hull and Zacher's (2007) suggestion that how we understand ourselves is 'fashioned in relation to the identities of others - sometimes in concert with them, sometimes in opposition to them, but always in relation to them' (p.75). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) acknowledge the 'self' as being 'shaped and reshaped in interaction with others in a professional context' (p. 178), asserting that emotions play an important role in shaping identity. The connections that teachers in all phases developed with colleagues, pupils and school leaders were cited as critical events, or critical people (Font, 2017), who predominantly had a positive influence on their sense of professional identity (Andersen & Chen, 2002; Blustein, 2011). Stories which revealed primacy of the relational level of professional identity (RPI) related teachers' sense of self to other people, with professional identity being defined through significant relationships within interpersonal spaces. The factors which were identified as influencing teachers' sense of relational professional identity will be discussed under the broad categories which emerged during analysis of interpersonal ***relationships, pupils, school leadership*** and ***collaboration and conversation*** illustrated in **figure 8.3**.

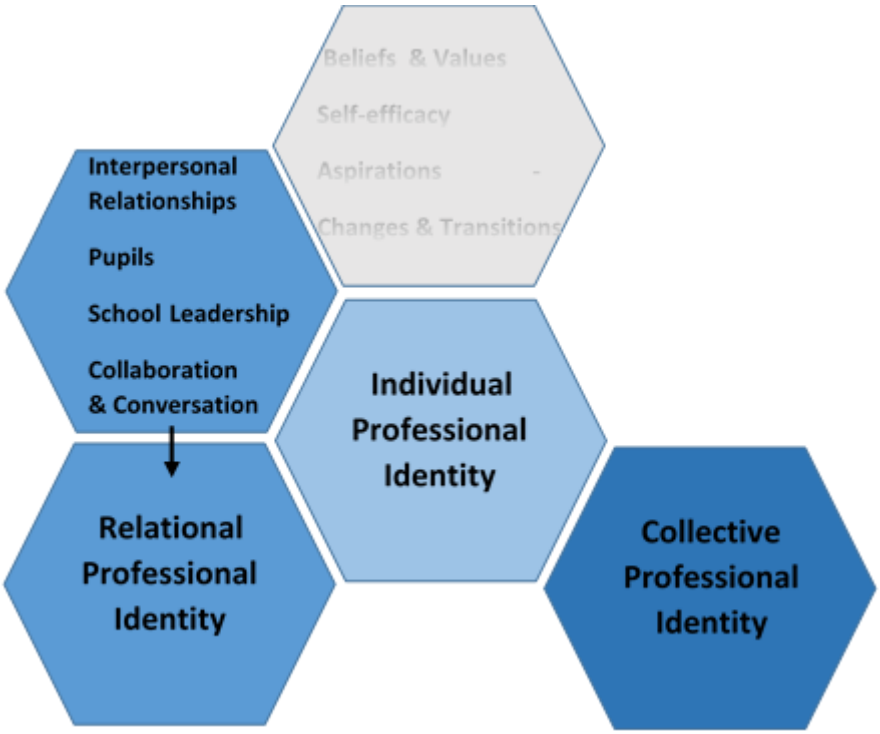


Figure 8.3 Key influences on relational level of professional identity

8.1.2.1 Interpersonal Relationships

The findings from this study support previous assertions that relationships with colleagues in school play a fundamental role in the development of teachers' professional identity (Hargreaves, 2001; Izadinia, 2013, 2016), and support the notion that teachers' professional development is constructed 'during teachers' social exchanges and as a result of interactions within other members of the school community such as students and parents' (Pearce & Morrison, 2011, p.56).

While it is well-established that supportive relationships with colleagues can have a positive influence on professional development (e.g. Beijaard, 1995; Forde et al., 2006; King, 2014) being 'particularly important to newer teachers' (Day et al., 2007, p. 59), the findings from this study also illuminate the importance of these relationships to teachers sense of self-efficacy, resilience, and the important part that these emotional attachments play in developing a positive sense of professional identity, for teachers in all career phases.

Teachers' stories also suggest that ECP teachers' peer networks can be more valuable than mandated support from assigned mentors. For the ECP teachers in this study, the opportunity to share a close connection with a teacher whom they felt had similar characteristics and experiences to themselves, resulted in a stable or upward trajectory on their professional time line. The formation of a trusting and mutual friendship enabled shared humour and, importantly, the normalisation of circumstances (such as failed lessons) which might have previously had a negative influence on feelings of self-efficacy and professional identity. This finding further supports the notion that close relationships can also play an important role in building resilience for early career teachers (Le Cornu, 2013; Johnson et al., 2014), suggesting it is the reciprocity of these friendships which encourage ECP teachers to consider themselves as equals to their peers, rather than as beginners. It seems that the opportunity to position their own identity in relation to other professionals, rather than as being separate and individual (Anderson & Chen, 2002; Chen, Boucher & Tapias, 2006; Chen, Boucher & Kraus, 2013), can aid teachers' ability to cope with negative experiences such as the 'sense of being isolated in the school' (Pearce & Morrison, 2011, p.57), which has been discussed in the previous section. This finding reflects studies which demonstrate that interactions with trusted peers help to develop teachers' sense of self-efficacy (Canrinus et al., 2012; Uitto et al., 2016), and supports the notion that there is a relational aspect to the development of teacher professional identity (Uitto et al., 2014).

While these friendships were advantageous and considered to be '*the most important relationship'* for the ECP teachers in this study, Spencer et al., (2018) advise caution, arguing that although informal conversations 'are likely to meet the need for immediate help and

support, they are less likely to generate reflection on deeper questions about underlying issues, educational purposes, values and priorities' (p.43), suggesting that a more formal and structured mentoring role remains important to professional development.

Although informal support networks with colleagues and peers had developed naturally, the relationships with assigned mentors were viewed by ECP teachers as hierarchical, with the mentor being allocated a supervisory role, on top of their existing workload, in order to evaluate their performance. Although the statutory guidance for the induction of newly qualified teachers states that the provision of day to day mentoring and coaching is 'a very important element of the induction process and the induction tutor must be given sufficient time to carry out the role effectively and to meet the needs of the NQT' (Department for Education, 2018b, p. 16) the findings in this study suggest that this does not happen in the real-world of schools, consistent with previous research which has noted insufficient support during the first year of teaching (Hobson 2009; Le Maistre & Paré 2010; LoCasale-Crouch et al. 2012; Ulvik & Langørgen 2012). While there were positive influences from relationships formed with peers, most of the ECP teachers felt that their induction mentors were not given sufficient time to offer adequate support, as they still had their own classes to teach, or leadership roles to perform. This finding is significant as Hudson (2013) suggests that to be an effective mentor requires a reduced teacher workload and adequate professional development, with further research acknowledging the negative outcomes for novice teachers when adequate mentoring support is not provided (Cameron & Grant, 2017; Martin, Buelow & Hoffman, 2016).

As school-based mentoring has played a central role in initial teacher training and school induction since the 1980's in England (Hobson et al., 2009), the findings that ECP teachers do not always receive appropriate mentoring could put them at increased risk of 'slipping through the cracks' (Kelly et al., 2018, p.307) and suggests that NQT's would benefit from increased time with colleagues or mentors who are afforded appropriate training and time to support them with positive and constructive feedback, along with realistic expectations which are more aligned to an early-career phase teacher (Devos, Dupriez & Paquay, 2012). Identification of progress and improvement through constructive feedback and support could avoid ECP teachers completing their induction period while still 'questioning their position in school and their success as a teacher' (McCormack et al., 2006, p.110).

Teachers' stories suggest that MCP and LCP teachers, including those who have moved into leadership roles, can also benefit from informal mentor relationships, where they feel free to speak honestly about challenges they face, or trusting and open friendships, where personal experiences are discussed which often reach beyond the classroom. Although the social benefits of friendships have been studied for children in school (Ladd, 2005), literature

concerned with friendships at work has tended to focus on the organisation's performance outcomes (Berman et al., 2002; Song, 2006), reported from a managerial perspective, with less interest in potential benefits for the individual (Grey & Sturdy, 2007; Rumens, 2017). This study has illuminated the benefit to teachers of forming supportive dyadic relationships at school, confirming Day et al.'s (2007) assertion that staff relationships have a primarily positive influence on the motivation and engagement for teachers in all career phases. Where Day et al. (2007) do not specify the nature of these relationships, the present study supplements their findings and begins to draw distinctions between those who can provide information or guidance (school leaders and mentors), provide practical support and feedback (colleagues) and emotional support (friends).

This study also acknowledges that some relationships do not always feel supportive and can have a detrimental influence on teachers' developing sense of identity (Haslam, Reicher & Levine, 2012). Teachers' disclosure that they need at least one person they can confide in, without fear of judgement, supports the notion that people story their experiences in different ways, depending on who they are talking to (Sikes & Goodson, 2017). This means that reflections of the same lesson might differ depending on the audience (e.g. trusted friends offer the opportunity to be open and honest, and to normalise mistakes, where conversations with a school leader or mentor/assessor might mean that failed lessons are not discussed openly, while the efficacy of the lesson is enhanced).

Recent international research supports my assertion that positive relationships in school can increase feelings of self-efficacy for teachers (Meristo & Eisenschmidt, 2014; Veiskarami, Ghadampour & Mottaghinia, 2017). Although the subject of friendships between teachers in school appears to have been overlooked in the educational literature to date, sociologists have long recognised that the social practice of developing personal relationships often emerges within the workplace (e.g. Pedersen & Lewis, 2012; Spencer & Pahl, 2006). The assertion that workplace friendships 'contribute to human flourishing, helping individuals to pursue a meaningful existence' (Rumens, 2017, p.1151) is supported by the findings from this study, as ECP teachers use this social practice (Fritz, 2014) to develop a sense of shared values and membership of the teaching community, with MCP and LCP teachers regarding some of their colleagues as friends (Sias & Cahill, 1998) who can be relied upon to provide both practical and emotional support during challenging times.

8.1.2.2 Pupils

It can be argued that a person in any occupation would benefit from forming close and significant relationships with their colleagues (Hinchliffe, 2004), but unique to teachers are the

connections which they form with their pupils. For teachers in all career phases, positive relationships with pupils provided a sense of purpose and motivation, which they did not feel they would experience in any other job. It was particularly teachers in MCP and LCP who expressed a view that when *'it's just you and the children, it's a wonderful job. There's no job like it' (Emma).* The stories which teachers in all career phases recalled in this study illustrated both the motivational and emotional aspects of the relationship they shared with the children in their class, and how these relationships influenced their developing sense of professional identity.

Although ECP teachers spoke with pride about children making small amounts of progress and '*how much of a lift it gives you, when they do finally get it' (Andrea),* they seemed to give priority to the importance of establishing good relationships with their pupils, supporting Kington's (2012) assertion that empathy and familiarity with pupils were considered to be of central importance to teachers in this phase. While the number of practical challenges in the classroom have been recognised as being unexpected in the early years of teaching (Sikes et al., 1985, Veenman, 1984), some of the teachers in this study experienced a different side to the *reality shock* as they began to understand the level of poverty and deprivation which was experienced by a number of their pupils. Coupled with conversations with hostile or stressed parents, teachers can feel '*like a social worker' (Ellie),* as the social and emotional aspects of teaching become apparent (Hargreaves, 1998). Though it has been acknowledged that beginning teachers can feel overwhelmed by a mix of positive and negative emotions (Day & Kington, 2008; Dicke et al., 2015; Zembylas 2003), along with the recognition that emotions are central to teachers' identity development in relation to workload and policy change (Chen, 2016; Kelchtermans, 2005; Nichols et al., 2017; Šeďová et al.,2017), the intensity of emotions which can be experienced by beginning teachers on realising the magnitude of social disadvantage which some pupils face appears to have been unexplored in research. Teachers realisation that they '*didn't know the half of it' (Sue)*, could be attributed to the fact that teachers in this study were predominantly from middle-class backgrounds with no personal experience of disadvantage, a trend which is likely to be intensified through the expansion of ITE programmes such as Teach First (Thompson et al., 2016), focusing on recruiting graduates from elite and Russell Group universities. For the teachers in this study, the stark reality of some of the pupils' lives reinforced their individual beliefs of the importance and need for a '*caring'* aspect to their teacher identity (O'Connor, 2008). Although 'care' and 'caring' were frequently mentioned by teachers in all career phases within this study, they are words which are conspicuous by their absence from the Teacher Standards (Department for Education, 2013).

The realisation that '*there's no time to get to know them' (Andrea),* during the crammed school day means that some teachers give personal attention to children within their own break periods, while others take fruit into school for hungry children in their class. Considering Emma's assertion that '*they can't do what you're going to ask them to do, until they've had those basic needs met'*, and increasing concerns from school staff in England about children who might otherwise go hungry (Busby, 2018), I would argue that the requirement that 'Teachers make the *education* of their pupils their *first* concern' (Department for Education, 2013, p.10 – emphasis added) is not necessarily relevant to teachers who work with vulnerable children. For these pupils, deficiency needs (physiological, safety, belonging and esteem) must take priority (Maslow, 1954) before any learning can happen. Taking time to care for these needs can be seen as an opportunity which teachers in all phases take to fulfil the belief that they can make a difference, through kindness and caring, to the lives of the children they choose to work with. This lived reality of teaching positions the caring relationship shared with pupils as equally important to academic outcomes, and reinforces a personal sense of purpose (Goodson, 2007).

While teacher-parent relationships are acknowledged as influencing pupil outcomes (Pirchio et al., 2013; Sucuoğlu & Bakkaloğlu, 2018) most of the ECP teachers in this study expressed concerns about establishing positive relationships with parents (Willemse et al. 2017). Critical incidents which MCP and LCP teachers recalled which involved relationships with parents were predominantly times when they had felt threatened or intimidated, rather than incidents when parents had a positive influence on their identity. However, where teachers did receive positive feedback from parents and were able to form constructive relationships over time, their sense of professional identity was strengthened, supporting Day et al.'s (2007) findings that parents can have a positive or negative influence on teachers' sense of professional identity. These findings suggest that the family-school partnership should be supported further, as there is potential to benefit both pupil and teacher outcomes (Willemse et al., 2018).

It is also worthy of note that while the demands of a parental role can have a negative influence on teachers' individual professional identity in terms of work-life balance (discussed in previous section), for some teachers in this study, becoming a parent altered their perception of what it means to *be* a teacher, influencing their priorities and values (Sikes, 1997). Teachers who were parents reported having more empathy towards the children and families in their schools, which they consider to have had a '*hugely positive' (Emma)* impact on interpersonal relationships with pupils and parents, and on their teaching practice. It would be ridiculous to claim that it is only possible for teachers who are parents to empathise with the families within a school community, but the findings of this study do suggest there may be an initial deficit of understanding between teachers and parents. Davies and Cole (2018) argue that this situation

might be improved by encouraging critical discussions during ITE about student teachers' preconceived notions of the families with which they will work.

8.1.2.3 School Leadership

The relationship with school leaders, and the head teacher in particular was significant to all of the teachers in this study and influenced their developing sense of professional identity, in either a positive or a negative way, whether teachers were working in early-, mid- or late-career phase. Although it has previously been acknowledged that head teachers play an important role in the induction of new teachers (Engvik & Emstad, 2017; Peters & Pearce, 2012), stories from teachers in all phases support the idea that school leaders are also central to promoting the wider school climate (Engvik & Emstad, 2017; Flores, 2004) which influences an individual's experience of teaching in positive or negative ways (Aspfors & Bondas, 2013; Lassila et al., 2017).

While ECP teacher Justin had minimal contact with the head teacher during his training year, (apart from being publicly rebuked during a staff meeting), Anna and Sophie's head teachers were more closely involved in their NQT year having also performed the role of induction mentor. Although the Department for Education suggests that it may 'in some circumstances, be appropriate for the head teacher/principal to be the induction tutor' (Department for Education, 2018b, p.17), the situation made them both '*feel more nervous' (Sophie)* during mentor observations. While Sophie felt that she was supported and trusted by her head teacher, giving her the sense of becoming '*more competent'*, the constant critical feedback which Anna received during her induction year resulted in lost confidence, a reduced sense of self-efficacy (feeling like a *'terrible teacher'*), and a reduced sense of professional identity. These experiences illustrate the fundamental role which school leaders play in supporting ECP teachers (Roberson & Roberson, 2009; Lassila et al., 2017) in developing a sense of professional identity.

The instances of positive relationships with head teachers which were discussed in this study, (e.g. when teachers had received support during a period of experience of instability due to changes and transitions, as discussed in *the individual identity* section, **7.1.1**), illuminate the influence which a supportive school leader can have on ensuring positive outcomes for teachers during professional or life transitions. This finding is supported by Carlyon (2015, 2018) who argues that teachers' career transitions should be recognised as a process which can have a positive influence on teachers' professional development and sense of identity, provided that challenges are negotiated, with appropriate support put in place.

While most ECP teachers reported a lack of trust from their head teacher, a change in school leadership could introduce a period of instability for teachers in MCP and LCP. Experienced teachers who had experienced a change of head teacher, typically felt that their individual strengths were no longer being recognised or utilised, with the introduction of new school policies or procedural changes which did not seem to have any pedagogical relevance (e.g. using green/pink pens for marking). Perceptions of unnecessary and '*really silly' (Julia)* changes which are introduced by a new head teacher can lead to feelings of frustration and disillusionment for experienced and competent teachers. As previous research has argued that recognition from school leaders is central to feelings of self-efficacy and engagement (Gu & Day, 2013), the findings from this study suggest that if new head teachers do not take the time to recognise and value experienced teachers' existing skills and experience, feelings of uncertainty and vulnerability about their professional identity can emerge. While previous research has acknowledged the influence that head teachers have on effective communication in school and on general school culture (Day et al., 2007; Flores & Day, 2006), this study also recognises the significance of the dyadic relationships which are shared between individual teachers and individual school leaders in the development and maintenance of a positive professional identity for teachers in all phases of career.

8.1.2.4 Collaboration and conversation

It seems fair to say that just as significant relationships influence teachers' sense of professional identity, the *opportunity* to form these positive dyadic relationships was considered to be equally important by all teachers in this study. None of the ECP teachers or MCP teachers had experienced team-teaching as described by some LCP teachers, reflecting the current privileging of solo-teaching in primary schools in England. It is interesting to note that although teaching assistants (TAs) have previously been positioned in policy and public discourse as peripheral to teaching staff (Hammett & Burton, 2005; Mansaray, 2006), learning support staff were broadly considered by ECP teachers to be co-teaching in the classroom, due to a shared work space, prior knowledge of the pupils and their *'great ideas'(Justin).* Although there is little (and mixed) evidence of the impact that TAs have on learning (Blatchford et al. 2009; Farrell et al., 2010), this study supports Blatchford et al.'s (2009) assertion that teachers' job satisfaction and self-efficacy can be increased by this close and collegial relationship. During the last 20 years, the number of TAs (full-time equivalent) working in state-funded schools in England, has increased from 60,600 in 1997 (DCSF, 2008) to 262,800 in 2017 (Department for Education, 2018a), and while three of the ECP teachers in this study had worked as teaching assistants before training to teach, two others had worked as teaching assistants for a period after they had completed their training. It is interesting that

the stories ECP teachers told suggest a more co-operative and fluid relationship between the role of teacher and teaching assistant, and suggests that this significant relationship has a greater influence on teachers' professional identity than has previously been acknowledged within the literature. For MCP and LCP teachers the classroom provides a collaborative work space where a trusting relationship can be '*built up over time' (Emma)*.

Teachers' stories also support Mawhinney (2010), who found lunch times spent in the school staffroom to be beneficial, as teachers can chat together and share ideas. She asserts that the shared areas and the close bonds formed within this shared space provide 'an opportunity for spontaneous collaboration to occur' (p.975), offering informal professional development and a chance to share knowledge which will benefit teachers when they return to the classroom. Findings also suggest that the staffroom can offer a restorative space (Mawhinney, 2012) in which to '*laugh about the funny things, and a vent about the nightmare things' (Julia),* thereby providing a safe emotional, as well as professional, space. It seems particularly unfortunate then that the ECP teachers in this study reported that they did not have the opportunity to sit in the staffroom to eat lunch during the first few years of teaching, as they were typically using the time to plan and prepare for afternoon lessons. This detachment from other school staff means that they will not benefit from this important opportunity to collaborate, share stories, to learn from their peers, and the opportunity for a much-needed break! It is clear from the stories which teachers told that opportunities to collaborate and converse are important for teachers in *all* phases of career, offering the space to form and to maintain, significant relationships with peers, colleagues and trusted friends.

8.1.2.5 Summary of a relational level of professional identity

For teachers with an orientation towards a *relational* identity, discussions about teacher identity centre on significant interpersonal relationships with colleagues, pupils, parents and leaders, along with the appreciation of opportunities to engage with peers through both formal and informal contexts. The benefits of 'working with colleagues in collaborative cultures of help and support' (Hargreaves and Goodson, 1996, p. 20) are clear for teachers in all phases. Where an individual identity might answer the question 'Who am I?', a relational identity answers the question 'Who am I in relation to this significant other?' In response to Beijaard et al.'s (2004) call for clarification of what it means to be 'professional', the findings from this study suggest that it is significant and positive relationships that develop within schools, along with affirmation from others, which begin to establish a teacher's positive sense of professional identity. Teachers' stories suggest that during times when confidence levels are high or low, positive dyadic relationships with colleagues, pupils and school leaders can establish or sustain a positive sense of professional identity

and boost resilience for teachers in all phases of career. The salience of a relational identity can be related to Erikson's (1950, 1968) 'intimacy v/s isolation' stage, when individual teachers can benefit from 'the solidarity of close affiliation' (Erikson, 1950, p.237) as their self-definition is expressed in relation to significant others in the school community (Anderson & Chen, 2002). However, where Erikson argued that healthy intimate relationships require that a healthy identity is already established, the findings from this study suggest that significant relationships are an important factor in building a sense of individual identity and relational identity might co- develop.

8.1.3 Collective Professional Identity

While teachers with the primacy of an individual identity have a focus on personal attributes, abilities and aspirations in their role as teacher, and salience of a relational identity is influenced by relationships with significant others, teachers with a collective identity expressed feelings of identification with a wider and meaningful group (Hogg, 2011). The notion of a collective identity has been approached within social psychology by a combination of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorisation theory (Turner et al.,1994), referred to by Haslam (2001) as the social identity approach. Haslam (2001) argues that;

> *'…in order to understand perception and interaction in organizational contexts, we must do more than just study the psychology of individuals as individuals. Instead, we need to understand how social interaction is bound up with individuals' social identities – their definition of themselves in terms of group memberships'* (p.17).

Insights from this approach have since been applied in organisational literature, exploring topics such as leadership (Steffens, Haslam & Reicher, 2014) motivation (Haslam, Powell & Turner, 2000), and stress (Muhlhaus & Bouwmeester, 2016). The primacy of a collective level of professional identity (CPI) was identified through stories in which teachers defined their sense of self through their identification with one or more social groups, whether they identified with the school aims and culture, the wider teaching profession or a particular educational philosophy.

The factors which were identified as influencing teachers' sense of collective professional identity will be discussed under the broad categories which emerged during analysis of ***feeling connected, school characteristics, climate of primary education*** and ***the bigger picture*** illustrated in **figure 8.4**.

.

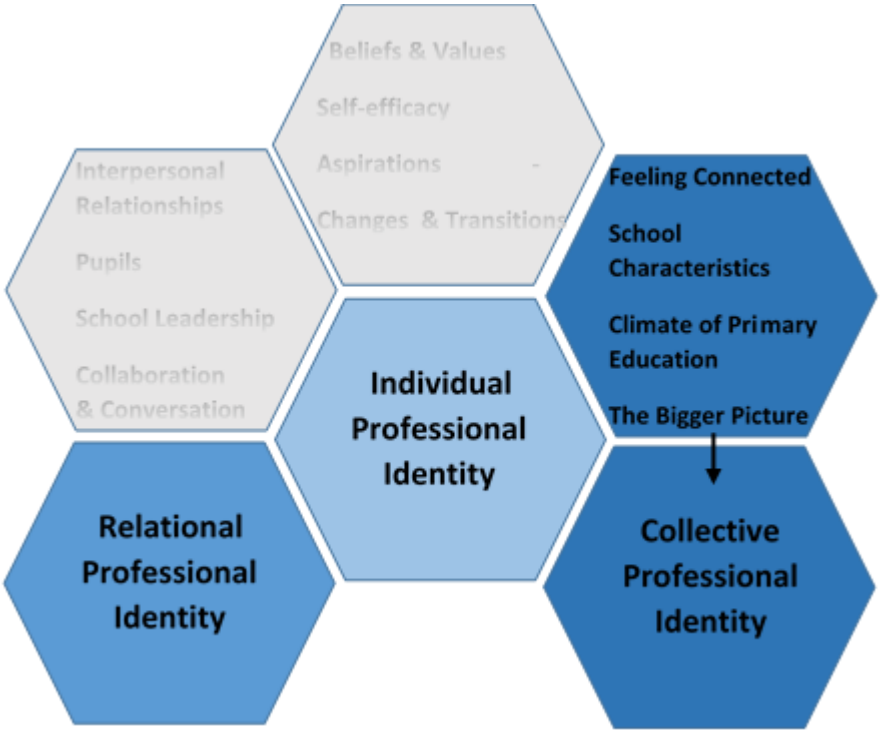


Figure 8.4 Key influences on collective level of professional identity

8.1.3.1 Feeling connected

Feelings of connectedness and belonging could be recognised during analysis of the data collected in this study by the use of language ('we' and 'us') whereby teachers categorised themselves in terms of being part of a community of teachers rather than as separate individuals (Brewer & Gardner, 1996; Turner et al. 1987). The insight offered by the pronouns used within teachers' stories illustrates the assertion made by Riessman and Speedy (2007) that the process of analysing people's narrative enables a simultaneous analysis of the narrative itself, while supporting previous studies which have acknowledged that identity can be constructed through collective action and thinking (Maclean & White, 2007, p.53). While an individual identity was typically dominant for teachers in ECP, the salience of a collective identity was characteristic of most MCP and LCP teachers in this study.

It can be argued from this finding that, over time, teachers locate schools with an ethos aligned to their own individual values and beliefs about education. So, where ECP teacher Andrea had decided that she was '*not in the right school'* during her induction year, teachers later in their career were more likely to feel that they '*fit into the ethos of the school' (Emma)*, with feelings of belonging enabling the transition from an individual to a collective self-definition (Turner et al., 1987). Justin was one of two ECP participants in this study who deviated from the norm, as his initial identification with the Teach First mission and his internalisation of a

'strong vision' communicated by school leaders who '*recruit into the Teach First community quite heavily'* meant that his collective professional identity was already salient in the early phase of his career.

While there is an expanding body of literature which recognises the positive impact of collaborative relationships on the quality of teaching and student achievement (e.g. Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, Moolenaar et al., 2012), consideration has not typically been given to whether teachers c*an identify* with, and to 'internalise group based values and goals and define them as part of self' (Haslam et al., 2000, p.335). Stories told by the teachers in this study support the notion that a *shared* meaning and purpose are central to the development of a positive professional identity, supporting Hogg's (2011) assertion that humans have a need for meaning in their work, and Goodson's (2007) recognition that 'people's sense of purpose and meaning is played out in their workplaces' (p.132). Perhaps then, there should be a greater focus on school leadership practices which not only encourage collaboration in school but the development of a shared vision for the school (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Sun & Leithwood, 2015).

It is interesting to note that while it is well-established within organisational literature that successful work teams 'engage in multiparty deliberations to establish team-level goals and strategies' (Chen & Kanfer, 2006, p.231), current policy guidelines for head teachers advise them to '*hold* and *articulate* clear values and moral purpose' and to '*communicate* compellingly the school's vision and drive the strategic leadership' (Department for Education, 2015, p.5, emphasis added). This language implies a top-down approach to school leadership, rather than leading through shared values and purpose which have been collectively agreed. This hierarchical approach to leadership is in stark contrast to the assertion from Reicher et al. (2005) who argue that 'the very possibility of leadership is dependent upon the existence of a shared social identity. Without such an identity there is nothing to bind leaders and followers together, there is no consensus for a leader to represent and therefore leadership is impossible' (p. 563). The importance of a shared vision in school is acknowledged by Penlington et al. (2008) where they considered the perceptions of school leaders, regarding the role played in improving pupil outcomes. They assert that 'the success of the head teacher's vision was not simply to do with the strength and clarity of its communication, but also the way that the head teacher's vision was responsive, both to what was happening internally within the school, and in the external environment' (Penlington et al., 2008, p. 67).

Perhaps it would be easy to assume that teachers who feel they share a school vision, might report feeling less autonomous than those with a strong individual identity. However, it was teachers with a salience of a collective identity in this study who spoke about school leaders

as supporting their individual ideas, allowing them the discretion to make decisions about their own classroom practice. This finding supports a notion of autonomy which considers an individual teacher to be 'authentic'. According to Bucelli (2017), authenticity 'connects individuals' attitudes, actions and practices to shared values, identities and modes of life' (p.593). Autonomy then, for these teachers, enables them to not only recognise the shared values and goals of the school, but also to advance them according to their own pupils' learning needs, with due consideration given to *'how they need to get there'(Emma).* It has been argued that it is 'wise' school leaders who enable and encourage independent decision making within collaborative schools (Day & Smethem, 2009), aiding the development of intrinsic motivation for teachers to improve their levels of competence and feelings of efficacy (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Emo, 2015).

8.1.3.2 School characteristics

As teachers told stories which spanned across their career, most had experienced working in schools which differed from each other, whether due to school structure or neighbourhood characteristics. The idea of competition and parental choice has been prominent in England's educational policy landscape since the 1988 Education Reform Act (Ball, 2013). The notion of choice has been supported by successive governments and means that there is a variety of providers of primary education (e.g. community schools, free schools, academies, faith schools, special schools) combined with the different neighbourhoods in which these schools are situated. While parental choice has been recognised within public and political discourse (Department for Education, 2014), this study supports the assertion that teachers also make choices about the schools in which they wish to work (Boyd et al., 2005). However, while Boyd et al. (2005) posit that teachers make choices based on geography, the findings of this study suggest the choice is made on characteristics of the school or school community.

Parding et al. (2017) have considered the impact of the choice-based approach for teachers in Australia, and argue that the distinct skill set which teachers develop in order to be successful in specific school contexts mean that they experience a 'lock-in' effect, as 'a teacher learns how to be a teacher in a specific setting. In other words, teachers develop context-specific skill-sets, dependent largely on the relative advantage or disadvantage of their students … school choice processes have created a diversified education arena, in which different sectors and different geographical locations attract different groups of students' (p. 121). A specific example which supports this claim is the experience of ECP teacher Cat who had begun working as a teaching assistant in a community special school. She had studied part-time for her degree, taking on some teaching responsibilities through her higher-level teaching assistant (HLTA) role, and then increased her responsibility as she trained through

a school-based route. This apprenticeship style of training, through a process of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) meant that Cat's participation *as* a teacher was established through her identification with the special school culture and values. This strong identification meant that Cat had a positive professional identity, and she could not imagine herself teaching in a mainstream school. It is also of interest to note that Cat did not experience the initial 'practice shock' (Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002; Veenman,1984) or feelings of isolation during her induction year as she has a strong collective identity, sense of belonging and was *'already part of the gang'*.

Similarly, some teachers expressed an identification with a particular school community or neighbourhood, in which they felt they could adapt their individual strengths and skillset to make a positive difference, increasing their feelings of efficacy. Where teachers with a salient individual identity considered their personal sense of self-efficacy, a collective identity also revealed a sense of shared competence, where a collective sense of efficacy was apparent. Bandura (1997) posits that collective efficacy 'represents a group's shared belief in its conjoint capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given levels of attainment' (p. 477), fostering 'resilience to adversity' (Bandura, 2000, p.75). Teachers with the salience of a collective identity were more likely to talk about the need for collective action during challenging times, with declarations such as *'we would work to the nth degree'(Emma)* to reverse a school's undesirable Ofsted rating. This sense of a collective resilience (Lyons et al., 2016) also supports Haslam et al.'s (2000) claim that identification with a social group leads to individual behaviour that is 'shaped by, and oriented towards, the interest of the group as a whole' (p.323).

Although teachers expressed differing opinions about the continual policy drive towards the academisation of schools (Department for Education, 2016), stories suggest that it is primarily the strength of relationships and feelings of identification with a school's ethos and culture, rather than its structure, which has the greatest influence on a sense of professional identity, for teachers in all career phases. This finding goes some way towards explaining the dip on some teachers' timelines which represented the challenges when changing school contexts and can be related to teachers who feel they have developed skills which are specific to a particular school community (Parding et al., 2017). For example, teachers working in areas of disadvantage felt that their practice was child-centred and *'almost like a mission, you know, like being a missionary … it was so rewarding'(Sue)* while teachers working in more affluent areas enjoyed the challenge of raising standards to meet the expectations of *'middle class, aspirational parents'(Lee).* Parding et al. (2017) recognised that different skills are required for different school contexts, warning against the phenomenon 'lock-in', arguing that teachers might find it difficult to transfer their practice from one context to another if they are not offered

appropriate support. With a continuing policy focus on school structures (Department for Education, 2016; Keddie, 2016), this finding is significant, and suggests that policies which could offer additional support to teachers and school leaders to work at a collective level (Day & Harrison, 2007), by acknowledging the different challenges across school contexts, and advancing a shared purpose (Steffens, Haslam, & Reicher, 2014), might see improved outcomes for teachers and pupils.

8.1.3.3 Climate of Primary Education

In addition to a focus on school choice and school structure, neo-liberal education policies have subjected primary schools in England to many policy reforms during the last 30 years (see Brown & Manktelow, 2016 for an overview), some of which were recalled by the mid- and late-career phase teachers in this study. Reforms with an increasing emphasis on teacher accountability and pupil performance, with the original intention of raising standards in school, were of particular concern. This approach, which has previously been termed 'performativity' (Ball, 2003) within educational literature, caused some teachers to question whether it is children's or politicians' needs which are being served within primary education. The notion that teachers are *'testing children within an inch of their lives'(Louise),* appears to cause teachers some level of cognitive dissonance and 'conflict with what teachers personally desire and experience as good' (Beijaard et al., 2004, p.109). The policy focus on standards, with a curriculum often driven by continual assessment of children, conflicted with some teachers' core values and beliefs about being a caring professional (discussed in *individual* and *relationa*l section), meaning that many of the teachers in this study had to navigate through an educational ideology which they could not personally identify with.

Although the ECP teachers in this study were not typically as critical of this performance culture, Anna (Year 2 teacher) was confused by inconsistent expectations from the school leadership. While she was being asked to support a *'system of creativity'* she was also aware that during her performance appraisal *'nobody tests for creativity'.* This conflict in approaches to primary education has been discussed by Braun and Maguire (2018), who assert that primary teaching is 'caught up in conflicting discourses: a professional one centred on theories of child development' against the backdrop of policies which prioritise 'standards and a 'back to basics' focus' (p. 3). Anna was not alone when she admitted that she had already started *'teaching to the test',* while some teachers were concerned that the grades of statutory assessment tests (SATs) were being enhanced in their schools. While concerns of 'gaming' the system have been illuminated previously in connection with secondary education (Winter, 2017), findings from this study suggest that the domination of performance data and

measurement could also be changing the practice of some primary school teachers from developmental pedagogies to limited testing regimes (Roberts-Holmes & Bradbury, 2016).

A central feature to the neoliberal model of education in England is the publication of SATs results, and national league tables, which some teachers felt promoted an environment which put schools, and teachers, *'in competition with each other'(Ellie)*. The Education Act (Department for Education, 1992) also saw the introduction of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), an independent inspection system which was mentioned frequently by teachers in all career phases. For some teachers in this study, constructive conversations with individual inspectors had offered them positive affirmation of their individual practice (discussed in *individual* identity section, **8.1.1**), while others felt that the broader organisation of Ofsted had *'ruined teaching' (Janet)*, anxious that an inspection was *'always looming' (Ricky).* Teachers' stories gave a sense that the threat of Ofsted's arrival left them feeling they should always be ready for a possible inspection. Perryman (2006) called this phenomenon 'panoptic performativity', arguing that Ofsted has created a 'sense of constant surveillance' (p.158), where teachers felt they had to adapt their practice to accede to the inspectors' expectations.

With this in mind, I found it to be of particular interest that while Justin was *'allowed quite a lot of autonomy and a lot of freedom'* by the leaders in his school, which he felt had increased his level of enjoyment and his sense of efficacy, he also recognised that the school's 'Outstanding' label meant that the leadership were *'not worried about Ofsted knocking on the door'.* Maintained primary schools judged to be outstanding are exempt from routine inspections (Ofsted, 2018), an exemption which meant that the leadership team were able to offer teachers a level of *'flexibility'*, allowing them to be more creative in their pedagogy. This acknowledgment supports Perryman's (2006) assertion that the prospect of an Ofsted inspection reduces the level of creativity in the classroom and can explain why some experienced teachers feel they are being told *'exactly what to do'(Katie)* by school leaders who might be concerned about a poor Ofsted evaluation. Recent research, conducted by Perryman and colleagues (2018), further supports the idea that Ofsted 'surveillance' can change teachers' professional practice, with Page (2017) asserting that classroom practice is becoming a 'simulation', with schools 'perpetually embodying the characteristics of good-or-outstanding [as] laid down in the external inspection framework'. Teachers' stories suggest that this situation promotes the status quo, where 'Outstanding' schools are more creative in their practice, while schools labelled 'Good' or below are disadvantaged by the restrictions placed on teachers' classroom practice.

With suggestions of surveillance and simulation in schools (Page, 2017; Perryman et al., 2018), perhaps some comfort can be drawn from the findings from this study, which suggest that there are still school leaders who have resisted the turn towards a data-driven culture, wanting to retain a child-centredness to their school, and openly accepting that this approach means they will *'never be an Outstanding school' (Lee).* For some mid- and late-career teachers, the 'generations of changes in educational policies' (Day & Gu, 2009, p.453) which they have witnessed led them to feel unconcerned about a label awarded by Ofsted, while for others it was their strong identification with the schools' ethos and a belief that *'data can't show all those [caring] things that we do'(Emma)*. All teachers' stories illuminate the important role that head teachers play in translating external policy demands into something which is meaningful and purposeful and can unite the school community (Gu et al., 2018).

8.1.3.4 The Bigger Picture

As teachers reflected on their careers, those with a collective sense of identity seemed to have become increasingly concerned with the broader landscape of primary education over a period of time. These teachers took pleasure from the opportunity to share their practice, working alongside colleagues from within their own school, or the wider educational community. Some teachers who were discussed in the *individual* identity section (**8.1.1**) expressed an aspiration to work in a role which would enable them to be generative (Erikson, 1950, 1959), while other teachers, working in their late-career phases, had already moved into leadership or other developmental roles. These teachers were considering how they might advance their core beliefs and values to engage with a broader vision of primary education. This wider promotion of collective interests is comparable to Steffens et al., (2016) notion of 'authentic leaders' who assert that effective leaders are 'authentic to their own beliefs' and to that of the 'broader group vision that they represent' (p. 727). A satisfaction derived from developing other teachers contrasts with Huberman's (1993) assertion that fulfilment in the 'final phase' primarily comes from being in the classroom.

There were two teachers in the final stage of their career who had been able to exercise this entrepreneurship, and were feeling positive about the personal legacy they would leave to primary education, considering their work to have *'made an impact'(Sue),* and to be *'sustainable for the future'(Lee)*. Identity entrepreneurship has been identified within organisational psychology as a dimension of leadership which brings different people together and increases inclusiveness (Steffens et al., 2014; van Dick et al., 2018), but can also be related to the teachers and school leaders in this study who engage others in a collective vision and mission for education. These teachers had a salient collective identity, maintaining 'a strong sense of efficacy, moral purpose and achievement' (Day et al. 2007, p. 96) in the

late phase of their career. These positive reflections suggest that it is the opportunity to engage in, and promote, shared values and ideas which can protect school teachers and school leaders from a bitter disengagement (Huberman, 1993) or a disenchanted exit (Day et al., 2007), and can promote a positive sense of professional identity and the belief that they can make a difference up until retirement.

8.1.3.5 Summary of a collective level of professional identity

Teachers who were able to identify with their school ethos, broader educational 'group', or participate in collaborative practice were oriented towards a *collective* identity, and typically had an overwhelmingly positive sense of professional identity. The feeling of a shared ethos values and visions, whether relating to an individual school or wider beliefs about primary education gave teachers a feeling of connectedness and collective responsibility, along with increased feelings of both self, and collective efficacy. Where a collective identity is salient, an understanding of teacher professional identity responds to the questions "Who are we?" and "What do we stand for?" (Steffens et al., 2014). The notion that a positive professional identity derives from feelings of connectedness and belonging contrasts with the prevailing tendency to privilege individualism when considering teachers' professional identity development.

It was the teachers who could identify with the beliefs and values of their school, or with broader educational philosophies while feeling they were a valued member of the group who managed to sustain a positive professional identity and a positive sense of collective efficacy. The salience of a collective identity also promoted an appreciation of the wider primary education community, and can be related to Erikson's (1980) 'generativity v/s stagnation' stage, suggesting that as a teacher's professional identity shifts from an individual to a collective level, so too does their own professional agenda as they are motivated by 'establishing and guiding the next generation' (p.103), of teachers by sharing and collaboration, in the hope that they might leave a legacy of their knowledge and experience which might continue to benefit other professionals and primary school pupils.

8.1.4 Response to Question 1

While previous studies concerned with the development of teacher professional identity have tended to focus on the individuality of teachers (Darby, 2008; Keltcherman, 2009b; Tateo, 2012), the importance of contextual influences such as significant dyadic relationships and collective values in education have typically been overlooked. The response to this research question expands the current understanding of teachers' professional identity beyond a focus on the individual teacher to incorporate significant relationships, school leaders, work teams,

school ethos, and broader meaningful social groups. It is perhaps due to the fact that previous research has tended to have focused predominantly on student and ECP teachers (Flores & Day, 2006; Friesen & Besley, 2013; Izadinia, 2013) that the influences discussed have been those which give prevalence to an individual professional identity, as this level of identity has seen to be typically active during the beginning of a teacher's career. A focus on individual capabilities (or limitations) on career entry is likely to be due to the need for the acquisition of curriculum knowledge and specific contextual skills, but can also be attributed to the application of the Teacher Standards (Department for Education, 2013) during performance appraisals. Teachers' personal stories place supportive relationships and collective identification as being central to developing and maintaining a positive professional identity, while the formal standards promote a competence-based, individualistic approach to teaching, which do not seem to recognise the complex and social nature of being a teacher.

The findings from this study illustrate that the focus on the individual level of professional identity, which has been privileged in the literature to date, provides an important, but limited perspective of teacher development and this thesis asserts that multiple levels of influencers (individual, relational and collective) should all be considered when attempting to understand teacher professional identity. Although this question has been answered by presenting and discussing these three levels of identity, it is also acknowledged that in practice they do not develop in isolation from one another but as 'a complex interplay of cognitive, affective, and communication processes, within particular local contexts as well as wider historical and cultural context' (Vignoles, 2013, p.404). The professional identity of a teacher then can be understood in terms of the choice that an individual makes to become a 'teacher', guided by personal experiences, beliefs and aspirations, while also being an ongoing developmental process, built and sustained by interactions with significant others. While a teachers' role is predominantly played out in a classroom, they are also situated within work teams, school communities and within a broader socio-historical context which shapes public and political expectations of what a teacher should be.

It is recognised within this thesis that for teachers in all phases (early-, mid- and late-career), the experience of a negative sense of professional identity, is typically related to circumstances when their individual professional identity is active. A negative sense of professional identity can be attributed to not being able to establish or to sustain positive and supportive relationships or having no sense of a shared and meaningful purpose, typically leading to feelings of isolation and stress. This finding is supported by Reicher and Haslam's (2006) assertion that a lack of social identity (relational or collective) feeds into feelings of alienation and leads to a compromised sense of wellbeing. This undesirable situation can be improved by the formation of one or more significant positive relationships, or when a sense

of belonging is nurtured for teachers in *all* phases of career. The parallels which have been drawn across phases support Canrinus et al.'s (2012) study which found indicators of teachers' sense of professional identity (self-efficacy, job satisfaction, occupational commitment and level of motivation) to be comparable for teachers in all three phases of their career. When teachers experience a positive sense of relational or collective professional identity, their individual beliefs and personal sense of purpose are also strengthened, along with increased feelings of collective and individual self-efficacy for teachers in early-, mid- and late-career.

The results of this study support work which has been conducted within occupational psychology making the assertion that a collective identification with a meaningful group can act as a protective factor and improve a sense of wellbeing during challenging times (referred to as the 'social cure'), by providing individuals with support networks, meaningful work and a positive sense of self (Jetten et al., 2017; van Dick & Haslam, 2012). This new conceptualisation of the importance of significant supportive relationships and the need for a meaningful identification with a school's culture and broader education policies proposes a new lens for examining the development and maintenance of a *positive* teacher professional identity.

Ideally, as a teacher progresses from early- to mid- through to late-career phases, their level of professional identity will become more inclusive: transcending an individual level (least inclusive) on career entry, to include relational and collective levels (most inclusive) as teachers form significant relationships and become socialised into the school community, sharing a collective vision for education. However, as has been illustrated within this discussion chapter, some teachers at the beginning of their career are fortunate to benefit almost immediately from supportive and significant relationships and feel a sense of belonging (collective identity) through shared values and beliefs early on in their career. Equally, some teachers in later career phases who are negotiating changes and transitions in their personal or professional lives, find their established sense of professional identity can become unstable, meaning their individual identity becomes dominant once more.

This identity-based view of a teacher career rejects the fixed phases and boundaries related to tenure (Day et al., 2007) or age (Sikes et al., 1985), and acknowledges the non-linear nature of teachers' professional development (Huberman, 1993) meaning teachers can re-enter previous levels of professional identity at various points across their career (Fessler & Christensen, 1992). **Figure 8.5** illustrates the professional identity development pattern which would ideally take place during a teachers' career; from an individual level of identity through to more inclusive relational and collective identity. This model is supported by the categories

which emerged from the interviews, along with the existing literature which has been discussed.

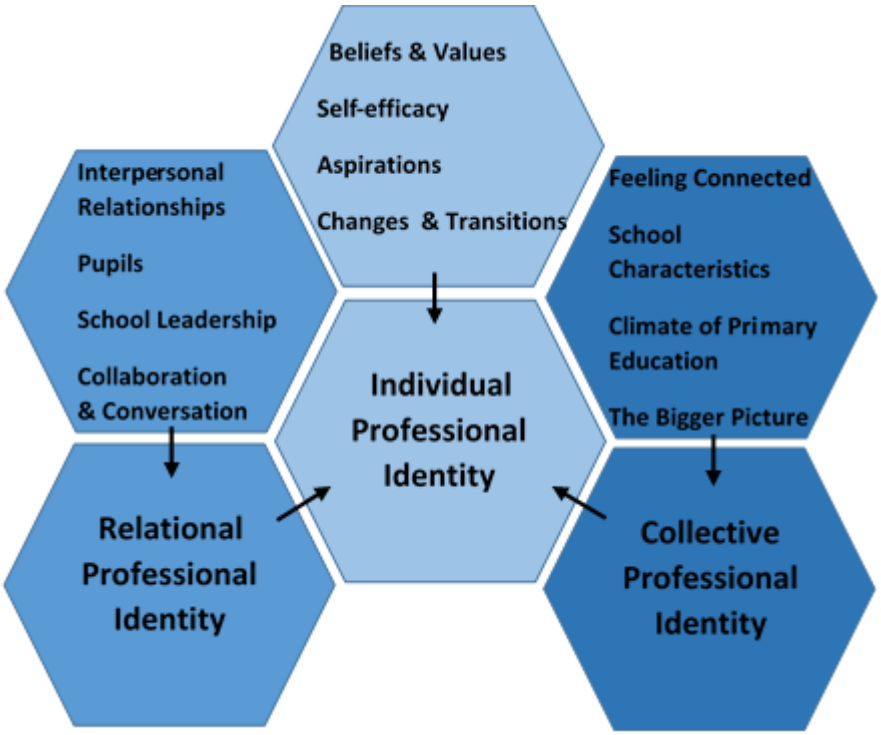


Figure 8.5 Relationship between key influences and levels of professional identity

8.2 *Research Question 2: To what extent do these key influences impact positively and negatively on primary teachers' commitment to the profession?*

The findings from this study support Day et al.'s (2007) assertion that commitment 'is affected primarily by teachers' sense of identity' (p. 215) and extends their finding that there are associations between the two. Analysis of the teachers' stories suggests that teacher professional identity and teacher commitment are interrelated processes, where the focus of commitment is dependent of the dominant level of identity orientation (individual, relational or collective). In political terms teacher commitment is related to teacher supply and retention (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017; National Audit Office, 2017), while it is discussed in educational literature in terms of an individual's motivation and a positive attitude to the profession (Jones, 2016; Sinclair, 2008) and the association with teacher attrition (Chapman, 1983; Smithers & Robinson, 2003, 2005).

In Nias' (1989) seminal study on the work of teachers, she noted that teachers themselves tended to use the term 'commitment' to suggest their degree of motivation, while she also

acknowledged that previous literature (Lacey, 1977) had made distinctions between 'professional commitment' and a broader 'commitment to education' (p.89). More recent literature (e.g. Day et al., 2007; Sammons et al., 2007) has tended to define commitment in the same terms as the teachers studied by Nias: as a construct which is synonymous to motivation and refers to the *attitude* of teachers 'who believe that they can make a difference to the learning and achievement of their students' (Day & Gu, 2009, p. 445). While it is accepted that motivation and commitment are related (Meyer et al., 2004), with both being described as 'energizing forces with implications for behaviour' (p.994), it is also recognised that, in everyday language, commitment typically represents a long term investment (e.g. committed to obtain a degree), while motivation is related to short term action (e.g. motivation to begin writing an assignment) (ibid.).

While organisational literature and work motivation theories have typically focused on individual *or* team level motivation (Bishop & Dow Scott, 2000; Blau, 1985), more recent work has begun to acknowledge the interplay between the two (e.g. Chen & Kanfer, 2006). Recent educational literature recognises that there are different motivators (intrinsic and altruistic) which influence teacher commitment (Chiong et al, 2017), positing that teachers' motivation can be influenced by both school level and broader educational policies. Organisational studies have long acknowledged that there can be different targets of commitment (Becker, 1992; Morrow, 1983; Reichers, 1985) or have integrated multiple components into the conceptualisation, such as Meyer and Allen's (1991, 1997) normative, affective or continuance understanding of commitment. Work by O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) also acknowledged the multidimensionality of commitment, along with the resulting behaviours which are associated with different dimensions (e.g. turnover, turnover intention, pro-social behaviours), with more recent studies drawing a distinction between employee commitment which is career-oriented and commitment to a particular organisation (Ngo & Hui, 2018; Ok & Vandenberghe, 2016). Johnson and Chang (2006) examined the connection between an individual's self-concept and organisational commitment positing that there are strong associations between the two, which supports the findings from the current study. The findings from this study extend previous literature, suggesting that teachers' levels of identity orientation (individual, relational or collective) each promote a different focus of commitment: either to a particular career role, to individuals within a specific school community, or to a wider culture and shared beliefs about primary education. In order to illuminate the associations found in this study between professional identity level and different focus of commitment, the response to this question will consider teachers' commitment to a ***career role***, the ***school community*** and to a ***shared ideology*** of primary education, illustrated in **figure 8.6**.

Figure 8.6 Three foci of commitment

8.2.1 Commitment to a Career Role

Teachers' stories suggest that there is a relationship between an individual level of professional identity and a commitment which is focused on a particular ***career role*** illustrated in **figure 8.7**.

Figure 8.7 Relationship between individual professional identity and commitment to a career role

Although each participant identified as being a teacher, they each held different roles in school (Hoekstra, 2011) or sub-identities (Hall, 1971; Kram et al., 2012) such as classroom teacher, phase leader or head teacher, while some teachers had worked in different schools: a

conception of 'teacher' which is aligned to Super's (1957) notion of a chosen occupation as being 'a group of similar jobs in several establishments' (p. 8).

Hall (1971) defined career commitment as 'the strength of one's motivation to work in a chosen career role' (p.59), although this particular focus of commitment to a role has also been defined in organisational literature as 'professional' and 'occupational' commitment (Meyer et al.,1993), with each being related to one particular line of work. As those teachers with an individual sense of professional identity were predominantly focused on the necessary skills to perform a particular role within a particular context (whether that was due to being a new teacher in a new school, or in a new role), the finding that these teachers' focus of commitment was towards their *career role* is not surprising.

Teachers who were at the beginning of their career had been motivated to teach by a desire to make a difference to the lives of their pupils (Chiong et al., 2017), entering the classroom with a strong commitment to their beliefs about the role of a teacher. During their training some teachers had begun to internalise the profession into their self-definition (Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000), increasing their career role commitment. This original reason for choosing teaching as a career, sometimes referred to as a *calling,* or an internal voice which 'invites me to honour the nature of my true self' (Palmer, 1998, p.29), has been recognised previously in teacher education literature (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012; Richardson & Watt, 2006), with Day et al. (2005) suggesting that commitment is 'ideological in nature', with a 'belief in an ideal' (p.570) still present in experienced teachers.

As the ECP teachers in this study had intentions to make a difference, experiencing feelings of low self-efficacy during their induction year, paired with perceptions of low support, typically led to a reduction in their commitment, as they questioned their ability to be successful in a teaching role: '*I'd had an awful day, and my observations had been crap and everything, and I just said 'I'm not sure this is for me.''(Russell, ECP).* In contrast, when teachers began to feel more effective in their role (e.g. '*I feel like I'm getting on top of now, and getting better at it' - Andrea, ECP)*, their commitment to being a teacher increased. In line with these findings, previous studies report that teachers with low self-efficacy experience higher stress levels and burnout (Betoret, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), while a positive sense of self-efficacy has been recognised as important, promoting job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011), increased levels of motivation (Canrinus et al., 2012) and increased commitment (Klassen et al. 2013).

For teachers with an individual sense of professional identity, their commitment was expressed in terms of their motivation towards a specific professional development need which might

help them to develop skills required to be successful in their role, such as managing classroom behaviour more effectively or increasing learning in a lesson. Meyer and Herschovitch (2001) caution that a commitment which is solely focused on achieving specific objectives can be to the detriment of the broader goals of an organization. This suggests that educational policies which focus solely on developing the technical aspects of teaching (e.g. Teacher Standards, 2013), could mean that an individualistic mind-set is perpetuated, reducing opportunities to consider the wider culture and aims of the school and that of primary education.

It is of interest, that while previous studies have cited behaviour and classroom management as a source of emotional burnout and teacher turnover (e.g. Hong, 2010), the teachers' stories in this study suggest that it is not classroom management *per se* that influences an individual's commitment to the teaching role, but the level of support which is offered to teachers who are experiencing such challenges. Opportunities to talk openly, without judgement, about classroom management were an important influence on teachers' sense of self-efficacy, as well as on their individual professional identity, and on their commitment to the role of teacher. This finding is supported by Eldor and Shoshani (2016) who assert that compassion from colleagues can help teachers to cope when experiencing the stresses of student misbehaviour, and indirectly impacts job satisfaction and commitment. Connections between feelings of self-efficacy, commitment and attrition have already been established within educational literature (Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Wang et al., 2015), supporting the assertion that if newly qualified teachers do not receive adequate support and affirmation of their good practice on entering the classroom, they can be left feeling uncertain and unprepared, experience feelings of low self-efficacy and, consequently, begin to doubt their career choice. This insight could go some way towards explaining the 'dip' on the ECP teachers' professional timeline and can be related to continuing high attrition rates amongst early-career phase teachers (Department for Education, 2018a). For teachers in later career phases 'whose sense of commitment and self-efficacy might be less secure' (Day et al., 2005, p.572) due to changes in their role or to promotion, positive feedback about their classroom practice seemed to be scarce. This dearth of positive affirmation in later career phases meant that positive comments from an Ofsted inspector could offer much needed affirmation of their teaching for some teachers, and could 'strengthen their sense of professional mastery' (Chiong et al., 2017, p. 1105), while helping to sustain their career role commitment: *'I felt like I had earned my stripes.'(Sarah, LCP), '…the feedback from that just validated it all' (Ricky, MCP).*

In addition to feelings of self-efficacy, the findings from this study also support assertions found in health and organisational literature that longer-term career aspirations and vocational planning are linked to career commitment (Blau et al., 2016; Hall, 1971). For ECP teacher

Russell, his desired future self, as a teacher for children with special needs, acted as an incentive and was one factor which had helped him to stay committed to his current role, while Anna's feared future self of not being able to juggle the hours required in her teaching role with raising a future family indicated a reduction in her commitment to the role. Teachers in later career phases tried to envisage their future career path and, in line with findings in a report by the National Foundation for Educational Research (Bamford & Worth, 2017), teachers who had contemplated a change of career in this study, had considered possible roles in the wider education sector. Although these teachers' career role commitment may have been reduced, they were aware that they still wanted to be employed in *'something education-based' (Katie, MCP)*, with those who considered working in an advisory role worried that cuts to local authority services mean *'there's just not that job security' (Louise, LCP).*

The findings from this study suggest that experienced teachers find it difficult to perceive a career opportunity which would enable them to utilise their teaching expertise, while being an alternative to the *'thankless role' (Cat, ECP)* of headship. In contrast to this study, current literature concerned with the 'future selves' of teachers tends to focus on student teachers and those in their early-career phase (e.g. Dinham et al., 2017; Lee & Schallert, 2016). While it is recognised that continuing professional development is important for sustaining teachers' commitment in later phases of career (Day et al., 2007; Frelin & Fransson, 2017), this finding also suggests that it would be of benefit to give greater consideration to the future career aspirations of teachers in mid- and late-career phases.

Changes in personal and professional circumstances across the teachers' careers could also result in changing levels of role commitment. In mid-career, Katie already had a young family and was beginning to feel her role as a teacher was superseding her role as a mother: '*I'm doing really good stuff for thirty parents who don't actually appreciate what I'm doing, and my own kids are missing out'*. The identity conflict she was experiencing resulted in increased levels of stress and a reduced commitment to her teaching role. Considering alternative options, Katie realised that she could not '*afford to come out of school, because at the moment we need the money'.* Her commitment to teaching was what Meyer and Allen (1984) termed as 'continuance commitment' (p.373), based on the *need* to continue in a particular employment due to the perceived costs of leaving. This inter-role conflict between work and family commitments has been reported in previous educational literature (Hong, 2010; Palmer et al., 2012), with broader organisational studies finding that conflict between work and family roles can influence future career decisions and reduce commitment (Lee et al., 2000; Westring & Ryan, 2011). The practical reasons for remaining in her teaching role discussed by Katie

supports Chiong et al.'s (2017) assertion that 'teachers become increasingly pragmatic over time, due to changes in life stage' (p.1105).

As well as changes in personal circumstances, transitions in professional lives influenced teachers' individual professional identity and their level of role commitment. Moving into headship, Alan was under increasing pressure as he took on the responsibility of a new school building, in addition to his leadership duties. This unrealistic workload, coupled with low support and feelings of isolation, led to a critical moment: *'I got onto the car park one Monday morning, and I just thought 'What am I doing? I don't even know why I'm here anymore."* Alan's response to these cumulative stressors was the feeling that he was unable to cope, as he experienced burnout (Maslach, 2003), needing time away from work and losing his commitment to continue in his role of head teacher. There appear to be few studies which consider school leaders' commitment (Johnson, 2005) although recent literature has begun to illuminate the influences of isolation and burn-out for new school principals in the US (Bauer et al., 2017; Bauer & Silver, 2018). This supports findings from the current study that feeling *'left and abandoned' (Lee, LCP)* is associated with teachers' reduced commitment to the role and increased likelihood of leaving the profession.

The findings from this study illustrate a likely chain of events where low levels of support coupled with a lack of positive feedback, lead to feelings of low self-efficacy, a negative sense of individual professional identity, possible burn-out, and low commitment to the career role. Conversely, sufficient support and positive feedback in a career role could lead to an increase in teachers' sense of self-efficacy, which is associated with a positive sense of individual professional identity and a stronger identification *with*, and commitment *to* the role.

8.2.2 Commitment to a School Community

While the previous section considered the relationship between an individual level of professional identity and commitment to a career role, this section will discuss the findings which support the idea that a *relational* level of professional identity is associated with a commitment to a ***school community*** illustrated in **figure 8.8**.

The findings from this study support findings from Kington et al. (2014) and suggest that positive relationships are not only an essential aspect of developing and sustaining a positive sense of professional identity, but also in building resilience and commitment to the school community in which teachers work. Organisational literature recognises interpersonal commitment within the workplace as a psychological 'bond between an individual and other persons or small groups' (Becker, 2013, p.137), which is distinctive from career role commitment and can be directed towards supervisors (Landry & Vandenberghe, 2009), peers

(Papaoikonomou & Valor, 2016), work teams (Bishop et al., 2005) or customers (Vandenberghe et al., 2007). The relationships which were central to teachers' commitment to the school community in this study were with colleagues, pupils and school leaders.

Figure 8.8 Relationship between relational professional identity and commitment to a school community

This current study suggests that friendships with peers play an important role in coping with stress and in building resilience for teachers across all career phases and supports the study by Eldor and Shoshani (2016) that considered caring relationships in schools, and reported a positive relationship between compassion from colleagues and coping with work stressors. The positive relationships with colleagues discussed by the teachers in this study, offered a space where negative feelings could be openly acknowledged while developing positive emotions (Buzzanell, 2010), helping to build up emotional reserves (Afifi et al., 2016) which helped teachers to cope in a profession which can fuel the *'feeling of vulnerability and isolation' (Lee LCP)*. Teachers in all phases recognised schools as having the potential to be socially isolating environments, where one could *'shut the door and be on your own'(Emma, MCP),* with some reporting that they could *'go a few weeks without seeing some teachers' (Anna, ECP)*.

The possibility of alienation and the detrimental impact on teachers' sense of wellbeing should be taken seriously as it is increasingly recognised that feelings of isolation can challenge the

resilience and commitment of teachers (Nehmeh & Kelly, 2018), with similar outcomes recently being reported in other public service professions (e.g. Huyghebaert et al., 2019). Some MCP and LCP teachers in this study reported a strong sense of commitment to their school community because they were aware that the strong relationships they shared may not be characteristic of every school: *'I don't think I would find [the support I get] where I am, maybe somewhere else. I just don't think I would' (Emma, MCP*). The importance of collegial relationships on motivation and commitment for the teachers in all phases aligns with previous literature concerned with teacher careers (Day et al., 2007; Day & Gu, 2009) and with broader organisational literature which emphasises the importance of friendship formation on employee commitment (Akila & Priyadarshini, 2018*;* Milner et al., 2010).

Where teachers' professional timelines illustrated a 'dip' which was typically due to circumstances which had a negative influence on their professional identity and commitment (e.g. low self-efficacy in ECP, pressures of work/life balance in MCP, or feelings of isolation due to a change of role), it was often the support of *'*a *good mate' (Russell, ECP)* or being able to chat with *'my friends'(Emma, MCP)* that helped build resilience and return the line to a peak. This finding supports claims that building resilience is a social process which takes place within school communities through mutually supportive and committed relationships (Gu, 2014; Siciliano & Thompson, 2018).

The teachers in this study also discussed the relationship which they shared with their pupils as being central to their sense of professional identity and commitment. This finding supports the discussions in much educational literature (e.g. Day et al., 2007; Fransson & Frelin, 2016; Gu, 2014; Kington et al., 2014; Sammons et al., 2018; Spilt et al., 2011) which emphasises the teacher-student relationship as central for teacher commitment and resilience. In addition to the existing literature, the current study also acknowledges that, during times of challenge, some teachers have to rely on a shorter-term motivation, where it is a sense of responsibility to the children which keeps them returning to school on a day to day basis: *'…because if I don't go in tomorrow and I quit, and go somewhere else, which I could… then they've just got somebody else' (Ricky, MCP).* The loyalty which Ricky showed towards the children in his class when he moved to an extremely challenging school environment early in his career helped him to continue in his role: *'You get up some days and think 'I'm knackered. If I worked in an office I'd call in sick today, and I wouldn't care if they didn't pay me.' But you don't do that as a teacher, you get up and go 'I've planned all this work for these children, and I have* ***got*** *to be there.'* This sense of obligation aligns with Meyer and Allen's (1991; 1997) normative commitment and seemed to enable a strength of commitment from teachers towards pupils before deeper relationships could be formed in the classroom. Sammons et al. (2018)

acknowledge that positive relationships between teachers and pupils take time to develop, and it was Ricky's sense of loyalty, before stronger relational bonds could be formed, which enabled his pupils to rely on, and to trust him.

It was interesting to note that the teachers in this study discussed pupils' wellbeing needs more frequently than they discussed their learning needs, with many showing a deep concern for some children's welfare. The fact that teachers seemed more focused on pupil's wellbeing could be due to an assumption that learning needs are more obviously an aspect of their job, although teachers' commitment to the pupils in their class was clearly more holistic in nature than purely connected to curriculum learning. Although the influence of this significant and caring relationship has been considered in terms of teachers' emotions (Hargreaves, 2001; Spilt et al., 2011; Veldman et al., 2013) and pupils' learning (Bryk & Schneider, 2002; Newberry & Davis, 2008), there has been less exploration of associations with commitment. In contradiction to the findings of this study, Jo (2014) considered the quality of relationships, teachers' emotions and their commitment for teachers in South Korea and found no direct association between teacher-pupil relationships and teachers' organisational commitment (to an individual school), although positive relations did result in less stress, greater job satisfaction and increased feelings of efficacy. However, for the teachers in this current study, their commitment to pupils stemmed more from the desire to provide stability and to be dependable, with a sense of vocation (Day & Gu, 2009) which connects 'their hearts and souls with the very people they care about and care for' (Gu, 2014, p. 519) rather than being related to a *quality* relationship which could be measured in any quantifiable way.

Some teachers' increased or diminished commitment to a particular school which they discussed on their timeline, was due to their relationship with a particular school leader: *'I absolutely loved it there because I got on really well with the head teacher' (Katie, MCP).* In stark contrast to Katie's experience, the poor relationship which Anna shared with her head teacher meant that she had a negative sense of professional identity and made the decision to move to a different school: *'If I had stayed at that school, it would break me'.* Leaders have long been recognised within organisational literature as influencing employees' interpersonal commitment (Stinglhamber & Vandenberghe, 2003; Tepper et al., 2009). In educational literature school leaders have been cited as influencing beginning teachers' turnover intentions (Devos et al., 2012; Engvik & Emstad, 2017; Lassila et al., 2017), with positive teacher-leader relationships also being recognised as a *school-level* reason for staying in teaching for teachers working in later phases of their careers (Chiong et al., 2017).

While Engvik and Emstad (2017) assert that 'school leaders have a great amount of power and influence … when it comes to the wellbeing of NQTs and their decision to remain in the

profession' (p.468, emphasis added), the findings from this current study suggest that head teachers influence NQTs decision to remain working in a particular *school*, rather than the teaching profession. However, it is acknowledged that the ECP teachers in this study, who relocated to a different school, were able to establish a more positive relationship with their new head teacher. It is likely to be teachers who are unfortunate to find another unsupportive head teacher in a different school who make the decision to leave teaching completely. In contrast to the findings of this study, school leaders were not cited by National Audit Office (2017) as a key factor which affects teacher commitment or retention, (see **Appendix K**), although it is interesting to note that the respondents of the survey were all working in school leadership positions. The findings from the current study suggest that seeking responses from teachers themselves, rather than school leaders, may have resulted in entirely different data.

While organisational literature concerned with staff turnover intentions supports the findings of the current study with assertions that 'relationships matter ... their development influences important organizational outcomes' (Mossholder et al., 2005, p.12), educational literature has also established the influence of significant relationships in school on resilience and commitment (Day & Gu, 2009; Gu, 2014, Tiplic et al., 2015). The findings from this study extend the previous literature and suggest that opportunities for increased social interaction which nurtures the development of significant and trusting relationships should be considered as central to teachers' sense of well-being, self-efficacy, resilience and to their commitment to the school community in which they work.

8.2.3 Commitment to a Shared Ideology

This section will discuss the relationship between a *collective* level of professional identity and the relationship with a commitment to a ***shared ideology***, illustrated in **figure 8.9**.

Similar to relational identity and teachers' commitment to a school community, collective identity and commitment to a shared ideology can be related to affective commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990), as it involves the internalisation of others' beliefs and values, and a strong emotional attachment to a social group. The relationship between the constructs of a collective (or social) identity and organisational commitment have often been discussed in organisational literature (e.g. Gupta, 2017; Meyer et al., 2004; Riketta, 2005), and are supported by the findings in the present study.

Figure 8.9 Relationship between collective professional identity and commitment to a shared ideology

While the dyadic relationship with school leaders was important to teachers in all phases (discussed in previous section, **8.2.2**), teachers in mid- and late-career phase typically cited a school culture in harmony with their own 'ideals for education and society' (Nias, 1989, p.31) as a key factor for sustaining a positive sense of professional identity and an ideologically-based commitment. Although it has been argued that teachers in later phases of their career have developed strong emotional ties to their school community (McIntyre & Thompson, 2015), the findings from this study suggest that some teachers in later career phases have actively moved to, and remained in, schools which have values with which they are not left feeling 'ideologically uncomfortable' (Nias, 1989, p.119), and feel a sense of value-congruence (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Meyer et al. (2006) argue that, although organisational literature has tended to use the terms identification and commitment synonymously (e.g. Ellemers, De Gilder, & Haslam, 2004; Miller, Allen, Casey, & Johnson, 2000), a distinction should be drawn between the two;

> *For a social identity, the mind set reflects a sense of self and one's similarity to a collective or its members. This sense of self includes an awareness of shared characteristics (e.g., values), an evaluation of these characteristics, and positive or negative affect (e.g., pride, shame) associated with this evaluation. For commitment, the mind set reflects a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to a target (e.g., collective, goal)* (p.667).

Teachers with a salient collective identity wished to maintain membership of the group, with the basis for their commitment being due to congruent values and a shared ideological approach to primary education.

While significant relationships helped some teachers to build resilience, those with shared ideological beliefs also shared a collective sense of efficacy: *'Everybody is really well qualified, and everybody is ambitious and aspirational' (Justin, ECP)*. This seemed to offer an increased sense of being part of a professional community, trust and a shared sense of collective resilience. While Tiplic et al. (2015) recognise collective efficacy in schools as offering beginning teachers the opportunity to draw on experienced colleagues' expertise, the current study found that ECP teachers (such as Cat), working in collaborative environments are also afforded the opportunity to share their knowledge and skills, which is associated with teachers' commitment to the profession (Adoniou, 2016; Hong 2010). These findings support Gu and Day's (2013) assertion that shared values and visions amongst staff increase a collective capacity for joint work, while also suggesting that a salient collective identity can offer teachers a feeling of collective resilience during challenging times.

When considering the positive influences of collaboration, a collective sense of self-efficacy and the association with increased resilience and commitment, it seems unfortunate that some teachers felt that the wider policy culture within primary education could prevent collaboration between teachers and schools. Teachers in year groups which were subjected to statutory assessments spoke about a negative influence of school league tables: *'It's quite competitive in Year Two at the moment. It's almost like we're in competition with each other' (Ellie, MCP).* This notion of competition stemming from the labelling of schools was echoed in Anna's statement as she did not wish to be associated with a school *'…that's lucky to get Good. I want to be in a school that's reaching for Outstanding' (Anna, ECP).* The labelling and public ranking of schools seemed to have influenced some teachers who did not want to self-categorise (Turner, 1985; Turner et al., 1987) as belong to a school which could be considered to be failing.

Some of the ECP teachers in this study also seemed to be 'caught up in conflicting discourses: a professional one centred on theories of child development … and the current education policy climate in England which prioritises standards and a 'back to basics' focus' (Braun & Maguire, 2018, p.3). Beginning teachers in this study had been genuinely shocked at the amount of information which primary school children were expected to learn when they first entered a classroom: *'I couldn't believe the pace at which things move on a daily basis in a classroom' (Andrea, ECP).* Others felt disappointed that they *'…ended up teaching to the test' (Anna, ECP).* In Justin's first school his head teacher was asking him to target resources to

children who were on the boundary of a level and pull resources from children who were not likely to achieve their target: *'it was very sad to me' (Justin, ECP).* For some teachers, practices such as targeting groups of children with resources, or *'testing children within an inch of their lives' (Louise, MCP)* present a moral dilemma which means that the purpose of primary school education is called into question, with any notion of a holistic learner being eroded as pupils are increasingly viewed only as data (Hardy & Lewis, 2018).

While Elliott (2018) argues that Teach First and Teach for All are responsible for the 'repositioning of teaching as a transitory venture rather than a career for life' (p.4), the findings from this study suggest that if teachers in any phase of their career are unable to identify with the broader values and ideologies of the school in which they work, or the national policies which dictate the way they conduct their work, classroom teaching could be just one role they hold within a career in education, regardless of the route through which they trained. With the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) reporting that 'a large proportion of teachers who leave the state sector in England remain in the wider education sector' (Bamford & Worth, 2017, p.3), the findings from this study suggest that teachers who are committed to an ideology will make career decisions which reduce feelings of cognitive dissonance.

Janet's decision in her late-career phase to leave her role as a head teacher and embark on a new role in teacher education at a university, did not reflect a loss of commitment as might be assumed. In fact, her decision represents a rejection of national policies which *'forget about people'*, and a strengthened commitment to the core beliefs and values which she held dear. Her move to a new role enabled her to be an authentic leader (Steffens et al., 2016), working within an organisation which shared her personal beliefs about primary education. A commitment to her personal beliefs about education remained high, and this career decision reflected the importance of having meaning to her work (Yinon & Orland-Barak, 2017). This reframing of Janet's decision to leave teaching, which could be recorded as a case of attrition, supports Yinon and Orland-Barak's (2017) assertion that where teacher attrition is usually viewed as a negative work outcome, and a perceived loss of commitment, it can be due to a calling orientation towards teaching (Bullough & Hall-Kenyon, 2012), where deep meaning is attached to a person's role. It is this sense of calling which can ultimately shape the decision to leave an organisation (school or broader education system) which does not share beliefs, values and ideological commitment. Considering long service teachers, Goodson et al.'s (2006) notion of the 'reconstruction of professional and life missions' and 'resistance to change' (p.44) supports the assertion that a teacher's decision to leave can be related to a commitment to, and a need to preserve, an ideology about education which is held dear. Hong (2010) also found that some 'dropout teachers' (p.1531) make their career decision due to an

emotional commitment to be a certain type of teacher, and to a broader philosophy of education.

8.2.4 Response to Question 2

The findings of this study suggest that commitment is integral to a sense of identity, and that multiple levels of teachers' professional identity, which have been discussed in response to question 1 (individual, relational and collective), each lead to a different focus of commitment. Specifically, an individual professional identity, constructed and achieved through personal beliefs, values, feelings of self-efficacy, motivations and aspirations is related to a commitment to a career role. A school which values the caring relationships which teachers develop with pupils, while encouraging supportive and trusting significant relationships with colleagues, peers and school leadership, will nurture a commitment to the school community. Where teachers are able to identify with a broader ethos or culture, in which their personal beliefs and values align with those of the school or a broader educational community, a commitment to a shared ideology will be sustained (**see figure 8.10**).

Figure 8.10 Relationship between levels of professional identity and focus of commitment

Day at al.'s (2007) professional life phase model of teacher career acknowledges that there are 'sub-groups' which relate to 'positive or negative outcomes, in terms of teachers' motivation, commitment, resilience and perceived effectiveness' (p.69). The findings from this study suggest that it is likely to be the teachers with a salient individual professional identity

who might be categorised as experiencing these negative outcomes, while those with a relational or collective professional identity would be more likely to fit into the positive sub-groups for each career phase. While the current government's initiative which relate to teacher commitment and retention have primarily been focused on workload (DfE, 2017; House of Commons, 2017), this study finds that a more nuanced approach is needed.

A multidimensional approach, which considers the development and maintenance of different levels of teachers' professional identity along with their relationship to multiple foci of commitment, could be more beneficial in understanding teachers' career decisions. From the previous discussion, it is clear that 'teacher resilience is not primarily associated with the capacity to 'bounce back' or recover from highly traumatic experiences and events' (Gu & Day, 2013, p. 26). This is a conception which stresses an individualistic view of resilience, but is influenced and nurtured by supportive significant relationships, common beliefs and values and a shared sense of a collective identity.

A focus on enabling the important significant relationships which can develop in schools, along with encouraging a collaborative working environment, would build upon the positive influence which these opportunities afford. The development of a collective approach to school leadership, along with the development of local and national policies, rather than policies which promote individualism and competition among schools, could have a positive influence on teachers' individual, relational and collective sense of professional identity and see increased commitment to their career roles, the local school community, and to a shared educational ideology.

The next chapter concludes the process of this grounded theory construction. Drawing together the findings from this study, a new theoretical model is presented which illustrates the relationships between the key influences on the three levels of professional identity and the associated foci of commitment.

9 Conclusion - A Theoretical Model Grounded in Data

The final chapter of this thesis will present a conclusion which draws together the findings and discussion of this study. First, the theoretical model which has evolved over the previous chapters will be outlined and presented in full. Next the grounded theory will be evaluated by drawing on the criteria of credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness as suggested by Charmaz (2014). Limitations of the study, in relation to the research design and data collection methods employed, will then be discussed along with recommendations for future research. A final summary of the study will then be presented to conclude the thesis.

In the discussion chapter, it has been argued that teacher professional identity should be considered as individual, relational and/or collective, reflecting three levels of orientation. Individual identity is influenced by beliefs and values, a sense of self-efficacy, personal aspirations and changes and transitions, while relational identity is developed and sustained through significant interpersonal relationships, and a collective identity is developed and maintained by feelings of belonging and of group membership. It is recognised within the discussion that these three levels of professional identity can differ in salience as teachers move across different career phases and in different school contexts. Each level of professional identity is associated with a difference focus of commitment. An individual professional identity can be related to commitment to a career role, (which can include classroom teacher, year group leader or head teacher), a relational professional identity can be related to commitment to a particular school community, while a collective professional identity is related to a commitment to a shared ideology.

9.1 *A Multi-dimensional Approach to Professional Identity and Commitment*

Reflecting on the findings and the discussion which have been presented in this thesis, it can be argued that the existing models of teacher careers (Day et al., 2007; Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993; Sikes et al., 1985) should be reconceptualised. The model which is represented in this thesis seeks to promote a framework for initial teacher education and continuing professional development which allows due consideration to be given to the complex dynamics that exist within individual teachers' career trajectories, work relationships, different school contexts, and the broader (and constantly changing) education system in England. This framework enables policymakers and school leaders to reflect on the key factors which influence the positive development of three levels of professional identity, and help to sustain a commitment to a particular career role, colleagues, leadership teams and school communities, and to broader shared ideologies in primary education. **Figure 9.1** completes the construction of this new theoretical model and illustrates the relationships

between the key influences on the three levels of professional identity and the associated foci of commitment.

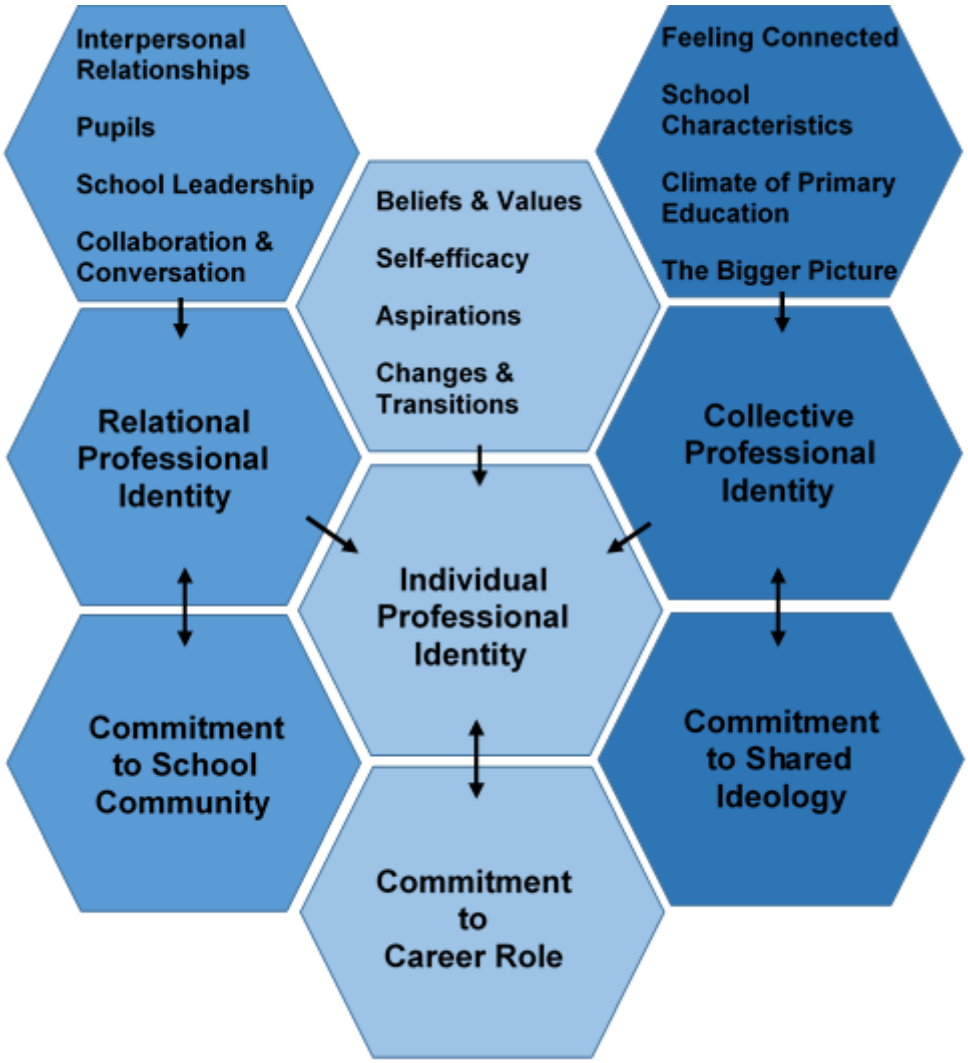


Figure 9.1 A theoretical model: The relationship between key influences on three levels of professional identity and focus of commitment

In order to understand the key influences on teacher professional identity and commitment, this thesis has deconstructed the previously broad concepts. Figure **9.1** represents the relationships between each section of this deconstruction. However, I acknowledge that in doing so this model does not fully represent the dynamic and interconnected nature of professional identity and commitment, nor does it fully represent the ebb and flow which teachers experience across their careers. In wishing to recognise (and embrace) the human centredness of this model, I also include within this thesis an alternative representation (see **Appendix L**). As Charmaz (2014) acknowledges 'theorizing is an ongoing activity' (p.244), and it is anticipated that once the usefulness of this theoretical model has been established, other researchers and policy makers may decide how and where to modify and develop it further, along with amended or alternative representations.

The originality, usefulness and resonance of this study and the resultant theoretical model will be discussed further in the following section.

9.2 *Evaluating a Grounded Theory*

Charmaz (2014) suggests that there are four specific criteria by which a grounded theory can be evaluated, asserting that 'the sense we make from our [research] journey takes form in our completed work' (p. 336). This section will discuss and clarify the theoretical worth of the study and resulting grounded theory using the headings of *credibility, originality, resonance* and *usefulness* and will provide examples of how each criterion has been met.

9.2.1 Credibility

Charmaz (2014) suggests that to determine credibility a study should achieve 'intimate familiarity with the setting or topic' (p.337). Through the use of life history methods each participant was able to 'guide the research process' (Chiovitti & Piran, 2003, p. 430), meaning that their perspectives could be accurately represented and delineated to gain an understanding of their lived experience. The initial codes reflected the language which was used by the participants, enabling strong and logical connections to be made between the interview transcripts, the emergent codes and subsequent analysis. Chapter four provided a transparent account of the analytical strategies which were employed to develop the initial and focused codes, and then to 'scale up' to emergent and theoretical categories.

The constant comparison of the data enabled similarities and differences to be identified; a process which was supported by memos to help trace emerging theoretical insights. Chapters five, six and seven presented excerpts from the teachers' stories to ensure that the analysis remained grounded in their lived experiences, supported by vignettes which highlighted individual teachers' stories and illuminated associations between the salient level of professional identity and the focus of commitment.

Further literature and theoretical arguments which were identified as supporting or contrasting with the emergent codes were woven into the discussion (chapter **8**) to support the resulting theoretical model. Theoretical saturation gives credibility to the arguments which have been made in this thesis. Sufficient data were obtained to achieve saturation, and to account for all focused codes which related to each category. Credibility was further enhanced as two participants from each career phase took part in a follow-up semi-structured interview offering them an opportunity for clarification of any points raised in previous interviews, and also to discuss emerging themes within the data and to receive their feedback.

9.2.2 Originality

This multidimensional model of career, which acknowledges the different levels of professional identity and varying focus of commitment, offers new insights into the concepts of teacher professional identity and commitment. The grounded theory proposes a more adaptable theoretical model than the previous models of teacher career which have been based on tenure or age (Day et al., 2007; Levinson et al., 1978, Sikes et al., 1985). Viewing teachers' careers through the lens of professional identity aligns with the view that teachers' careers are not linear or predictable (Fessler & Christensen, 1992; Huberman, 1993; Super, 1984), and that individuals can move between different levels of identity during changes and transitions (Levinson et al., 1978).

This grounded theory study applies a tripartite notion of identity (individual, relational, collective) to the development of teachers' professional identity across a career. As this is a well- established framework within social and occupational psychology (Gaertner et al., 2012; Sedikides & Brewer, 2001), it can be considered to be a strength of this thesis. The application of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986) and self-categorisation theory (Turner et al., 1994) offers new insights into the influence of school culture and broader educational policies on teachers' collective sense of professional identity.

The findings from this study illuminate the importance of developing significant relationships for professional and emotional support, and the part that these relationships play in teachers' resilience and commitment. The new theoretical model recognises commitment as a process and product of identification, rather than as an attitude (e.g. Day et al., 2007; Sammons et al., 2007), or a psychological attachment to the profession (Chapman, 1983), with findings illuminating the conditions which enable teachers to build and sustain a commitment to their career role, the school community and to a shared ideology of primary education.

In addition, the emergent categories have challenged and extended previous literature in reconceptualising experiences which could have easily been based on unchallenged assumptions. For example, the experience of Ofsted has been previously reported as stressful, inducing feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996), whereas some teachers in this study gained affirmation from the positive feedback which they received. Equally, where challenging pupil behaviour has been cited as the cause of emotional burn-out and the reason why teachers leave (Hong, 2010, National Audit Office, 2017), the findings from this study suggest that it is the lack of support which is offered to teachers who are experiencing such challenges which leads to emotional burn-out and attrition.

Also related to the level of support which teachers receive was the finding that some early-career phase teachers are reluctant to admit to mistakes or to ask for help, as they feel that there will be a negative judgement made by mentors and school leaders, which will reflect poorly against the Teacher Standards (2013) by which they are appraised. It has been argued that errors at work can provide an opportunity for learning (Goodman et al., 2011; Reason, 2000), and therefore this finding is important in terms of teachers professional development and sense of efficacy.

9.2.3 Resonance

Charmaz (2014) argues that a 'strong combination of originality and credibility increases resonance, usefulness and the subsequent value of the contribution' (p. 338), and suggests that the criteria for resonance is that the study makes sense to the participants and others who might share their situation. The process of member checking (Birt et al., 2016), which took place during data collection and analysis, ensured that the grounded theory made sense to the participants, while the connections which have been made with preceding theoretical and empirical work on self, identity and commitment in social and occupational psychology helps to draw 'links between larger collectives or institutions and individual lives' (Charmaz, 2014, p. 338).

In addition to the analysis and grounded theory offering insights into teachers' professional lives, some teachers' commented that the process of participating in life history and professional timeline interviews offered a valuable opportunity for reflection and self-understanding. The 'rich flow of dialogue and discussion' (Goodson, 2008, p.98) in itself was considered to be a professional development opportunity.

9.2.4 Usefulness

The criteria for usefulness is related to the degree that the analysis will be beneficial to people in their lived experience (in this case, teachers' work and lives), and the extent to which the analysis could inspire further research, and make a *valuable* contribution to knowledge. The usefulness of this grounded theory lies in the development of this interdisciplinary and theoretical model, which I envisage to be valuable for several populations both inside and outside of the academic discipline.

First, the model would be useful for researchers and academics working in the field of teacher professional development, as it provides a significant contribution to existing knowledge. Researchers and academics working in other fields could also benefit from the research. For

example, researchers concerned with the professional identity of other public service workers could benefit both in terms of methodology and contribution to knowledge.

Table 9.1 Key recommendations for professional development needs in developing positive individual, relational and collective levels of professional identity

Level of professional identity	Key influences	Focus of teaching practice	Professional development needs	Focus of commitment
Individual	Personal beliefs and values Self-efficacy Aspirations Changes and transitions	Teaching as a career role Focus on technical aspects of role 'Delivering' learning	Support required from policy makers, school leaders and mentors to ensure teachers in all phases are able to develop skills needed to carry out the technical aspects of their role (e.g. behaviour management, lesson planning, support during change of role, school or on returning to work)	Commitment is to a particular career role
Relational	Interpersonal relationships Pupils School leadership Collaboration and conversation	Teaching as a process of interaction Relationships as key to teaching and learning (for pupils and staff)	Policy makers and school leaders should ensure there are sufficient opportunities for teachers in all phases to form significant relationships (e.g. team teaching, joint planning, social time, shared spaces)	Commitment is to a particular school community
Collective	Feeling connected School characteristics Climate of Primary Education The bigger picture	Teaching as one part of a wider interdependent education system, including other teachers, whole school ethos, and educational policies	Policy makers and school leaders should prioritise opportunities for collaboration with the wider educational community, along with opportunities to be generative (e.g. mentoring, leadership roles)	Commitment is to a shared ideology

Second, school leaders (including head teachers and middle leaders) who are concerned with the initial, and continuing, professional development of their staff, would benefit from understanding and supporting the professional development needs. Taking into account the individual, relational and collective level of professional identity development when considering teachers' continuing professional development programmes may improve the likelihood of increasing commitment to the role, the school community, and a long term career in primary education. **Table 9.1** outlines the key influences for each level of professional identity, along with the characterisation of the teaching professional and key recommendations to policy makers and school leaders to support professional development needs.

Finally, educational policy makers and national bodies who are concerned with teacher recruitment and retention could be beneficiaries of this research. By understanding the key positive influences, along with the challenges and tensions which influence a teachers' sense of professional identity and their focus of commitment, initiatives which support the key recommendations could be put in place to reduce teacher attrition.

9.2.5 Study limitations

Having considered the credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness of this study, some key limitations should also be noted. These limitations will be discussed below. Suggestions for further research are then presented in reply to these limitations and to extend the present study.

All research studies will inevitably have some limitations. Identification of limitations is important, as they can they aid in understanding research findings, place the current work in context and assign a level of credibility to the study (Ioannidis, 2007). The constructivist nature of this grounded theory study requires an acknowledgement of limitations as vital in demonstrating reflexivity with regards to research design, data collection methods and the application of analysis.

All of the participant teachers who volunteered to take part in the study were white and born in the United Kingdom. It cannot be claimed that these three levels of identity represent universal components of all teachers worldwide, although there is evidence to suggest that the individual, relational and collective aspects form the composites of 'self' for men and women from many different cultures (Kashima et al., 1995). Therefore while the focus of this study has been the experiences of teachers working in primary schools in England, shared concerns regarding teacher attrition in an international context (e.g. Flores, 2006; Lindqvist et al., 2014) indicate that the findings could also inform a much broader educational context in relation to teacher retention.

While the aim of this study was to *'foreground the perspective of the teacher'*, it is also acknowledged that the interviews offered only a brief window into the lived experiences of twenty primary school teachers working in different schools across England at a particular point in their career. However, this limitation in the context of this study is not problematic, as the development of a grounded theory does not claim an objective truth, but rather aims to offer new insights into the phenomenon. Indeed, Charmaz (2014) argues that 'situating grounded theories in their social, historical, local, and interactional contexts strengthens them' (p. 322) embracing the constructivist nature of the approach.

9.3 *Future Research*

Charmaz (2014) suggests that one aspect of *usefulness* is that analysis should 'spark future research in other substantive areas' (p. 338). While the identification of limitations can reveal how the current study can be improved (Ioannidis, 2007), the analysis from this study points to several significant directions for further research.

While some the teachers in this study were originally motivated to teach because they wanted to make a difference to children's lives, whether through educational attainment or through kindness and caring, some research suggests that secondary teachers are more likely to enter teaching due to a desire to promote their subject (e.g. Dinham & Scott, 2000). In addition, previous research suggests that primary teachers are more likely to sustain their commitment and feelings of self-efficacy than secondary school colleagues (Day et al., 2007). It would be of interest then, to repeat this study with participants who are working in secondary schools, to explore whether the theoretical model would look different for teachers working in a different educational phase.

There is also the question of whether the understanding of identity and commitment which has been presented in this thesis could extend research concerned with other professions. Although this study has drawn largely on the literature concerned with the professional identity of teachers, it has been argued that the challenges presented for nurses and social workers at the beginning of their career are 'similar to those experienced by beginning teachers' (Pillen et al. 2013b, p. 244). This multidimensional model of identity and commitment could potentially be just as relevant across professional boundaries of other public service professionals, such as doctors and nurses who are also subject to a focus on the performance of hospitals through targets and league tables (Goodson, 2009).

Positive school experiences and relationships with past teachers were cited by participants in this study as reasons for choosing teaching as a future career. If an increasingly performative culture in schools is reducing opportunities for human interaction between teachers and pupils,

as analysis from this study suggests, then there may be a danger that young people who experience this 'immoral education' (Gibbs, 2018, p.88) will not consider the prospect of returning to school as a teacher. A narrative study exploring secondary students' experiences of school life, identification with school and broader educational values and possible future career aspirations, could begin to reveal any possible repercussions and impact on teacher recruitment in the future.

This study revealed a distinction between formal and informal mentoring relationships. While previous studies have considered the effects of instrumental and socio-emotional mentoring in other areas of work (e.g. Chemers et al., 2011), it would be useful to better understand mentoring relationships and circumstances when different types of mentoring are helpful. A qualitative study could be conducted which explored these important relationships in school, along with the associations with resilience and/or attrition.

Although research concerning the work of teaching assistants and their future career aspirations (Dunne et al., 2008) has been meagre, this study has identified an increasing likelihood that newly qualified teachers may have previously worked in this role at an earlier phase of their career, with some teachers discussing the difficulties they faced in enabling the transition. It would be of interest then to explore the career goals and imagined career trajectories of TAs, and to consider any possible barriers for those who aspire to gain Qualified Teacher Status. Consideration of how to widen access to this previously marginalised staff group (Sorsby, 2004) could be particularly beneficial where teacher supply is a continuing problem, such as core subject areas or school regions (House of Commons Education Committee, 2017), where existing teaching assistants may have already established significant relationships and a sense of collective identity.

It has been argued that a full integration and understanding of identity literature 'requires researchers to look beyond the methodologies that are most familiar to them, and to see what insights can be gained by paying attention to alternative methodological as well as theoretical traditions' (Vignoles et al., 2013, p.12). With this in mind, a quantitative investigation into the self-orientation (level of identity) of teachers could be conducted using existing scales (e.g. the 30-item Relational, Individual and Collective Self-aspects (RIC) scale; Kashima & Hardie, 2000), along with a scale to assess the focus of commitment, in the hope of establishing a causal relationship between the two.

Finally, as a collective professional identity appears to have increased the resilience for the teachers in this present study, future research could further explore the role that school leaders play in the development and nurturing of teachers' collective professional identities, and it's influence on staff retention. Reicher et al. (2005) argue that effective and influential leaders

are able to ‘represent and define social identity in context’ (p. 552), with Haslam (2001) asserting that leadership ‘is about the creation, coordination and control of a shared sense of ‘us’’ (p.85). A quantitative enquiry could be conducted to find associations, between school leaders’ and teachers’ identity and psychological measures identified in Jetten et al. (2012).

9.4 *Final Summary*

The new multidimensional theoretical model which is presented in this thesis illustrates the development of teachers’ professional identity and its relation to commitment across a career. In this model a teacher career is viewed through the lens of identity and commitment: constructs which have arguably more relevant and practical applications, within the constantly changing landscape of initial teacher education and professional development, than previous models of teachers’ career which have been based on age or tenure. This emphasis shifts the focus from professional identity and commitment according to career phase, to consider them both in *context*, emphasising the importance of the complex interactions which take place within the classroom, school community and broader educational landscape.

Within neoliberal schooling contexts which have a focus on increased accountability, performance and standardised testing regimes, ‘systems which demand that teachers ‘perform’ and in which individuals are made accountable’ (Troman, 2008, p.620) it appears that the consideration of relationships, feelings of connectedness, and the human need for a collective sense of purpose have been neglected. Viewing a teacher’s career and professional development through the lens of individual, relational and collective professional identity, along with due consideration of the key influences which have been identified across each level, might help to redress this balance. In turn, teachers’ commitment to their role, the school community, and to a shared ideology of primary education can be nurtured, developed and sustained.

References

Adoniou, M. (2016) Don't let me forget the teacher I wanted to become. *Teacher Development, 20*(3), 348-363.

Afifi, T. D., Merrill, A., & Davis, S. (2016) The theory of resilience and relational load (TRRL). *Personal Relationships, 23*(4), 663–683.

Akila, A., & Priyadarshini, R. G. (2018) The impact of workplace friendships on organizational commitment and intention to leave. *IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering, 390*(1). doi:10.1088/1757-899X/390/1/012064

Allen, N. J., & Meyer, J. P. (1990) The measurements and antecedents of affective, continuance, and normative commitment to the organisation. *Journal of Occupational Psychology, 63*(1), 1-18.

Andersen, S. M., & Chen, S. (2002) The relational self: An interpersonal social-cognitive theory. *Psychological Review, 109*(4), 619-645.

Anderson, L., & Olsen, B. (2006) Investigating early career urban teachers' perspectives on and experiences in professional development. *Journal of Teacher Education, 57*(4), 359-377.

Arnett, J. J. (2000) Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist, 55*(5), 469-480.

Arthur, M. B., Hall, D. T., & Lawrence, B. S. (1989) 'Generating new directions in career theory: The case for a transdisciplinary approach', in Arthur, M. B., Hall, D.T., and Lawrence, B.S. (eds.) *Handbook of Career Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.7–25.

Ashforth, B. E., & Mael, F. (1989) Social identity theory and the organization. *The Academy of Management Review, 14*(1), 20-39

Aspfors, J., & Bondas, T. (2013) Caring about caring: Newly qualified teachers' experiences of their relationships within the school community. *Teachers and Teaching, 19*(3), 243-259.

Baldwin, M. W. (1992) Relational schemas and the processing of social information. *Psychological Bulletin, 112*(3), 461-484.

Ball, D. L. (2000) Bridging practices: Intertwining content and pedagogy in teaching and learning to teach. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51*(3), 241-247.

Ball, S. J. (2003) The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(2), 215-228.

Ball, S. J. (2013) *The Education Debate* (second edition). Bristol: Policy Press.

Baltar, F. & Brunet, I. (2012) Social research 2.0: virtual snowball sampling method using Facebook. *Internet Research, 22*(1), 57-74.

Bamford, S. & Worth, J. (2017) *Teacher Retention and Turnover Research. Research Update 3: Is the Grass Greener Beyond Teaching?* Slough: NFER. Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/teacher-retention-and-turnover-research-research-update-3-is-the-grass-greener-beyond-teaching/ [Accessed: 1 November 2018]

Bandura, A. (1982) The assessment and predictive generality of self-percepts of efficacy. *Journal of Behavioral Theory and Experimental Psychiatry*, *13*(3), 195-199.

Bandura, A. (1989) Perceived self-efficacy in exercise of personal agency. *The Psychologist: Bulletin of the British Psychological Society, 10(2)*, 411–424.

Bandura, A. (1995) *Self-efficacy: In Changing Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bandura, A. (1997) *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: Freeman.

Bandura, A. (2000) Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 9*(3), 75-78.

Barker, C., Pistrang, N., and Elliott, R. (2002) *Research methods in clinical psychology: An introduction for students and practitioners*. London, John Wiley and Sons.

Bauer, S. C., & Silver, L. (2018) The impact of job isolation on new principals' sense of efficacy, job satisfaction, burnout and persistence. *Journal of Educational Administration, 56*(3), 315-331.

Bauer, S. C., Silver, L., & Schwartzer, J. (2017) The impact of isolation on new principals' persistence: Evidence from a southern US state. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership.* doi:10.1177/1741143217739359.

Bazeley, P. & Jackson, K. (2013) *Qualitative Data Analysis with Nvivo.* London: Sage.

Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2009) Understanding teacher identity: An overview of issues in the literature and implications for teacher education. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *39* (2),175-189.

Beauchamp, C., & Thomas, L. (2011) New teachers' identity shifts at the boundary of teacher education and initial practice. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *50*(1), 6-13.

Beck, C., & Kosnik, C. (2017) 'The continuum of pre-service and in-service teacher education', in Clandinin, D. J. and Husu, J.(eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Research on Teacher Education.* London: Sage, 107-122.

Becker, H. S. (1960) Notes on the concept of commitment. *American Journal of Sociology, 66*(1), 32-40.

Becker, T. E. (1992) Foci and bases of commitment: Are they distinctions worth making? *Academy of Management Journal, 35*(1), 232-244.

Becker, T. E. (2013) 'Interpersonal Commitments', in Klein, H. J., Becker, T. E., & Meyer, J. P. (eds.) *Commitment in Organizations: Accumulated Wisdom and New Directions*. New York: Routledge, 137-178.

Beijaard, D. (1995) Teachers' prior experiences and actual perceptions of professional identity. *Teachers and Teaching, 1(*2), 281–294.

Beijaard, D. (2011) Editorial. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 17*(5), 515–516.

Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004) Reconsidering research on teachers' professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *20*(2), 107-128.

Bell, A.P., Super, D.E., & Dunn, T.B. (1988) Understanding and implementing career theory: A case study approach. *Counselling and Human Development,* 20(8), 1-19.

Berger, R. (2015) Now I see it, now I don't: researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research,* 15 (2), 219-234.

Berman, E. M., West, J. P., & Richter, M. N. (2002) Workplace relations: Friendship patterns and consequences (according to managers). *Public Administration Review, 62*(2), 217–230.

Betoret, F. D. (2006) Stressors, self-efficacy, coping resources, and burnout among secondary school teachers in Spain. *Educational Psychology, 26*(4), 519-539.

Betts, B. (2012) An insight into the promise and problems of combining life history and grounded theory research. *European Conference on Research Methodology for Business and Management Studies.*

Billett, S. (2012) 'Errors and learning from errors at work', in Bauer, J & Harteis, C. (eds.) *Human fallibility: The ambiguity of errors for work and learning*. Dordrecht: Springer, 17-32.

Bingle, B., Kington, A., Howard, C. & Robinson, C. (2015) Tales from the Watershed: Using repertory grids in the study of mid-career identity (In Press).

Birks, M. & Mills, J. (2015) *Grounded Theory: a practical guide.* London, Sage.

Birt, L., Scott, S., Cavers, D., Campbell, C., & Walter, F. (2016) Member checking: A tool to enhance trustworthiness or merely a nod to validation? *Qualitative Health Research, 26*(13), 1802-1811.

Bishop, J. W., & Dow Scott, K. (2000) An examination of organizational and team commitment in a self-directed team environment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85*(3), 439-450.

Bishop, J.S., Scott, K.D., Goldsby, M.G., & Cropanzano, R. (2005) A construct validity study of commitment and perceived support variables: a multifoci approach across different team environments. *Group and Organization Management, 30*(1), 153-80.

Blatchford, P., Bassett, P., Brown, P. & Webster, R. (2009) The effect of support staff on pupil engagement and individual attention. *British Educational Research Journal*, *35*(5), 661–686.

Blau, G., Chapman, S. A., & Neri, M. (2016) Testing the relationship between Personal/Home care aide trainees' career goals and their commitment to home care. *Home Health Care Management & Practice, 28*(3), 150-154.

Blumer, H. (1969) *Symbolic Interaction: Perspective and Method*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Blustein, D. L. (2011) A relational theory of working. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 79*(1), 1 -17.

Bodenhausen, G. V. (2010) Diversity in the person, diversity in the group: Challenges of identity complexity for social perception and social interaction. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 40*(1), 1–16.

Bowen, G. A. (2009) Supporting a Grounded Theory with an audit trail: An illustration. *International Journal Of Social Research Methodology, 12*(4), 305-316.

Bowlby, J. (1982) *Attachment and Loss* (Vol.1). New York: Basic Books.

Boyd D, Lankford H, Loeb S, & Wyckoff, J. (2005) The draw of home: How teachers' preferences for proximity disadvantage urban schools. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management 24(*1): 113–132.

Braun, A. & Maguire, M. (2018) Doing without believing – enacting policy in the English primary school. *Critical Studies in Education*, Published online: doi:10.1080/17508487.2018.1500384

Breakwell, G. (1986) *Coping with Threatened Identities*. New York: Methuen & Co.

Brewer, M. B., & Gardner, W. (1996) Who is this 'we'? Levels of collective identity and self representations. *Journal of personality and Social Psychology*, 71(1), 83–93.

British Educational Research Association (2014) Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research [online]. Available from: https://www.bera.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/BERA-Ethical-Guidelines-2011.pdf [Accessed 04.10.2016]

Brown, Z. & Manktelow, K. (2016) Perspectives on the standards agenda: exploring the agenda's impact on primary teachers' professional identities, *Education 3-13, 44*(1), 68-80.

Bryant, A., & Charmaz, K. (2010) *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bryk, A. S., & Schneider, B. L. (2002) *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Bucelli I. (2017) The role of 'autonomy' in teaching expertise. *Journal of Philosophy of Education, 51*(3), 588-604.

Bullough, R. V., & Hall-Kenyon, K. M. (2012) On teacher hope, sense of calling, and commitment to teaching. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 39*(2), 7-27.

Busby, E. (2018) 'School staff buy food for children who would go hungry without their help, survey reveals' *Independent*, 1 October. Available at: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/school-funding-cuts-child-poverty-hungry-pupils-gmb-union-a8563656.html [Accessed: 2 October 2018].

Busch, H. & Hofer, J. (2012) Self-regulation and milestones of adult development: Intimacy and generativity. *Developmental Psychology, 48*(1), 282–293.

Buzzanell, P. (2010) Resilience: Talking, resisting, and imagining new normalcies into being. *Journal of Communication, 60*(1), 1–14.

Cameron, D., & Grant, A. (2017) The role of mentoring in early-career physics teachers' professional identity construction. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education, 6*(2), 128-142.

Canrinus, E. T., Helms-Lorenz, M., Beijaard, D., Buitink, J., & Hofman, A. (2012) Self-efficacy, job satisfaction, motivation and commitment: Exploring the relationships between indicators of teachers' professional identity. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 27*(1), 115-132.

Carlyon, T. (2015) Teacher transition between year levels in primary schools: An opportunity for continuing professional development. *Professional Development in Education*, *41*(3), 563-578.

Carlyon, T. (2018) Teachers in schools transitioning from one year level to another: what impact does this have on teachers' professional identity?, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 46*(1), 98-110.

Carter, S., & Little, M. (2007) Justifying knowledge, justifying method, taking action: Epistemologies, methodologies and methods in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, *17*(10), 1316–1328.

Castro, A. J., Kelly, J., & Shih, M. (2010) Resilience strategies for new teachers in high-needs areas. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(3), 622-629.

Chambers, G. & Roper, T. (2000) Why students withdraw from initial teacher training, *Journal of Education for Teaching,* 26(1), 25-43.

Chang, M. (2009) An appraisal perspective of teacher burnout: Examining the emotional work of teachers. *Educational Psychology Review,* 21(3), 193-218.

Chapman, D.W. (1983) A model of the influences on teacher attrition. *Journal of Teacher Education, 34*(1)*,* 43–49.

Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2010) 'Grounded Theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods', in Luttrell, W. (ed.) *Qualitative Educational Research: Readings in Reflexive Methodology and Transformative Practice*. Abingdon: Routledge, 183-207.

Charmaz, K. (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London and Thousand Oaks, CA:SAGE.

Charmaz, K. (2015) Teaching theory construction with initial grounded theory tools: A reflection on lessons and learning. *Qualitative Health Research, 25*(12), 1610-1622.

Chemers, M. M., Zurbriggen, E. L., Syed, M., Goza, B. K., & Bearman, S. (2011) The role of efficacy and identity in science career commitment among underrepresented minority students. *Journal of Social Issues, 67*(3), 469-491.

Chen, G., Gully, S.M., & Eden, D. (2001) Validation of a new general self-efficacy scale. *Organizational Research Methods, 4*(1), 62-83.

Chen, G., & Kanfer, R. (2006) Toward a systems theory of motivated behavior in work teams. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 27*, 223-267.

Chen, J. (2016) Understanding teacher emotions: The development of a teacher emotion inventory. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 55*(1), 68-77.

Chen, S., Boucher, H., & Kraus, M. W. (2013) 'The relational self', in Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., & Vignoles, V. L. (eds.) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Springer, 149-175.

Chen, S., Boucher, H., & Tapias, M. P. (2006) The relational self revealed: Integrative conceptualization and implications for interpersonal life. *Psychological Bulletin, 132*(2), 151-179.

Cherrington, S. (2017) 'Developing teacher identity through situated cognition approaches to teacher education', in Clandinin, D. J. & Husu, J.(eds.) *The Sage handbook of research on teacher education.* London: Sage, 160-176.

Chiong, C., Menzies, L., & Parameshwaran, M. (2017) Why do long-serving teachers stay in the teaching profession? analysing the motivations of teachers with 10 or more years' experience in England. *British Educational Research Journal, 43*(6), 1083-1110.

Chiovitti, R. F., & Piran, N. (2003) Rigour and grounded theory research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 44*(4), 427-435.

Choi, P. L., & Tang, S. Y. F. (2009) Teacher commitment trends: cases of Hong Kong teachers from 1997 to 2007. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(5), 767-777.

Chong, S. (2011) Development of teachers' professional identities: From pre-service to their first year as novice teachers. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy, 8*(2), 219-233.

Clandinin, D. J. (2010) Sustaining teachers in teaching. *Teachers and Teaching*, *16*(3), 281-283.

Coolican, H. (2009) *Research Methods and Statistics in Psychology* (5th edition). London: Hodder Arnold.

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (1990) Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, *13*(1), 3-21.

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2008) *Basics of Qualitative Research* (3rd edition). Los Angeles: Sage.

Dall'Alba, G., & Sandberg, J. (2006) Unveiling professional development: A critical review of stage models. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(3), 383-412.

Darby, A. (2008) Teachers' emotions in the reconstruction of professional self-understanding. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(5), 1160-1172.

Davies, J. & Cole, M. (2018) 'What can you expect?' An exploration of student teachers' responses to a post-graduate module aimed at exploring and addressing poverty and social mobility, and its impact on their professional practice. *Presented at BERA Annual Conference, Newcastle, 11-13 September 2018.*

Day, C. (2002) School reform and transitions in teacher professionalism and identity. *International Journal of Educational Research, 37*(8), 677-692.

Day, C. & Bakioglu, A. (1996) 'Development and disenchantment in the professional lives of head teachers', in Goodson, I. F. & Hargreaves, A. (eds.) *Teachers Professional Lives*. London: Falmer Press, 205-227.

Day, C., Elliot, B., & Kington, A. (2005) Reform, standards and teacher identity: Challenges of sustaining commitment. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(5), 563–577.

Day, C. & Gu, Q. (2009) Veteran teachers: commitment, resilience and quality retention. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 15*(4), 441-457.

Day, C., & Kington, A. (2008) Identity, wellbeing and effectiveness: the emotional contexts of teaching. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 16*(1), 7-23.

Day, C., Sammons, P., Stobart, G., Kington, A. & Gu, Q. (2007) *Teachers Matter: Connecting Work, Lives, and Effectiveness*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Day, C., & Smethem, L. (2009) The effects of reform: Have teachers really lost their sense of professionalism? *Journal of Educational Change, 10*(2), 141-157.

Day, D. V., & Harrison, M. M. (2007) A multilevel, identity-based approach to leadership development. *Human Resource Management Review, 17*(4), 360-373.

Deci, E., & Ryan, R. (1985) *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-determination in Human Behavior*. New York: Plenum Press.

Deneen, C. C. (2011) Through the power of his coffee mug: Negotiating a gendered, professional identity in primary school. *International Journal of Learning,17*(10), 195-203.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) School workforce in England (including pupil: teacher ratios and pupil: adult ratios). Available at: http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20101008170318/http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000813/index.shtml [Accessed: 10 August 2018].

Department for Education (1992) *Education Act 1992*. London: HMSO.

Department for Education (2010) *The Importance of Teaching: The Schools White Paper 2010* [Online] CM7980. London, The stationary Office. Available at: https://www.education.gov.uk/publications//eOrderingDownload/CM-7980.pdf [Accessed 02 March 2015].

Department for Education (2013) *Teachers' Standards: Guidance for school Leaders, School Staff and Governing Bodies*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/665520/Teachers__Standards.pdf [Accessed: 13 June 2018].

Department for Education (2014) *School Performance and Parental Choice of School: secondary data analysis.* Available at: *https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/275938/RR310_-_School_performance_and_parental_choice_of_school.pdf*

Department for Education (2015) *National Standards of Excellence for Head Teachers: Departmental Advice for Head Teachers, Governing Boards and Aspiring Head Teachers.* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396247/National_Standards_of_Excellence_for_Headteachers.pdf [Accessed: 17 September 2018].

Department for Education. (2016) *Educational Excellence Everywhere.* London: HMSO. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/508447/Educational_Excellence_Everywhere.pdf [Accessed 10 July 2016].

Department for Education (2017) *Reducing Teacher Workload Action Plan: Update and Next Steps.* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reducing-teachers-workload [Accessed: 12 September 2018].

Department for Education (2018a) *School Workforce in England*. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/719772/SWFC_MainText.pdf [Accessed: 10 August 2018].

Department for Education (2018b) *Induction for Newly Qualified Teachers (England).* Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/696428/Statutory_Induction_Guidance_2018.pdf. [Accessed:12 June 2018].

Devos, C., Dupriez, V., & Paquay, L. (2012) Does the social working environment predict beginning teachers' self-efficacy and feelings of depression? *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(2), 206-217.

Dick, A. L. (2013) Why epistemology matters. *Information Development*, 29(1), 7-9.

Dicke, T., Parker, P. D., Holzberger, D., Kunina-Habenicht, O., Kunter, M., & Leutner, D. (2015) Beginning teachers' efficacy and emotional exhaustion: Latent changes, reciprocity,

and the influence of professional knowledge. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, *41*(1) 62–72.

Dinham, J., Chalk, B., Beltman, S., Glass, C., & Nguyen, B. (2017) Pathways to resilience: how drawings reveal pre-service teachers' core narratives underpinning their future teacher-selves. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *45*(2), 126-144.

Dinham, S., & Scott, C. (2000) Moving into the third, outer domain of teacher satisfaction. *Journal of Educational Administration, 38*(4), 379-396.

Dunne, L., Goddard, G., & Woolhouse, C. (2008) Mapping the changes: A critical exploration into the career trajectories of teaching assistants who undertake a foundation degree. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 60*(1), 49-59.

Dutton, J. E., Roberts, L. M., & Bednar, J. (2010) Pathways for positive identity construction at work: Four types of positive identity and the building of social resources. *Academy of Management Review, 35*(2), 265-293.

Eldor, L., & Shoshani, A. (2016) Caring relationships in school staff: Exploring the link between compassion and teacher work engagement. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *59*(1), 126-136.

Ellemers, N., De Gilder, D., & Haslam, S. A. (2004) Motivating individuals and groups at work: A social identity perspective on leadership and group performance. *Academy of Management Review, 29*(3), 459-78.

Elliot, J. (2005) *Using Narrative in Social Research.* London: Sage.

Elliott, J. (2018) Teach First organisational discourse: What are Teach First teachers really being trained for? *Power and Education, 10*(3), 264-274.

Emo, W. (2015) Teachers' motivations for initiating innovations. *Journal of Educational Change, 16*(2), 171-195.

Engvik, G. & Emstad, A. B. (2017) The importance of school leaders' engagement in socialising newly qualified teachers into the teaching profession. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 20*(4), 468-490.

Erikson, E. H. (1950) *Childhood and Society.* New York: Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1959) Identity and the Life Cycle. *Psychological Issues*, *1*(1), 1-171.

Erikson, E. H. (1963) *Childhood and Society* (second edition). New York: Norton

Erikson, E. H. (1968) Identity, Youth, and Crisis. New York: Norton.

Erikson, E. H. (1980) *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York: Norton.

Falk, B. (2014) Early career teachers: Possibilities for professional learning. *The New Educator, 10*(3), 163-165.

Fantilli, R. D., McDougall, D. E. (2009) A study of novice teachers: Challenges and supports in the first years. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(6), 814-825.

Farrell, P., Alborz, A., Howes, A., & Pearson, D. (2010) The impact of teaching assistants on improving pupils' academic achievement in mainstream schools: A review of the literature. *Educational Review, 62*(4), 435-448.

Fessler, R. & Christensen, J. (1992) *The teacher career cycle: Understanding and guiding the professional development of teachers*. Needham Heights/Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Fielding, M. (2001) Ofsted, Inspection and the betrayal of democracy. *Journal of the Philosophy of Education, 35*(4), 695-709.

Flores, M. A. (2004) The impact of school culture and leadership on new teachers' learning in the workplace. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 7*(4), 297-318.

Flores, M. A. (2006) Being a novice teacher in two different settings: Struggles, continuities, and discontinuities. *Teachers College Record, 108*(10), 2021–2052.

Flores, M. A., & Day, C. (2006) Contexts which shape and reshape new teachers' identities: A multi-perspective study. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *22*(2), 219-232.

Font, C. M. (2017) The role of critical incidents in the dialogical construction of teacher identity: Analysis of a professional transition case. *Revista Akadèmeia,16*(2), 49-75.

Forde, C., McMahon, M., McPhee, A. and Patrick, F. (2006) *Professional Development, Reflection and Enquiry.* London: Paul Chapman.

Frelin, A. & Fransson, G. (2017) Four components that sustain teachers' commitment to students – a relational and temporal model. *Reflective Practice, 18*(5), 641-654.

Freud, S. (1905) *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality: Complete Psychological Works*, *Volume 7*. London: Hogarth.

Friedrich D, Walter M and Colmenares E (2015) Making all children count: Teach for All and the universalizing appeal of data. *Education Policy Analysis Archives, 23*(48). Available from: https://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/1797 [Accessed 30 July 2018]

Friesen, M. D., & Besley, S. C. (2013) Teacher identity development in the first year of teacher education: A developmental and social psychological perspective. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 36*(1), 23-32.

Fritz, J. H. (2014) Researching workplace relationships: What can we learn from qualitative organizational studies? *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships, 31*(4),460–466.

Gaertner, L., Sedikides, C., Luke, M., O'Mara, E. M., Iuzzini, J., Jackson, L. E., Cai, H., Wu, Q. (2012) A motivational hierarchy within: Primacy of the individual self, relational self, or collective self? *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(5), 997-1013.

Gergen, K.J. (1977) 'Stability, change and chance in understanding human development', in Datan, N. & Reeses, H.W. (eds.) *Life-Span Developmental Psychology: Dialectical Perspectives on Experimental Research*. New York: Academic Press, 119-141.

George, A. J. T. (2016). Research ethics. *Medicine, 44*(10), 615-618.

George, S. V., Richardson, P. W., & Watt, H. M. (2018) Early-career teachers' self-efficacy: A longitudinal study from Australia. *Australian Journal of Education, 62*(2), 217-233.

Gibbs, S. (2018) The immorality of education: A position paper for educational psychologists. *Educational & Child Psychology, 35*(3), 86-95.

Glaser, B. (1978) *Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory.* Mill Valley, CA: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. (1992) *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis*. Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B. (1998) *Doing Grounded Theory: Issues and Discussions.* Mill Valley: Sociology Press.

Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.* Chicago: Alsine De Gruyter.

Goddard, R., O'Brien, P., & Goddard, M. (2006) Work environment predictors of beginning teacher burnout. *British Educational Research Journal, 32*(6), 857–874.

Goldkuhl, G., & Cronholm, S. (2010) Adding theoretical grounding to grounded theory: Toward multi-grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *9*(2), 187–205.

Goodman, P.S., Ramanujam, R., Carroll, J.S., Edmondson, A.C., Hofmann, D.A., & Sutcluffe, K.M. (2011) Organizational errors: directions for future research. *Research in Organizational Behaviour*, *31*(1), 151–176.

Goodson, I. F. (2007) All the lonely people: the struggle for private meaning and public purpose in education. *Critical Studies in Education*, *48*(1), 131-148.

Goodson, I. F. (2008) *Investigating the Teacher's Life and Work.* Rotterdam: Sense.

Goodson, I. F. (2009) 'Listening to professional life stories: Some cross professional perspectives', in Bayer, M., Brinkkjær, U., Plauborg, H., & Rolls, S. (eds.) *Teachers' Career Trajectories and Work Lives*. New York: Springer, 203-210.

Goodson, I. F., Moore, S., & Hargreaves, A. (2006) Teacher nostalgia and the sustainability of reform: The generation and degeneration of teachers' missions, memory, and meaning. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 42*(1), 42-61.

Goodson, I. F. & Numan, U. (2002) Teacher's life worlds, agency and policy contexts. *Teachers and Teaching, 8*(3), 269-279.

Goodson, I. F. & Sikes, P. (2001) *Life History Research in Educational Settings: Learning from Lives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Goodson, I. F. & Sikes, P. (2017) 'Techniques for doing life history' in Goodson, I., Antikainen, A., Sikes, P., & Andrews, M. (eds.) *The Routledge International Handbook on Narrative and Life History.* New York: Routledge, 72-88.

Graves, S. B., & Larkin, E. (2006) Lessons from Erikson: A look at autonomy across the lifespan. *Journal of Intergenerational Relationships, 4*(2), 61-71.

Grey, C., & Sturdy, A. (2007) Friendship and organizational analysis: Toward a research agenda. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 16*(2), 157–172.

Groundwater-Smith, S. & Sachs, J. (2002) The activist professional and the reinstatement of trust. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *32*(3), 341-358.

Gu, Q. (2014) The role of relational resilience in teachers' career long commitment and effectiveness. *Teachers and Teaching, 20*(5), 502-529.

Gu, Q., & Day, C. (2007) Teachers resilience: A necessary condition for effectiveness. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 23*(8), 1302-1316.

Gu, Q., & Day, C. (2013) Challenges to teacher resilience: Conditions count. *British Educational Research Journal, 39*(1), 22-44.

Gu, Q., & Johansson, O. (2013) Sustaining school performance: School contexts matter. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 16*(3), 301-326.

Gu, Q., Sammons, P., & Chen, J. (2018) How principals of successful schools enact education policy: Perceptions and accounts from senior and middle leaders. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 17*(3), 373-390.

Guarino, C. M., Santiba~nez, L., & Daley, G. A. (2006) Teacher recruitment and retention: a review of the recent empirical literature. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(2), 173-208.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1989) *Fourth Generation Evaluation.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Gupta, M. (2017) Corporate social responsibility, Employee–Company identification, and organizational commitment: Mediation by employee engagement. *Current Psychology, 36*(1), 101-109.

Haeruddin, M. I. M., & Natsir, U. D. (2016) The cat's in the cradle: 5 personality types' influence on work-family conflict of nurses. *Economics & Sociology, 9*(3), 99-110.

Hagger, H., Mutton, T., & Burn, K. (2011) Surprising but not shocking: The reality of the first year of teaching. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 41*(4), 387-405.

Hall, D. T. (1971) A theoretical model of career sub-identity development in organizational settings. *Organizational Behavior & Human Performance, 6*(1), 50-76.

Hamman, D., Coward, F., Johnson, L., Lambert, M., Zhou, L. & Indiatsi, J. (2013) Teacher possible selves: How thinking about the future contributes to the formation of professional identity. *Self and Identity, 12*(3), 307-336.

Hamman, D., Gosselin, K., Romano, J., & Bunuan, R. (2010) Using possible-selves theory to understand the identity development of new teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(7), 1349-1361.

Hammett, N. & Burton, N. (2005) Motivation, stress and learning support assistants: An examination of staff perceptions at a rural secondary school. *School Leadership and Management 25*(3), 199–310.

Hardy, I., & Lewis, S. (2018) Visibility, invisibility, and visualisation: The danger of school performance data. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 26*(2), 233-248.

Hargreaves, A. (1994) *Changing Teachers, Changing Times – Teachers Work and Culture in the Postmodern Age.* London: Cassell.

Hargreaves, A. (1998) The emotional practice of teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 14*(8), 835-854.

Hargreaves, A. (2001) The emotional geographies of teachers' relations with colleagues. *International Journal of Educational Research, 35*(5), 503–527.

Hargreaves, A. & Fullan, M. (2012) *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hargreaves, A. & Goodson, I. F. (1996) 'Teachers' professional lives: aspirations and actualities' in Goodson, I. F. & Hargreaves, A. (eds.) *Teachers' Professional Lives*. London: Falmer, 1-28.

Hargreaves, A., Lieberman, A., Fullan, M. & Hopkins, D. (2005) *The Roots of Educational Change: International Handbook of Educational Change*. Dordrecht/Boston, MA/London: Springer.

Haslam, S. A. (2001) *Psychology in Organizations: The Social Identity Approach.* London & Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Haslam, S. A. & Ellemers, N. (2013) 'Identity processes in organisations' in Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., and Vignoles, V. L. (eds.) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Springer, 715-744.

Haslam, S. A., Postmes, T., & Ellemers, N. (2003) More than a metaphor: Organisational identity makes organisational life possible. *British Journal of Management, 14*(4), 357-369.

Haslam, S. A., Powell, C., & Turner, J. (2000) Social identity, self-categorization, and work motivation: Rethinking the contribution of the group to positive and sustainable organisational outcomes. *Applied Psychology and International Review, 49*(3), 319-339.

Haslam, S. A., & Reicher, S. (2006) Stressing the group: Social identity and the unfolding dynamics of responses to stress. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 91*(5), 1037-1052.

Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S. D., & Levine, M. (2012) 'When other people are heaven, when other people are hell: How social identity determines the nature and impact of social support', in Jetten, J., Haslam, C., & Haslam, S. A. (eds.) *The Social Cure: Identity Health and Wellbeing.* Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 157-174.

Hayes, D. (2004) Recruitment and retention: Insights into the motivation of primary trainee teachers in England. *Research in Education*, *71*(1), 37-49.

Hebert, E., & Worthy, T. (2001) Does the first year of teaching have to be a bad one? A case study of success. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 17*(8), 897-911.

Hellawell, D. (2006) Inside-out: Analysis of the insider-outsider concept as a heuristic device to develop reflexivity in students doing qualitative research. *Teaching in Higher Education*, *11*(4), 483–494.

Henry, A. (2016) Conceptualizing Teacher Identity as a Complex Dynamic System: The Inner Dynamics of Transformations During a Practicum. *Journal of Teacher Education, 67*(4), 291-305.

Hinchliffe, G. (2004) Work and human flourishing. *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 36(5), 535–47.

Hobson, A.J. (2009) On being bottom of the pecking order: beginner teachers' perceptions and experiences of support. *Teacher Development: An International Journal of Teachers' Professional Development*,*13*(4), 299-320.

Hobson, A. J., Ashby, P., Malderez, A., & Tomlinson, P. D. (2009) Mentoring Beginning Teachers: What We Know and What We Don't. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(1), 205–216.

Hobson, A. J., & Malderez, A. (2013) Judgementoring and other threats to realizing the potential of school-based mentoring in teacher education. *International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching in Education, 2*(2), 89-108.

Hodson, E. Smith, K. & Brown, T. (2012) Reasserting theory in professionally based initial teacher education. *Teachers and Teaching*, *18*(2), 181-195.

Hoekstra, A. (2011) A career roles model of career development. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 78*(2), 159-173.

Hoekstra, A., Korthagen, F., Brekelmans, M., Beijaard, D., & Imants, J. (2009) Experienced teachers' informal workplace learning and perceptions of workplace conditions. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 21*(4), 276-298.

Hogg, M. A. (2011) 'Social identity and the psychology of groups', in Leary, M.R. (eds.), *Handbook of Self and Identity* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press, 502-519.

Holland, J. L. (1959) A theory of vocational choice. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *6*(1), 35-45.

Holland, J. L. (1997) *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments*. Odessa, FL: Psychological Assessment Resources.

Hong, J. (2010) Pre-service and beginning teachers' professional identity and its relation to dropping out of the profession. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*(8), 1530-1543.

Hong, J., Greene, B., & Lowery, J. (2017) Multiple dimensions of teacher identity development from pre-service to early years of teaching: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 43*(1), 84-98.

Hope, N. H., Milyavskaya, M., Holding, A. C., & Koestner, R. (2014) Self-growth in the college years: Increased importance of intrinsic values predicts resolution of identity and intimacy stages. *Social Psychological and Personality Science, 5*(6), 705-712.

House of Commons Education Committee (2012) *Great Teachers: Attracting, Training and Retaining the Best.* London: The Stationery Office Limited. Available at :http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmeduc/1515/151502.htm [Accessed 30 March 2015].

House of Commons Education Committee (2017) *Recruitment and Retention of Teachers.* Fifth Report of Session 2016–17 (HC 199). London: TSO. Available at: https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmeduc/199/199.pdf [Accessed 20 June, 2018].

Hoy, A. W., & Spero, R. B. (2005) Changes in teacher efficacy during the early years of teaching: A comparison of four measures. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(4), 343-356.

Huberman, M. (1993) *The Lives of Teachers*. London, New York: Cassell and Teachers College Press.

Hudson, P. (2013) Mentoring as professional development: 'Growth for both' mentor and mentee. *Professional Development in Education, 39*(5), 771-783.

Hull, G. A., & Zacher, J. (2007) Enacting identities: An ethnography of a job training program. *Identity, 7*(1), 71-102.

Hunter-Johnson, Y. (2015) Demystifying the mystery of second career teachers' motivation to teach. The Qualitative Report, 20(8), 1359 – 1370.

Hussein, M. E., Hirst, S., Salyers, V., & Osuji, J. (2014) Using Grounded Theory As A Method Of Inquiry: Advantages And Disadvantages. *The Qualitative Report*, *19*(27), 1-15.

Huyghebaert, T., Gillet, N., Audusseau, O., & Fouquereau, E. (2019) Perceived career opportunities, commitment to the supervisor, social isolation: Their effects on nurses' well-being and turnover. *Journal of Nursing Management, 27*(1), 207-214.

Ibarra, H. (1999) Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 44*(4), 764–791.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2001) Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: an organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal, 38(*3), 499-534.

Ingersoll, R. M. (2012) Beginning teacher induction: What the data tells us. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 93*(8), 47–51.

Ioannidis, J. P. A. (2007) Limitations are not properly acknowledged in the scientific literature. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology, 60*(4), 324-329.

Izadinia, M. (2013) A review of research on student teachers' professional identity. *British Educational Research Journal Association, 39*(4), 694-713.

Izadinia, M. (2016) Student teachers' and mentor teachers' perceptions and expectations of a mentoring relationship: Do they match or clash? *Professional Development in Education, 42*(3), 387-402.

Jeffrey, B., & Woods, P. (1996) Feeling deprofessionalised: The social construction of emotions during an OFSTED inspection. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 26*(3), 325-343.

Jenkins, R. (2008) *Social Identity.* New York: Routledge.

Jetten, J., Haslam, C., & Haslam, S. A. (2012) *The Social Cure: Identity, Health and Well-Being.* New York : Psychology Press.

Jetten, J., Haslam, S. A., Cruwys, T., Greenaway, K. H., Haslam, C., & Steffens, N. K. (2017) Advancing the social identity approach to health and well-being: Progressing the social cure research agenda. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 47*(7), 789-802.

Jetten, J., Haslam, S. A., Iyer, A., & Haslam, C. (2009) 'Turning to others in times of change: Shared identity and coping with stress', in Sturmer, S. & Snyder, M.(eds.), *New Directions in the Study of Helping: Group Level Perspectives on Motivations, Consequences and Interventions.* Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 139-156.

Jo, S. H. (2014) Teacher commitment: Exploring associations with relationships and emotions. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 43*(1), 120-130.

Johansson, S., Myrberg, E., & Rosén, M. (2015) Formal teacher competence and its effect on pupil reading achievement. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 59*(5), 564-582.

Johnson, B., Down, B., Le Cornu, R., Peters, J., Sullivan, A., Pearce, J., & Hunter, J. (2014) Promoting early career teacher resilience: A framework for understanding and acting. *Teachers and Teaching, 20*(5), 530-546.

Johnson, L. (2005) Why principals quit. *Principal, 84(3)*, 21-23.

Johnson, R. E., & Chang, C. (2006) "I" is to continuance as "we" is to affective: The relevance of the self-concept for organizational commitment. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 27*(5), 549-570.

Jones, B. K. (2016) Enduring in an "impossible" occupation: Perfectionism and commitment to teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education, 67*(5), 437 – 446.

Jones, K., & Tymms, P. (2014) Ofsted's role in promoting school improvement: The mechanisms of the school inspection system in England. *Oxford Review of Education, 40*(3), 315-330.

Kashima, E. S., & Hardie, E. A. (2000) The development and validation of the relational, individual and collective self-aspects (RIC) scale. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology, 3*(1),19 –48.

Kashima, Y., Yamaguchi, S., Kim, U., Choi, S. C., Gelfand, M. J., & Yuki, M. (1995) Culture, gender and the self: A perspective from individualism – collectivism research. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *69*(5), 925 – 937.

Keddie, A. (2016) Children of the market: Performativity, neoliberal responsibilisation and the construction of student identities. *Oxford Review of Education, 42*(1), 108-122.

Kelchtermans, G. (2005) Teachers' emotions in educational reforms: Self-understanding, vulnerable commitment and micro-political literacy. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(8), 995-1006.

Kelchtermans, G. (2009a) 'Career stories as gateway to understanding teacher development', in Bayer, M., Brinkkjær, U., Plauborg, H., & Rolls, S. (eds.) *Teachers' Career Trajectories and Work Lives*. New York: Springer, 9-28.

Kelchtermans, G. (2009b) Who I am in how I teach is the message: Self-understanding, vulnerability, and reflection. *Teachers and Teaching, Theory and Practice, 15*(2), 257-272.

Kelchtermans, G., & Ballet, K. (2002) The micro-politics of teacher induction. A narrative-biographical study on teacher socialisation. *Teaching and Teacher Education,* 18(1), 105–120.

Kelly, A., & Saunders, N. (2010) New heads on the block: Three case studies of transition to primary school headship. *School Leadership & Management, 30*(2), 127-142.

Kelly, N., Sim, C., & Ireland, M. (2018) Slipping through the cracks: Teachers who miss out on early career support. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 46*(3), 292-316.

King, F. (2014) Evaluating the impact of teacher professional development: an evidence-based framework. *Professional Development in Education, 40*(1), 89–111.

Kington, A. (2012) Narratives of variation in teacher-pupil relationships across a career, *European Journal of Educational Studies, 4*(2), 189-201.

Kington, A., Reed, N., & Sammons, P. (2014) Teachers' constructs of effective classroom practice: variations across career phases. *Research Papers in Education,* 29(5), 534-556.

Kington, A., Sammons, P., Regan, E., Brown, E., Ko, J., & Buckler, S. (2014) *Effective Classroom Practice*. Maidenhead: McGraw Hill.

Kivetz, Y. & Tyler, T. R. (2007) Tomorrow I'll be me: The effect of time perspective on the activation of idealistic versus pragmatic selves. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 102*(2), 193-211.

Klassen, R. M., & Chiu, M. M. (2011) The occupational commitment and intention to quit of practicing and pre-service teachers: influence of self-efficacy, job stress, and teaching context. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 36*(1), 114-129.

Klassen, R., Wilson, E., Angela F. Y. Siu, Hannok, W., Wong, M. W., Wongsri, N., . . . Jansem, A. (2013). Preservice teachers' work stress, self-efficacy, and occupational commitment in four countries. *European Journal of Psychology of Education, 28*(4), 1289-1309.

Klein, S. B. (2001) 'A self to remember: a cognitive neuropsychological perspective on how self creates memory and memory creates self', in Sedikides, C., and Brewer, M. B. (eds.) *Individual Self, Relational Self, Collective Self.* Psychology Press: Philadelphia, 25-46.

Kram, K. E., Wasserman, I. C., & Yip, J. (2012) Metaphors of identity and professional practice: Learning from the Scholar–Practitioner. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 48*(3), 304-341.

Kwok, A. (2017) Relationships between instructional quality and classroom management for beginning urban teachers. *Educational Researcher, 46*(7), 355-365.

Kyriacou, C. (2001) Teacher stress: Directions for future research. *Educational Review,* 53 (1), 27-35.

Labone, E. (2004) Teacher efficacy: Maturing the construct through research in alternative paradigms. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 20*(4), 341-359.

Lacey, C. (1977) *The Socialisation of Teachers*. London: Methuen.

Ladd, G. W. (2005) *Children's Peer Relations and Social Competence: A Century of Progress.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Landry, G., & Vandenberghe, C. (2009) Role of commitment to the supervisor, leader-member exchange, and supervisor-based self-esteem in employee-supervisor conflicts. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 149*(1), 5-28.

Lasky, S. (2005) A sociocultural approach to understanding teacher identity, agency and professional vulnerability in a context of secondary school reform. *Teaching and Teacher Education: An International Journal of Research and Studies, 21*(8), 899-916.

Lassila, E. T., Timonen, V., Uitto, M., & Estola, E. (2017) Storied emotional distances in the relationships between beginning teachers and school principals. *British Educational Research Journal, 43*(3), 486-504.

Lauder, H. (2006) *Education, Globalization, and Social Change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Le Cornu, R. (2013) Building early career teacher resilience: The role of relationships. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, *38*(4), 1-16.

Le Gallais, T. (2008) Wherever I go there I am: reflections on reflexivity and the research stance. *Reflective Practice*, *9*(2), 145-155.

Le Maistre, C., & Paré, A. (2010) Whatever It Takes: How Beginning Teachers Learn to Survive. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(3), 559–564.

Lee, K., Carswell, J. J., & Allen, N. J. (2000) A meta-analytic review of occupational commitment: Relationships with person and work related variables. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 85*(5)*,* 799-811.

Lee, S., & Schallert, D. L. (2016) Becoming a teacher: Coordinating past, present, and future selves with perspectival understandings about teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 56*(1), 72-83.

Leithwood, K., & Sun, J. (2012) The nature and effects of transformational school leadership: A meta-analytic review of unpublished research. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48*(3), 387-423.

Lemov, D. (2015) *Teach Like a Champion 2: 62 techniques that put students on the path to college*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Lempert, L.B. (2007) 'Asking questions of the data: Memo writing in the grounded theory tradition', in Bryant, A. & Charmaz, K. (eds.) *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory.* London: SAGE, 245-264.

Levinson, D. J. (1986) A conception of adult development. *American Psychologist*, *41*(1), 3-13.

Levinson, D.J., Darrow, C.M., Klein, E.B., Levinson, M.H., & McKee, B. (1974) The psychosocial development of men in early adulthood and the mid-life transition. *Life History Research in Psychopathology*, *3*(1), 243–248.

Levinson, D.J., Darrow, C. M., Klein, E.B., Levinson, M.H., & McKee, B. (1978) *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. New York: AA Knopf.

Lindqvist, P., Nordanger, U., & Carlsson, R. (2014) Teacher attrition the first five years – A multifaceted image. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 40*(4), 94–103.

LoCasale-Crouch, J., Davis, E., Wiens, P., & Pianta, R. (2012) The role of the mentor in supporting new teachers: Associations with self-efficacy, reflection, and quality. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning, 20*(3), 303–323.

Lortie, D. C. (1975) *Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lovett, S., & Davey, R. (2009) Being a secondary English teacher in New Zealand: Complex realities in the first 18 months. *Professional Development in Education, 35*(4), 547–566.

Luthans, F. (2002) The need for, and meaning of, positive organizational behavior, *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 23*(6), 695-706.

Lyons, A., & Heywood, W. (2016) Collective resilience as a protective factor for the mental health and well-being of HIV-positive gay men. *Psychology of Sexual Orientation and Gender Diversity, 3*(4), 473-479.

McAdams, D.P. (1996) 'Narrating the self in adulthood', in Birren, J.E., Kenyon, G.M., Ruth, J-E., Schrot, J.F., & Svensson, T. (eds.) *Aging and Biography: Explorations in Adult Development*. New York: Springer, 131-148.

McAdams, D.P. (2001) 'Generativity in midlife', in Lachman, M.E. (ed.) *Handbook of Midlife Development.* New York: John Wiley, 395-443.

McAdams, D. P. (2006) The problem of narrative coherence. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology, 19*(2), 109-125.

McCormack, A., Gore, J., & Thomas, K. (2006) Early career teacher professional learning. *Asia Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 34*(1), 95-113.

McCrae, N., & Purssell, E. (2016) Is it really theoretical? A review of sampling in grounded theory studies in nursing journals. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 72*(10), 2284-2293.

McIntyre, J. & Thompson, P. (2015) 'Poverty, Schooling, and Beginning Teachers Who Make a Difference: A Case Study From England', in Lampert, J. & Burnett, B. (eds.). *Teacher education for high poverty schools.* New York & London: Springer, 153-170.

McNally, J., Blake, A., & Reid, A. (2009) The informal learning of new teachers in school. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 21*(4), 322–333.

Maclean, R., & White, S. (2007) Video reflection and the formation of teacher identity in a team of pre-service and experienced teachers. *Reflective Practice, 8*(1), 47-60.

Male, T. (2006) *Being an Effective Head Teacher*. London: Paul Chapman.

Malone, J. C., Liu, S. R., Vaillant, G. E., Rentz, D. M., & Waldinger, R. J. (2016) Midlife Eriksonian psychosocial development: Setting the stage for late-life cognitive and emotional health. *Developmental Psychology, 52*(3), 496-508.

Mansaray. Ayo, A. (2006) Liminality and in/exclusion: exploring the work of teaching assistants. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 14*(2),171-187.

Mansfield, C., Price, A., & Beltman, S. (2014) 'I'm coming back again!' the resilience process of early career teachers. *Teachers and Teaching,* 20 (5), 547-567.

Marcia, J. E. (1966) Development and validation of ego identity status. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3*(5), 551-558.

Marcia, J.E. (2002) Adolescence, identity, and the Bernardone family. *Identity*, *2*(3), 199-209.

Markus, H., & Nurius, P. (1986) Possible selves. *American Psychologist, 41*(9), 954-969.

Martin, K., Buelow, S. M., & Hoffman, J. T. (2016) New teacher induction: Support that impacts beginning middle level educators. *Middle School Journal, 47*(1), 4–12.

Maslach, C. (2003) Job burnout: new directions in research and intervention. *Current Directions in Psychological Science, 12*(5), 189-192.

Maslow, A. H. (1954) The instinctoid nature of basic needs. *Journal of Personality, 22*, 326–347.

Mawhinney, L. (2010) Let's lunch and learn: Professional knowledge sharing in teachers' lounges and other congregational spaces. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(4), 972-978.

Mawhinney, L. (2012) The creation of restorative places for teachers in an urban school. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 41*(5), 554-580.

Mead, G. H. (1934) *Mind, Self and Society.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Meristo, M., & Eisenschmidt, E. (2014) Novice teachers' perceptions of school climate and self-efficacy. *International Journal of Educational Research, 67*(1), 1–10.

Merriam, S.B. (2002) Introduction to qualitative research. *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Merton, R. K. (1972) Insiders and outsiders: A chapter in the sociology of knowledge. *American Journal of Sociology*, *78*(1), 9–47.

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1984) Testing the "side-bet theory" of organizational commitment: Some methodological considerations. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 69*(3), 372-378.

Meyer, J. P. & Allen, N. J. (1991) A three-component conceptualisation of organisational commitment. *Human Resource Management Review, 11*(3), 299-326.

Meyer, J. P., & Allen, N. J. (1997) *Commitment in the Workplace: Theory, Research, and Application.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Meyer, J. P., Allen, N. J., & Smith, C. A. (1993) Commitment to organizations and occupations: Extension and test of a three-component conceptualization. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*(4), 538-551.

Meyer, J. P., Becker, T. E., & Vandenberghe, C. (2004) Employee commitment and motivation: A conceptual analysis and integrative model. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 89*(6), 991-1007.

Meyer, J. P., & Herscovitch, L. (2001) Commitment in the workplace: Toward a general model. *Human Resource Management Review, 11*(3), 299-326.

Meyer, J. P., Stanley, D. J., Herscovitch, L., & Topolnytsky, L. (2002) Affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization: A meta-analysis of antecedents, correlates, and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 61*(1), 20–52.

Miller, V. D., Allen, M., Casey, M. K., & Johnson, J. R. (2000). Reconsidering the organizational identification questionnaire. *Management Communication Quarterly, 13*(4)*,* 626-658.

Miller, K. & Shifflet, R. (2016) How memories of school inform preservice teachers' feared and desired selves as teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *53*(1), 20–29.

Mills, J., Bonner, A., & Francis, K. (2006) The development of constructivist grounded theory. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods, 5*(1), 1–10.

Milner, K., Russell, J., & Siemers, I. (2010) Friendship in socially isolating work environments. *South African Journal of Psychology, 40*(2), 204-213.

Mills, M., Haase, M., & Charlton, E. (2008) Being the 'right' kind of male teacher: The disciplining of John. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 16*(1), 71-84.

Moolenaar, N. M. (2012) A social network perspective on teacher collaboration in schools: Theory, methodology, and applications. *American Journal of Education, 119*(1), 7-39.

Morrow, P. C. (1983) Concept redundancy in organisational research: The case of work commitment. *Academy of Management Review, 8*(3), 486-500.

Morse, J. M., Stern, P., Corbin, J., Bowers, B., Charmaz, K., & Clarke, A. (2009) *Developing Grounded Theory: The Second Generation.* Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Mossholder, K.W., Settoon, R.P., & Henagan, S.C. (2005) A relational perspective on turnover: examining structural, attitudinal and behavioural predictors. *Academy of Management Journal, 48*(4),607-621.

Muhlhaus, J., & Bouwmeester, O. (2016) The paradoxical effect of self-categorization on work stress in a high-status occupation: Insights from management consulting. *Human Relations, 69*(9), 1823-1852.

Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2005) *Attachment in Adulthood: Structure, Dynamics and Change*. New York: Guilford Press.

National Association of Head Teachers (2015) *The NAHT school recruitment survey 2015*. Retrieved from http://www.teachagain.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/NAHT-recruitment-survey-2015.pdf

National Audit Office (2016) *Training New Teachers.* Retrieved from https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Training-new-teachers.pdf

National Audit Office (2017) Retaining and developing the teaching workforce. Retrieved from https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Retaining-and-developing-the-teaching-workforce.pdf [Accessed 20 June 2018]

Newberry, M., & Davis, H. A. (2008) The role of elementary teachers' conceptions of closeness to students on their differential behaviour in the classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(8), 1965-1985.

Ng, T. W. H., & Feldman, D. C. (2010) The impact of job embeddedness on innovation-related behaviors. *Human Resource Management*, *49*(6), 1067–1087.

Ngo, H., & Hui, L. (2018) Individual orientations and career satisfaction: The mediating roles of work engagement and self-efficacy. *Journal of Career Development, 45*(5), 425-439.

Nehmeh, G., & Kelly, A. M. (2018) Urban science teachers in isolation: Challenges, resilience, and adaptive action. *Journal of Science Teacher Education, 29*(6), 527-549.

Nias, J. (1981) Commitment and motivation in primary school teachers. *Educational Review, 33(*3), 181-190.

Nias, J. (1989) *Primary Teachers Talking.* London: Routledge.

Nichols, S. L., Schutz, P.A., Rodgers, K., & Bilica, K. (2017) Early career teachers' emotion and emerging teacher identities, *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(4), 406-421.

Nye, B., Konstantopoulos, S., & Hedges, L. V. (2004) How large are teacher effects? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 26*(3), 237-257.

O'Connor, K.E. (2008) "You choose to care": Teachers, emotions and professional identity", *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(1), 117-126.

O'Neill, S., & Stephenson, J. (2013). One year on: First-year primary teachers' perceptions of preparedness to manage misbehaviour and their confidence in the strategies they use. *Australasian Journal of Special Education, 37*(2), 125–146.

Office for Standards in Education (2018) *School Inspection Handbook.* HMI 150066. London: Ofsted publications. Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730127/School_inspection_handbook_section_5_270718.pdf [Accessed 20 October 2018]

Ok, A. B., & Vandenberghe, C. (2016) Organizational and career-oriented commitment and employee development behaviors. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 31*(5), 930-945.

Olsen, B. (2008) Reasons for entry into the profession illuminate teacher identity development. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 35*(3), 23–40.

Olsen, B. (2010) *Teaching for Success. Developing Your Teacher Identity in Today's Classroom.* Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers.

Olsen, B., & Sexton, D. (2009) Threat, rigidity, school reform, and how teachers view their work inside current education policy contexts. *American Educational Research Journal, 46*(1), 9-44.

Olssen, M. (2004) Neoliberalism, globalisation, democracy: Challenges for education. *Globalisation, Societies and Education, 2*(2), 231-275.

Oyserman, D. & James, L. (2013) 'Possible identities', in Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., and Vignoles, V. L. (eds.) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Springer, 117-145.

Padgett, D.K., Mathew, R., & Conte, S. (2004) 'Peer debriefing and support groups: Formation, care, and maintenance', in Padgett, D. K. (ed.) *The Qualitative Experience.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 225-235.

Page, D. (2017). The surveillance of teachers and the simulation of teaching. *Journal of Education Policy, 32*(1), 1-13.

Palmer, M., Rose, D., Sanders, M., & Randle, F. (2012) Conflict between work and family among New Zealand teachers with dependent children. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 28*(7), 1049-1058.

Palmer, P. (1998) *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Papaoikonomou, E., & Valor, C. (2016) Exploring commitment in peer-to-peer exchanges: The case of time banks. *Journal of Marketing Management, 32*(13-14), 1333-1358.

Parding, K., McGrath-Champ, S., & Stacey, M. (2017) Teachers, school choice and competition: Lock-in effects within and between sectors. *Policy Futures in Education, 15*(1), 113-128.

Pearce, J., & Morrison, C. (2011) Teacher identity and early career resilience: Exploring the links. Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 36(1), 47-59.

Pedersen, V. B., & Lewis, S. (2012) Flexible friends? Flexible working time arrangements, blurred work-life boundaries and friendship. *Work, Employment & Society, 26*(3), 464–480.

Perryman, J. (2006) Panoptic performativity and school inspection regimes: disciplinary mechanisms and life under special measures. *Journal of Education Policy, 21*(2), 147–161.

Perryman, J., Maguire, M., Braun, A., & Ball, S. (2018) Surveillance, governmentality and moving the goalposts: The influence of Ofsted on the work of schools in a post-panoptic era. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 66*(2), 145-163.

Peters, J., & Pearce, J. (2012) Relationships and early career teacher resilience: A role for school principals. *Teachers and Teaching, 18*(2), 249-262.

Piaget, J. (1974) *The Origins of Intelligence in Children.* New York: International Universities Press. (Original work published 1936)

Pillen, M. T., Beijaard, D., & den Brok, P. J. (2013a) Professional identity tensions of beginning teachers. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *19*(6), 660-678.

Pillen, M., Beijaard, D., & den Brok, P. (2013b) Tensions in beginning teachers' professional identity development, accompanying feelings and coping strategies. *European Journal of Teacher Education, 36*(3), 240-260.

Pillen, M. T., den Brok, P. J., & Beijaard, D. (2013c) Profiles and change in beginning teachers' professional identity tensions. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *34*, 86-97.

Pirchio, S., Tritrini, C., Passiotere, Y., & Taeschner, T. (2013) The role of the relationship between parents and educators for child behaviour and wellbeing. *International Journal about Parents in Education, 7*(2), 145–155.

Pratt, M. G., Rockmann, K. W., & Kaufmann, J. B. (2006) Constructing professional identity: The role of work and identity learning cycles in the customization of identity among medical residents. *The Academy of Management Journal, 49*(2), 235-262.

Putz, D., Schilling, J. & Kluge, A. (2012) 'Measuring organizational climate for learning from errors at work', in Bauer, J & Harteis, C. (eds.) *Human Fallibility: The Ambiguity of Errors for Work and Learning*. Dordrecht: Springer,107-123.

Rattansi, A., & Phoenix, A. (2005) Rethinking youth identities: Modernist and postmodernist frameworks. *Identity, 5*(2), 97-123.

Reason, J.T. (2000) Human errors: models and management. *British Medical Journal*, 320 (7237), 768–770.

Reicher, S., Haslam, S. A., & Hopkins, N. (2005) Social identity and the dynamics of leadership: Leaders and followers as collaborative agents in the transformation of social reality. *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*(4), 547-568.

Reicher, S.D. & Haslam, S.A. (2006) Rethinking the psychology of tyranny: The BBC prison study. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *45*(1)*,* 1–40.

Reichers, A. E. (1985) A review and reconceptualisation of organisational commitment. *Academy of Management Review, 10*(3), 465-476.

Richards, L. & Morse, J. M. (2013) *Readme First for a User's Guide to Qualitative Methods*. London: Sage.

Richardson, P. W., & Watt, H. M G. (2006) Who chooses teaching and why? Profiling characteristics and motivations across there Australian universities. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *34*(1), 27-56).

Richter, D., Kunter, M., Klusmann, U., Lüdtke, O., & Baumert, J. (2011) Professional development across the teaching career: Teachers' uptake of formal and informal learning opportunities. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(1), 116-126.

Riessman, C. Kohler and Speedy, J. (2007) 'Narrative inquiry in the psychotherapy professions: a critical review', in Clandinin, D. J. (ed.) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Riketta, M. (2005) Organizational identification: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 66*(2), 358-384.

Rivkin, S. G., Hanushek, E. A., & Kain, J. F. (2005) Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometrica*, *73*(2), 417-458.

Rinke, C. R. (2006) Understanding teachers' careers: Linking professional life to professional path. *Educational Research Review, 3*(1), 1–13.

Roberson, S., & Roberson, R. (2009) The role and practice of the principal in developing novice first-year teachers. *The Clearing House, 82*(9), 113-118.

Roberts-Holmes, G., & Bradbury, A. (2016) The datafication of Early Years Education and its impact upon pedagogy. *Improving Schools, 19*(2), 119–128.

Rolfe, G. (2006) Validity, trustworthiness and rigour: Quality and the idea of qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing, 53*(3), 304-310.

Rolls, S., & Plauborg, H., (2009) 'Teachers' career trajectories: An examination of research', in Bayer, M., Brinkkjær, U., Plauborg, H., & Rolls, S. (eds.) *Teachers' Career Trajectories and Work Lives*. New York: Springer, 9-28.

Ross, A. & Hutchings, M. (2003) *Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. OECD Country Background Report.* London Institute for Policy Studies in Education: London Metropolitan University.

Rumens, N. (2017) Researching workplace friendships: Drawing insights from the sociology of friendship**.** *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 34(8), 1149 – 1167.

Sammons, P., Day, C., Kington, A., Gu, Q., Stobart, G. & Smees, R. (2007) Exploring variations in teachers' work, lives and their effects on pupils: Key findings and implications from a longitudinal mixed-method study. *British Educational Research Journal, 33*(5), 681–701.

Sammons, P., Kington, A., Lindorff, A., & Ortega, L. (2018) 'It ain't (only) what you do, it's the way that you do it': A mixed method approach to the study of inspiring teachers. *Review of Education*, *6*(3), 303–356.

Sandelowski, M. (1993) Theory unmasked: The uses and guises of theory in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing & Health, 16*(1), 213–218.

Savickas, M. L. (2002) 'Career construction: A developmental theory of vocational behaviour' in Brown, D. (ed.) *Career Choice and Development.* 4th edition. New York: Wiley,149–205.

Savickas, M. L. & Super, D. E. (1993) Can life stages and sub-stages be identified in students? *Man & Work: Journal of Labour Studies*, *4*(1), 71-78.

Sbaraini, A., Carter, S., Evans, W., & Blinkhorn, A. (2011) How to do a grounded theory study: A worked example of a study of dental practices. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *11*(128), 1–10.

Schaefer, L., Long, J. S., & Clandinin, J. D. (2012) Questioning the research on early career teacher attrition and retention. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 58*(1), 106-12

Scheopner, A.J. (2010) Irreconcilable differences: Teacher attrition in public and catholic schools. *Educational Research Review*, *5*(3), 261–277.

Schepens, A., Aelterman, A., & Vlerick, P. (2009) Student teachers' professional identity formation: Between being born as a teacher and becoming one. *Educational Studies*, *35*(4), 361–378.

Schmidt, J., Klusmann, U., Lüdtke, O., Moller, J., & Kunter, M. (2017) What makes good and bad days for beginning teachers? A diary study on daily uplifts and hassles. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 48*(1), 85-97.

Schoklitsch, A. & Baumann, U. (2012) Generativity and aging: A promising future research topic? *Journal of Aging Studies, 26*(3), 262–272.

Schwandt, T.A. (2001) *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Schwartz, S. J. (2001) The evolution of Eriksonian and, Neo-Eriksonian Identity Theory and research: A review and integration. *Identity: International Journal of Theory and Research, 1*(1), 7-58.

Schwartz, S. J., Zamboanga, B. L., Wang, W., & Olthuis, J. V. (2009) Measuring identity from an Eriksonian perspective: Two sides of the same coin? *Journal of Personality Assessment, 91*(2), 143-154.

Schwartz, S. J., Zamboanga, B. L., Luyckx, K., Meca, A., & Ritchie, R. A. (2013) Identity in emerging adulthood: Reviewing the field and looking forward. *Emerging Adulthood, 1*(2), 96-113.

Sedikides, C., & Brewer, M. B. (2001) *Individual Self, Relational Self, Collective Self.* Philadelphia: Psychology Press.

Sedikides, C., Gaertner, L., Luke, M. A., O'Mara, E. M., & Gebauer, J. (2013) A three-tier hierarchy of motivational self-potency: Individual self, relational self, collective self. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, 48*(1), 235-295.

Sedikides, C., & Gregg, A. P. (2008) Self-enhancement: Food for thought. *Perspectives on Psychological Science, 3*(2), 102-116.

Šeďová, K., Šalamounová, Z., Švaříček, R., & Sedláček, M. (2017) Teachers' emotions in teacher development: Do they matter? *Studia Paedagogica, 22*(4), 77-110.

Seligman, M., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000) Positive psychology. *American Psychologist,* 55(1)*,* 5–14.

Serpe, R. T. & Stryker, S. (2013) 'The symbolic interactionist perspective and identity theory' in Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., and Vignoles, V. L. (eds.) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Springer, 225-248.

Sfard, A., & Prusak, A. (2005) Telling identities: In search of an analytic tool for investigating learning as a culturally shaped activity. *Educational Researcher, 34*(4), 14–22.

Sias, P. M., & Cahill, D. J. (1998) From co-workers to friends: The development of peer friendships in the workplace. *Western Journal of Communication, 62*(3), 273–299.

Siciliano, M. D., & Thompson, J. R. (2018) If you are committed, then so am I: The role of social networks and social influence on organizational commitment. *Administration & Society, 50*(7), 916-946.

Sikes, P. (1985) 'The life cycle of the teacher', in Ball, S.J. & Goodson, I. F. (eds.) *Teachers' Lives and Careers.* London: Falmer, 27-60.

Sikes, P. (1997) *Parents who Teach: Stories from Home and from School.* New York: Cassell.

Sikes, P. (2006) On dodgy ground? problematics and ethics in educational research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 29*(1), 105-117.

Sikes, P., & Goodson, I. F. (2017) 'What have you go when you've got a life story?' in Goodson, I. F., Antikainen, A., Sikes, P., & Andrews, M. (eds.) *The Routledge International Handbook on Narrative and Life History.* New York: Routledge, 60-71.

Sikes, P., Measor, L., Woods, P. (1985) *Teachers Careers. Crisis and Continuities.* London/Philadelphia: Falmer.

Sinclair, C. (2008) Initial and changing student teacher motivation and commitment to teaching. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 36*(2), 79-104.

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2007) Dimensions of teacher self-efficacy and relations with strain factors, perceived collective teacher efficacy, and teacher burnout. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(3), 611-625.

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2010) Teacher self-efficacy and teacher burnout: A study of relations. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *26*(4), 1059-1069.

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2011) Teacher job satisfaction and motivation to leave the teaching profession: Relations with school context, feeling of belonging, and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *27*(6), 1029-1038.

Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2017a) Dimensions of teacher burnout: Relations with potential stressors at school. *Social Psychology of Education, 20*(4), 775-790.

Skaalvik, S., & Skaalvik, E. M. (2017b) Motivated for teaching? associations with school goal structure, teacher self-efficacy, job satisfaction and emotional exhaustion. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 67*(1), 152-160.

Slater, C. L. (2003) Generativity versus stagnation: An elaboration of Erikson's adult stage of human development. *Journal of Adult Development, 10*(1), 53-65.

Smart, J. B., & Igo, L. B. (2010). A grounded theory of behavior management strategy selection, implementation, and perceived effectiveness reported by first-year elementary teachers. *The Elementary School Journal, 110*(4), 567–584.

Smithers, A., & Robinson, P. (2003) *Factors Affecting Teachers' Decisions to Leave the Profession.* London: Department for Skills and Education.

Smithers, A., & Robinson, P. (2005) *Teacher Turnover, Wastage and Movements between Schools*. London: Department for Skills and Education.

Song, S. H. (2006) Workplace friendship and employee's productivity: LMX Theory and the case of the Seoul City Government. *International Review of Public Administration, 11*(1), 47–58.

Sorsby, C. (2004) 'Forging and strengthening alliances: Learning support staff and the challenge of inclusion', in Armstrong, F. & Moore, M. (eds.) *Action Research for Inclusive Education: Changing Places, Changing Practices, Changing Minds*. London: Routledge, 48-63.

Spears, R. (2013) 'Group identities: The social identity perspective', in Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., and Vignoles, V. L. (eds.) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Springer, 201-224.

Spencer, P., Harrop, S., Thomas, J., & Cain, T. (2018) The professional development needs of early-career teachers, and the extent to which they are met: a survey of teachers in England. *Professional Development in Education, 44*(1), 33-46.

Spencer, L., & Pahl, R. (2006) *Re-thinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Spicksley, K. (2018) Intensifications and misrepresentations: Early-career teachers in post-2010 English education policy. *Presented at BERA Annual Conference, Newcastle, 11 - 13 September 2018.*

Spilt, J. L., Koomen, H. M. Y., & Thijs, J. T. (2011) Teacher wellbeing: the importance of teacher-student relationships. *Educational Psychology Review, 23*(4), 457-477.

Steffens, N. K., Haslam, S. A., & Reicher, S. D. (2014) Up close and personal: Evidence that shared social identity is a basis for the 'special' relationship that binds followers to leaders. *The Leadership Quarterly, 25*(2), 296-313.

Steffens, N. K., Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S. D., Platow, M. J., Fransen, K., Yang, J., . . . Boen, F. (2014) Leadership as social identity management: Introducing the identity leadership inventory (ILI) to assess and validate a four-dimensional model. *The Leadership Quarterly, 25*(5), 1001-1024.

Steffens, N. K., Mols, F., Haslam, S. A., & Okimoto, T. G. (2016) True to what we stand for: Championing collective interests as a path to authentic leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly, 27*(5), 726-744.

Stinglhamber, F., & Vandenberghe, C. (2003) Organizations and supervisors as sources of support and targets of commitment: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 24*(3), 251-270.

Strauss, A. L. (1987) *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Strauss, A. L. & Corbin, J. M. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Stutchbury, K. & Fox, A. (2009) Ethics in educational research: introducing a methodological tool for effective ethical analysis. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 39*(4), 489-504.

Sucuoğlu, N.B. & Bakkaloğlu, H. (2018) The quality of parent-teacher relationships in inclusive preschools. *Early Child Development and Care*, *188*(8), 1190-1201.

Sullivan, C., Gibson, S., & Riley, S. (2012) *Doing Your Qualitative Psychology Project.* London: Sage.

Sun, J., & Leithwood, K. (2015) Direction-setting school leadership practices: A meta-analytical review of evidence about their influence. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 26*(4), 499-523.

Super, D. E. (1957) *The Psychology of Careers.* New York: Harper & Row.

Super, D. E. (1963) 'Toward making self-concept theory operational', in Super, D. E. et al. (eds.) *Career Development: Self-Concept Theory.* New York: CEEB, 17-32.

Super, D. E. (1980) A life-span, life-space approach to career development. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, *16*(3), 282-298.

Super, D.E. (1981) 'A developmental theory: Implementing a self-concept' in Montross, D.H. & Shinkman, C.J. (eds.) *Career Development in the 1980's: Theory and Practice*. Springfield IL: Charles C. Thomas, 28-42

Super, D. E. (1984) 'Career and life development', in Brown, D. & Brooks, L. (eds.) *Career Choice and Development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 192-234.

Super, D.E., & Bachrach, P.B. (1957) *Scientific Careers and Vocational Development Theory*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Super, D.E., Savickas, M.L., & Super, C.M. (1996) 'The life-span, life-space approach to careers', in Brown, D., Brookes, L. & Associates (eds.) *Career Choice and Development.* 3rd edition. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass, 121 – 178.

Tahir, L., Thakib, M. T. M., Hamzah, M. H., Said, Mohd Nihra Haruzuan Mohd, & Musah, M. B. (2017) Novice head teachers' isolation and loneliness experiences: A mixed-methods study. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 45*(1), 164-189.

Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986) 'The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour', in Worchel, S. & Austin, W.G. (eds.) *The Psychology of Intergroup Behaviour.* Chicago: Nelson Hall, 7-24.

Tateo, L. (2012) What do you mean by "teacher"? Psychological research on teacher professional identity. *Psicologia & Sociedade, 24*(2), 344-353.

Teach First. (2018a) What you need to know. Available at: https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/our-programme/about-the-programme [Accessed 4 June, 2018]

Teach First (2018b) Teaching Assistant Fast Track. Available at: https://www.teachfirst.org.uk/tafasttrack [Accessed 15 Dec, 2018]

Tepper, B. J., Carr, J. C., Breaux, D. M., Geider, S., Hu, C., & Hua, W. (2009) Abusive supervision, intentions to quit, and employees' workplace deviance: A power/dependence analysis. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 109*(2), 156–167.

Thompson, I., McNicholl, J., & Menter, I. (2016) Student teachers' perceptions of poverty and educational achievement. *Oxford Review of Education, 42*(2), 214-229.

Thornberg, R. (2012) Informed grounded theory. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, *56*(3), 243-259.

Thornton, M., & Bricheno, P. (2009) 'Teacher Gender and Career Patterns', in Bayer, M., Brinkkjær, U., Plauborg, H., & Rolls, S. (eds.) *Teachers' Career Trajectories and Work Lives*. New York: Springer, 159-178.

Thrupp, M., & Lupton, R. (2006) Taking school contexts more seriously: The social justice challenge. *British Journal of Educational Studies, 54*(3), 308-328.

Tiplic, D., Brandmo, C., & Elstad, E. (2015) Antecedents of Norwegian beginning teachers' turnover intentions. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 45*(4), 451-474.

Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004) Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal Of Advanced Nursing, 48*(4), 388-396.

Treister-Goltzman, Y., & Peleg, R. (2016) Female physicians and the work-family conflict. *The Israel Medical Association Journal, 18*(5), 261-266.

Trent, J. (2010) Teacher education as identity construction: insights from action research, *Journal of Education for Teaching, 36*(2), 53–168.

Trent, J. (2013) From learner to teacher: Practice, language, and identity in a teaching practicum. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, *41*(4), 426-440.

Troman, G. (2008) Primary teacher identity, commitment and career in performative school cultures. *British Educational Research Journal, 34*(5), 619-633.

Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2003) Temporal construal. *Psychological Review, 110*(3), 403-421.

Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2007) The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *23*(6), 944–956.

Turner, J. C. (1985) 'Social categorisation and the self-concept: A social cognitive theory of group behaviour', in Lawler, E. J. (ed.) *Advances in Group Processes.* Greenwich: JAI Press, 77-122.

Turner, J. C., Hogg, M. A., Oakes, P. J., Reicher, S. D., & Wetherell, M. S. (1987) *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-categorization Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Turner, J. C., Oakes, P. J., Haslam, S. A., & McGarty, C. (1994). Self and collective: cognition and social context. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 20*(5), 454-463.

Uitto, M., Kaunisto, S., Syrjälä, L., & Estola, E. (2014) Silenced truths: Relational and emotional dimensions of a beginning teacher's identity as part of the micro-political context of school. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, 59*(2), 162-176.

Uitto, M., Kaunisto, S-L., Kelchtermans, G., & Estola, E. (2016) Peer group as a meeting place: Reconstructions of teachers' self-understanding and the presence of vulnerability. *International Journal of Educational Research, 75*, 7–16.

Ulvik, M., & Langørgen, K. (2012) What Can Experienced Teachers Learn from Newcomers? Newly Qualified Teachers as a Resource in Schools. *Teachers and Teaching 18*(1), 43–57.

University of Worcester (2014) Ethics Policy [online]. Available from: http://www.worcester.ac.uk/researchportal/documents/Ethics_Policy_Aprroved_by_AB_8_10_14.pdf [Accessed 04.10.2016]

Valenčič Zuljan, M., & Marentič Požarnik, B. (2014) Induction and early-career support of teachers in Europe. *European Journal of Education, 49*(2), 192-205.

van Dick, R., & Haslam, S. A. (2012) 'Stress and wellbeing in the workplace: Support for key propositions from the social identity approach', in Jetten, J., Haslam, C., & Haslam, S. A. (eds) *The Social Cure: Identity Health and Wellbeing.* Philadelphia: Psychology Press, 175-194.

van Dick, R., Lemoine, J. E., Steffens, N. K., Kerschreiter, R., Akfirat, S. A., Avanzi, L., . . . Haslam, S. A. (2018) Identity leadership going global: Validation of the identity leadership inventory across 20 countries. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *91*(4), 697-728.

van Niekerk, J. & Roode, J. (2009) Glaserian and Straussian grounded theory: similar or completely different?. *Paper presented at the ACM*, 96 -103.

van Tartwijk, J., den Brok, P., Veldman, I., & Wubbels, T. (2009) Teachers' practical knowledge about classroom management in multicultural classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 25*(3), 453–460.

Vandenberghe, C., Bentein, K., Michon, R., Chebat, J., Tremblay, M., & Fils, J. (2007) An examination of the role of perceived support and employee commitment in employee-customer encounters. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 92*(4), 1177-1187.

Veenman, S. (1984) Perceived problems of beginning teachers. *Review of Educational Research, 54*(2), 143–178.

Veiskarami, H. A., Ghadampour, E., & Mottaghinia, M. R. (2017) Interactions among school climate, collective self-efficacy, and personal self-efficiency: Evidence from education institutions. *International Journal of Economic Perspectives, 11*(1), 481-488.

Veldman, I., van Tartwijk, J., Brekelmans, M., & Wubbels, T. (2013) Job satisfaction and teacher-student relationships across the teaching career: four case studies. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 32*(1), 55-65.

Vignoles, V. L., Schwartz, S. J., & Luyckx, K. (2013) 'Towards an integrative view of identity', in Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., and Vignoles, V. L. (eds.) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Springer,1-27.

Vignoles, V. L. (2013) 'Identity motives', in Schwartz, S. J., Luyckx, K., and Vignoles, V. L. (eds.) *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*. New York: Springer, 403-432.

Voss, Z. G., Cable, D. M., & Voss, G. B. (2006) Organizational identity and firm performance: What happens when leaders disagree about "who we are?". *Organization Science, 17*(6), 741-755.

Waterman, A. S. (1999) Identity, the identity statuses, and identity status development: A contemporary statement. *Developmental Review, 19*, 591-621.

Wang, H., Hall, N. C., & Rahimi, S. (2015) Self-efficacy and causal attributions in teachers: Effects on burnout, job satisfaction, illness, and quitting intentions. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 47*(1), 120-130.

Wang, M., & Shultz, K. S. (2010) Employee retirement: A review and recommendations for future investigation: 1. *Journal of Management, 36*(1), 172.

Wasilewski, M. B., Stinson, J. N., Webster, F., & Cameron, J. I. (2018) Using Twitter to recruit participants for health research: An example from a caregiving study. *Health Informatics Journal,* doi:10.1177/1460458218775158.

Watkins, M. (2017) 'Who am I? Why am I here? Teachers losing their professional identity and commitment during challenging times.' *Papers from the University of Birmingham Education Doctoral Research Conference 2016*, 185 - 192. ISSN: 9780704428669.

Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Westring, A. F., & Ryan, A. M. (2011). Anticipated work-family conflict: A construct investigation. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 79*(2), 596-610.

Whitbourne, S. K., & Connolly, L. A. (1999) 'The developing self in mid-life' in Willis, S. L. & Reid, J. D. (eds.) *Life in the Middle*. San Diego: Academic Press, 25-44.

Wilhelm, K., Dewhurst-Savellis, J., & Parker, G. (2000) Teacher stress? An analysis of why teachers leave and why they stay. *Teachers and Teaching, 6*(3), 291-304.

Willemse, T. M., de Bruïne, E. J., Griswold, P., D'Haem, J., Vloeberghs, L., & Van Eynde, S. (2017) Teacher candidates' opinions and experiences as input for teacher education curriculum development. *Journal of Curriculum Studies 49*(6), 782–801.

Willemse, T. M., Thompson, I., Vanderlinde, R., & Mutton, T. (2018) Family-school partnerships: A challenge for teacher education. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 44*(3), 252-257.

Williams, C. P., & Savickas, M. L. (1990) Developmental tasks of career maintenance. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 36*(1), 166-175.

Wilt, J., Cox, K. S., & McAdams, D. P. (2010) The Eriksonian life story: Developmental scripts and psychosocial adaptation. Journal of Adult Development, *17*(1), 156-161.

Winter, C. (2017) Curriculum policy reform in an era of technical accountability: 'fixing' curriculum, teachers and students in English schools. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 49*(1), 55-74.

Worth, J., De Lazzari, G., & Hillary, J. (2017) *Teacher Retention and Turnover Research: Interim Report.* Slough: NFER [online]. Available at: https://www.nfer.ac.uk/teacher-retention-and-turnover-research-interim-report/ [Accessed 10 March, 2018].

Wubbels, T., Brekelmans, M., den Brok, P., Wijsman, L., Mainhard, T., & van Wrzesniewski, A. (2003) 'Finding positive meaning in work', in Cameron, K. S., Dutton, J. E., & Quinn, E. R. (eds.) *Positive Organizational Scholarship*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler, 296–308.

Wrzesniewski, A., McCauley, C., Rozin, P., & Schwartz, B. (1997) Jobs, careers, and callings: People's relations to their work. *Journal of Research in Personality, 31*(1), 21–33.

Yinon, H., & Orland-Barak, L. (2017) Career stories of Israeli teachers who left teaching: A salutogenic view of teacher attrition. *Teachers and Teaching, 23*(8), 914-927.

Zander, L., Kreutzmann, M., & Wolter, I. (2014) Constructive handling of mistakes in the classroom: The conjoint power of collaborative networks and self-efficacy beliefs. *Zeitschrift Für Erziehungswissenschaft, 17*(5), 205-223.

Zembylas, M. (2003) Emotions and teacher identity: a post-structural perspective. *Teachers and Teaching; Theory and Practice, 9*(3), 213 – 238.

Appendices

Appendix A Ethical Approval

Institute Ethics Coordinator Declaration

The Institute Ethics Committee is satisfied that the student has identified and addressed the ethical issues and grants ethical approval for this research.

Signature: **Sue Howarth** **Date:** **18.05.15**

Appendix B Project information letter

Institute of Education
University of Worcester
35 Henwick Grove
Worcester
WR2 6AJ

Date

Dear

Sustaining Teacher Quality: Associations between Primary Teachers Commitment, Professional Identity and Retention (working title)

I am writing to you about a new small scale study into Teachers Professional Identity which I am conducting as part of my study for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Worcester. This project aims to sample 18 teachers from across the West Midlands region of the UK. The study will involve three school-based visits during the school year of 2015/2016.

The research project is seeking to explore the personal experiences of teachers working in primary schools in England. In particular, it will focus on why and how teachers manage to sustain a positive professional identity and a commitment to teaching, in different phases of their career, during times of continual educational reform. The principle aim of the visits will be to talk to teachers about their work and lives and any influences which might impact upon their professional identity (i.e. what makes them the teacher that they are). The research will build on existing literature in this area, and will foreground the perspective of teachers, giving them a voice which will extend our knowledge and understanding of the key professional and personal influences which challenge the capacity to sustain positive professional identities. It will explore the conditions through which teachers maintain their belief that they can continue to make a difference to the lives of pupils through high quality teaching and their commitment to this.

This research has received ethical approval from the Institute of Education, University of Worcester. All data collected will be anonymised and treated as strictly confidential. Schools and individuals will only be referred to by pseudonyms and will not be identified in any reports or articles which are produced. Only I will have access to the data. All written notes or records will be stored securely in locked cabinets and will be destroyed at the end of the research. Any electronic files will be password protected and stored on a secure server.

The process will involve the following:

- An initial interview about your individual life story which will last approximately 1 hour
- A follow up interview, during which the key influences on your professional identity will be explored.
- A final semi-structured interview in which I will give feedback on early analysis, and there will be chance for each participant to make any changes before the report is in the public domain.

Please note that participation in this study is voluntary and, if you agree to take part, you may still withdraw from the study without penalty at any time by advising me of this decision. The study poses minimal risks to participants, but if you do have a concern about any aspect of the project, please speak to me, and I will do my utmost to address the matter. My email address is m.watkins@worc.ac.uk . If you should have any further questions or comments you can also contact Dr Colin Howard, who is my Director of Studies, University of Worcester. c.howard@worc.ac.uk

If you have any questions at all about this project, please do not hesitate to contact me. If you are willing to consider participating in this research, I would be very grateful if you could reply to me by email. Once received, I will contact you to arrange a time for the visit.

Thank you in advance

Yours sincerely

Appendix C Participant consent form

University of Worcester
Institute of Education

Sustaining Teacher Quality: Associations between Primary Teachers Commitment, Professional Identity and Retention (working title)

Purpose: To explore the personal experiences of teachers working in primary schools in England, to gain a better understanding of teachers work and lives and any influences which might impact upon their professional identity.

Researcher: Maxine Watkins (studying for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Worcester).

Participant ID#:

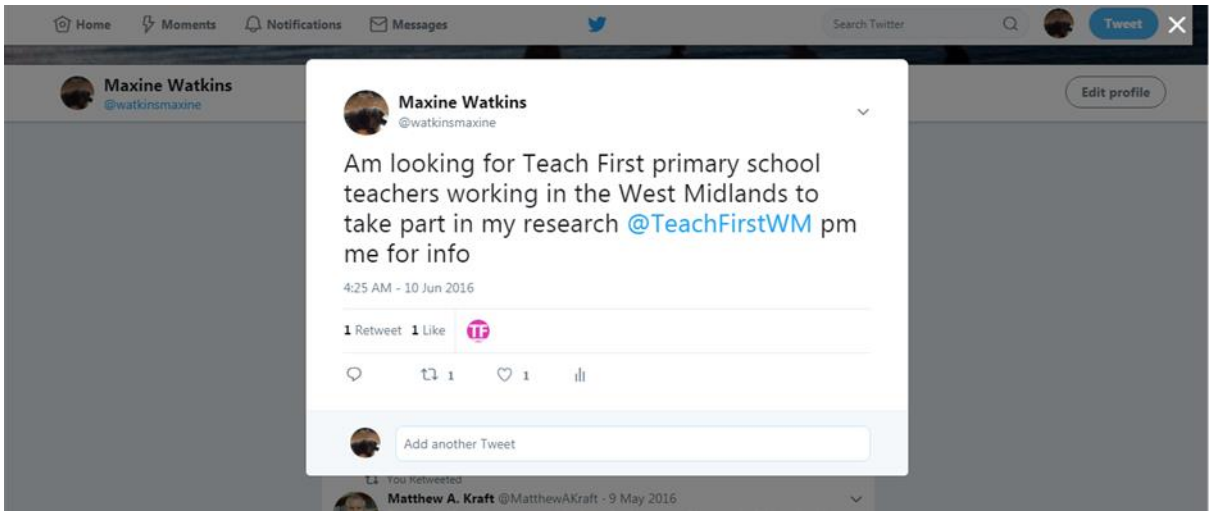
By signing below, I confirm that:

1. I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study, have had an opportunity to ask questions about the study and have received satisfactory answers.
2. I understand that my participation is strictly voluntary, and I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason I see fit, without consequence to myself.
3. I understand that this research will be written up and submitted as a thesis to the University of Worcester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Selected findings may also appear in future reports/articles/presentations.
4. I understand that no identifying information about me or any other individual will be included in any of the above, and that all confidential or identifying information (including any digital audio recording) will be anonymized and stored encrypted with password protection, or in a locked cabinet for hard copy items (such as this form), to be accessed only by the researcher. Paper records will be shredded at the end of the study & audio files will be deleted after ten years (in accordance with University of Worcester Ethics Policy).
5. I understand that the project has been reviewed by and has received ethical approval from the University of Worcester.
6. If I have any concerns about any aspect of the project, I may speak to the researcher who will do her best to answer my query. If I remain unhappy and wish to make a formal complaint, I may contact Dr Colin Howard, Director of Studies at the University of Worcester, 35 Henwick Grove, Worcester WR2 6AJ c.howard@worc.ac.uk

7. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant Signature: _____ Date (day/month/year): _____/_____/_____
Do you consent to have your interview digitally audio recorded? ☐ Yes ☐ No Participant Signature: _____
Researcher Signature: _____ Date (day/month/year): _____/_____/_____

Appendix D Screenshot of recruitment related tweets



Appendix E Information for participant about life history interview

Life History Interview – Information about Discussion

There are likely to be many influences, experiences and relationships within your life which have led to you developing your own personal philosophy of education, and to you taking on a specific professional identity which informs the way you teach.

In our first meeting I will be asking for your help in constructing a timeline of key events throughout your life.

Please be assured that we will only talk about the subjects that you feel happy to discuss. Below is a table illustrating topics we might cover.

Background details	Place and date of birth Family background, town, and area of growing up Parents occupations during your lifetime – their characteristics and interests Siblings – birth order – characters and interests Childhood memories – home life – community when growing up
Education	Preschool/primary/high school experience Preferred subjects – preferred teachers Relationships with peers Relationships with teachers
Occupation	Previous work history Decision to teach Route into teaching Type of school working in/position Preferred type of school/ preferred position
Personal life	Family/Marital status – children – ages Interests or hobbies Political views Religious beliefs
Future ambitions and aspirations	Intention to remain in teaching /School Leadership Professional development – Further qualifications Career change

- adapted from Goodson & Sikes (2001: p.30

Professional Identity Line – Early Career Phase (0-7 years)

Stable Professional Identity (positive)								
Unstable Professional Identity (negative)								
	NQT	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**
	Teaching Year							

- Adapted from the work lines used in Day et al. (2006) and Bingle, Kington, Howard & Robinson, C. (2016)

Professional Identity Line – Mid Career Phase (8-23 years)

Stable Professional Identity (positive)																	
Unstable Professional Identity (negative)																	
	NQT	**1 - 7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**
	Teaching Year																	

-Adapted from the work lines used in Day et al. (2006) and Bingle, Kington, Howard & Robinson, C. (2016)

Professional Identity Line – Late Career Phase (24+ years)

Stable Professional Identity (positive)	
Unstable Professional Identity (negative)	

NQT	1-7	8-23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44

Teaching Year

- Adapted from the work lines used in Day et al. (2006) and Bingle, Kington, Howard & Robinson, C. (2016

Appendix G Example of line-by-line coding

Participant 1 – Life History Interview

Yes

And although she, academically, was incredibly clever, I actually saw the negative of that...The fact that she always put very much pressure on her. I didn't expect to say all this! (both laugh)

That's great.

It's lovely though isn't it! You just start talking. Erm, that she had a lot of pressure on herself. Nobody else did it, but she put a lot of pressure on herself. Now I suppose only one thing that would really, erm, negatively have given something to me about teaching, is when my dad had to have a break from teaching. From his headship. And gave up the headship. Through illness, through stress.

Yes.

And erm, I suppose while I've been thinking about this, that could've really, *should* have given me, the open eyes to say 'Woah, maybe that isn't something you would want to do'. And I don't think...I knew I'd always wanted to work with children.

When I did some work experience, I chose to go to [school name] first school, and a local nursery. And that was around the same time that dad would've been having a bit of time off work. Erm, he had about...Again this is all from memory, mum and dad might have different memories. I suppose it was probably about six months, where he just basically shut down, could not go to work, and decided that that was it. He wasn't going to be a head teacher anymore. At the same time, I was probably doing my work experience..

So you would've been about 15 or 16? Something like that?

Yes. From memory, maybe a little bit..

That's alright, because it's your memory, your perception of it that I'm interested in. So..

Erm, the work experience was probably before dad's break from work, but that sort of time, of my life. I was doing work experience, I was doing exams and stuff like that, and I erm, had certainly decided that I wanted to work with children. So decided that my work experience needed to give me some sort of idea about that. And I think mum helped me in that, and said 'You need some different settings. Don't just go to schools. Go to some different settings.' And I generally thought I'd do nursery, and do little ones. That's what I thought.

Yes.

So went off to nursery, and I didn't really enjoy it. And shocked myself. I thought, I absolutely love it, but I'm bored stiff.

Yes.

I love looking after them , but then they go to sleep for an hour, and I'm washing bottles, and erm..I love looking after the little ones, they're lovely, but they don't really do a lot.

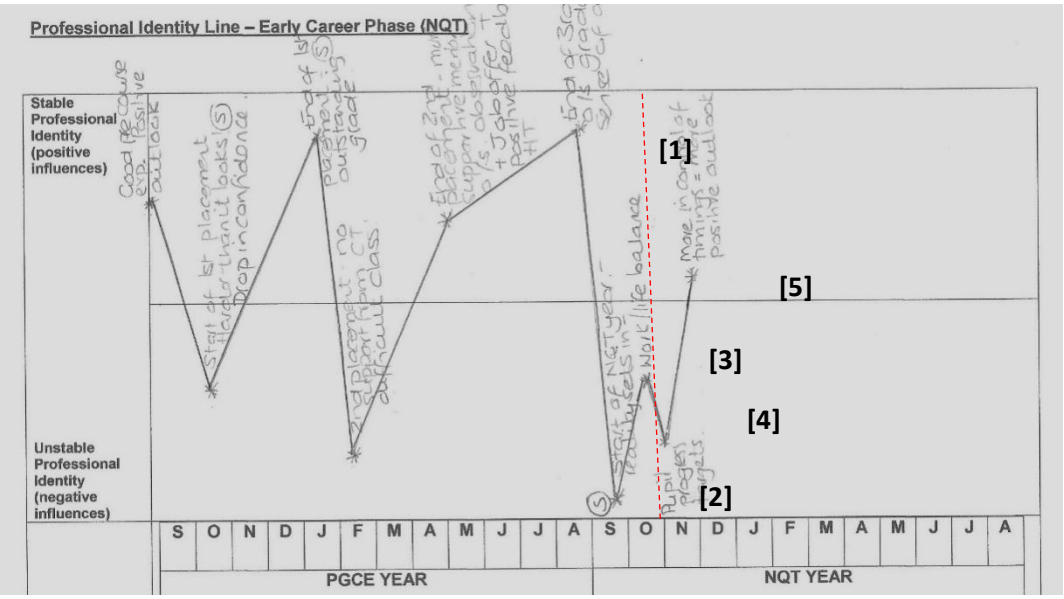
So it felt more like care?

Care, yes. It was like I was looking after them. And it was then, probably, that I realised 'Ok, so if the school placement doesn't feel right, I don't know what I'm going to do' (both laugh). **So I did the school placement, and had a wonderful experience...And I guarantee the main reason is the teachers that I had there. So, it's not...there was huge classes then. They felt huge. They were**

Appendix H Completed professional time lines

Early Career Phase Teachers

Andrea - NQT



[1] – Professional. Started NQT year on a high. Pleased to have been offered a job. Feeling confident after positive feedback from placement schools on PGCE

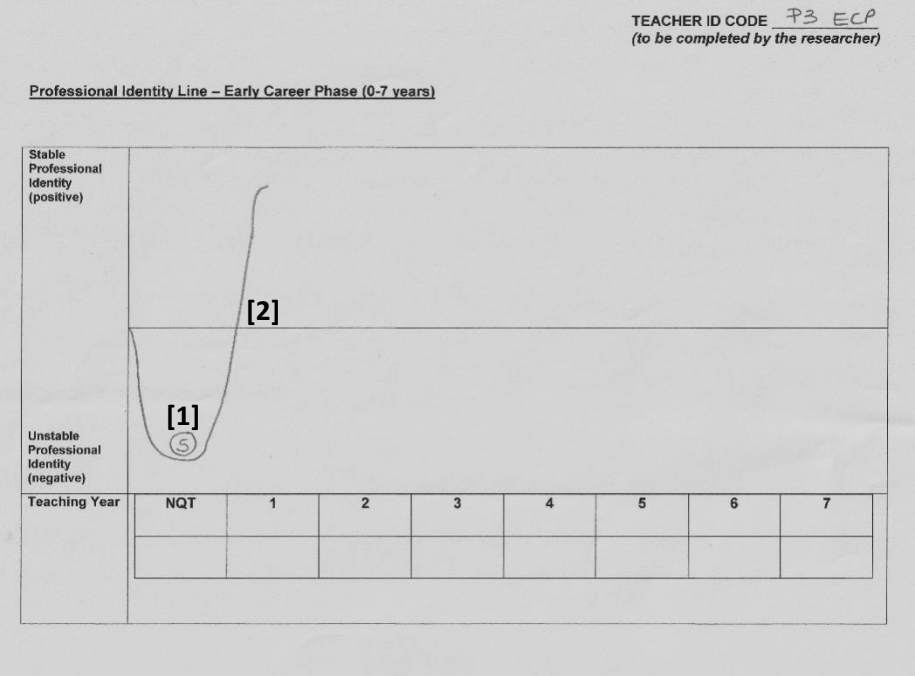
[2] – Situated. Had a 'meltdown' when reality of 'no let-up' hit. Feeling overwhelmed by responsibility. Low confidence.

[3] – Personal. Feeling her feet, getting organised, but at the expense of any work/life balance

[4] – Professional/situated. Pupil progress meeting with head. Felt that pupil targets were impossible as kids had come up having achieved Year 2 targets 'except they hadn't'.

[5] – Professional. Feeling more in control of day. Increasing confidence.

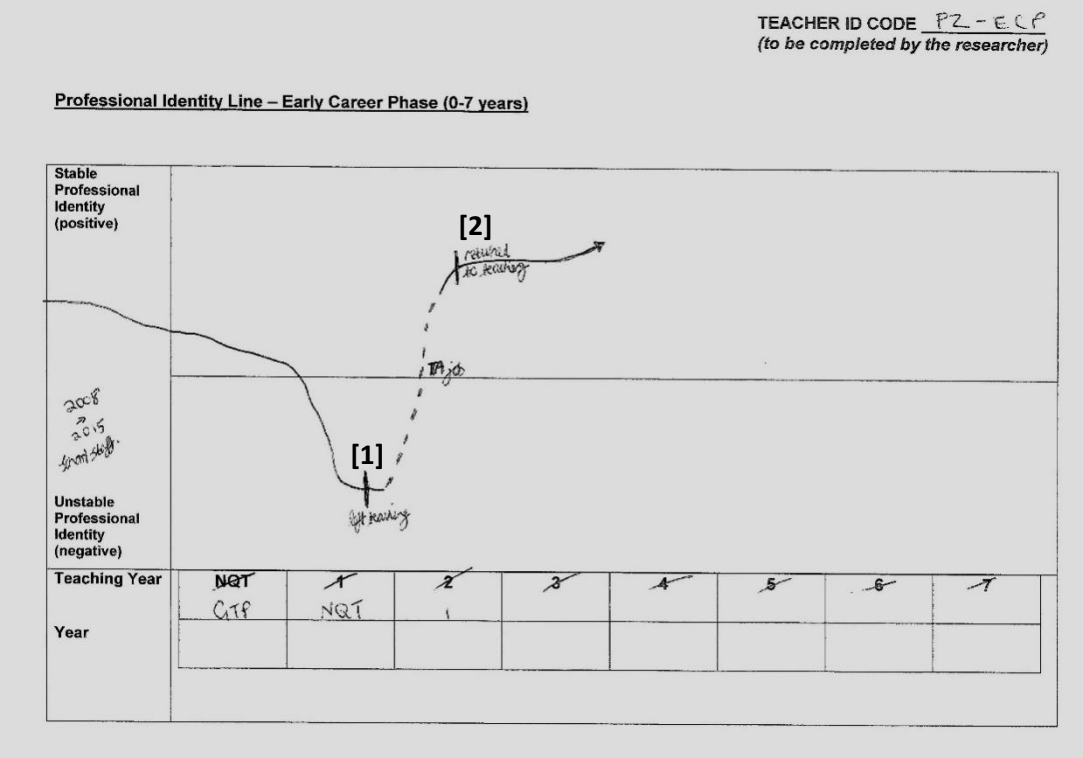
Anna NQT – 1 year in teaching



[1] – Situated. Felt unsupported and not valued by leadership team and felt judged rather than supported by mentor. Low self-efficacy.

[2] – Situated. New school. Feels valued. Commitment to school high.

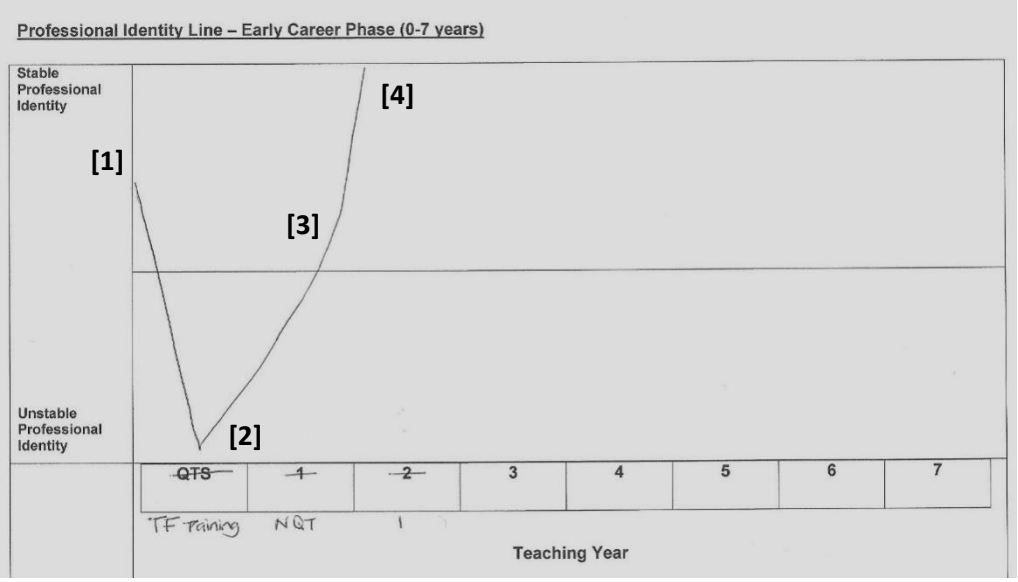
Michelle - 2 years in teaching



[1] – Situated. Felt unsupported and bullied by mentor in school. Left teaching.

[2] – Situated. Working in different school as TA. Encouraged to return to teaching role. Feels supported by colleagues and leadership. Self efficacy and confidence increasing.

Russell - 2 years in teaching



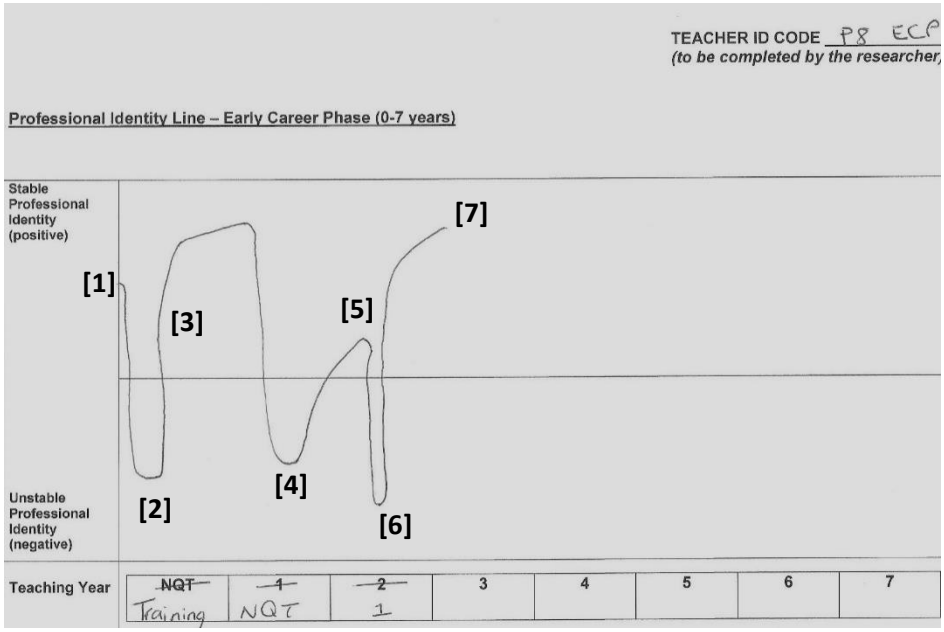
[1] – Professional. Started feeling confident after Teach First summer school.

[2] – Situated. Feeling overwhelmed, unprepared and low in confidence. Received negative feedback from a lesson observation, work/life balance poor. 'Ready to drop out'.

[3] – Situated. Found support and friendship from a male colleague. 'We've become really good mates'. Confidence increasing, enjoying teaching more.

[4] – Personal/situated. Better work/life balance. Confidence increasing. Has aspirations to work with children with autism.

Justin – 3 years in teaching



[1] – Professional. Feeling confident to begin, '*wasn't a car crash*'.

[2] – Professional. Began blogging, started to doubt self-efficacy. Felt that he was not being exposed to any educational or intellectual debates, '*zero professional development and mentoring*' in school.

[3] – Professional. Reading widely about education (DIY CPD!), started to '*build an idea of what I thought good teaching was, and how to provide it*'. Increasing self-efficacy.

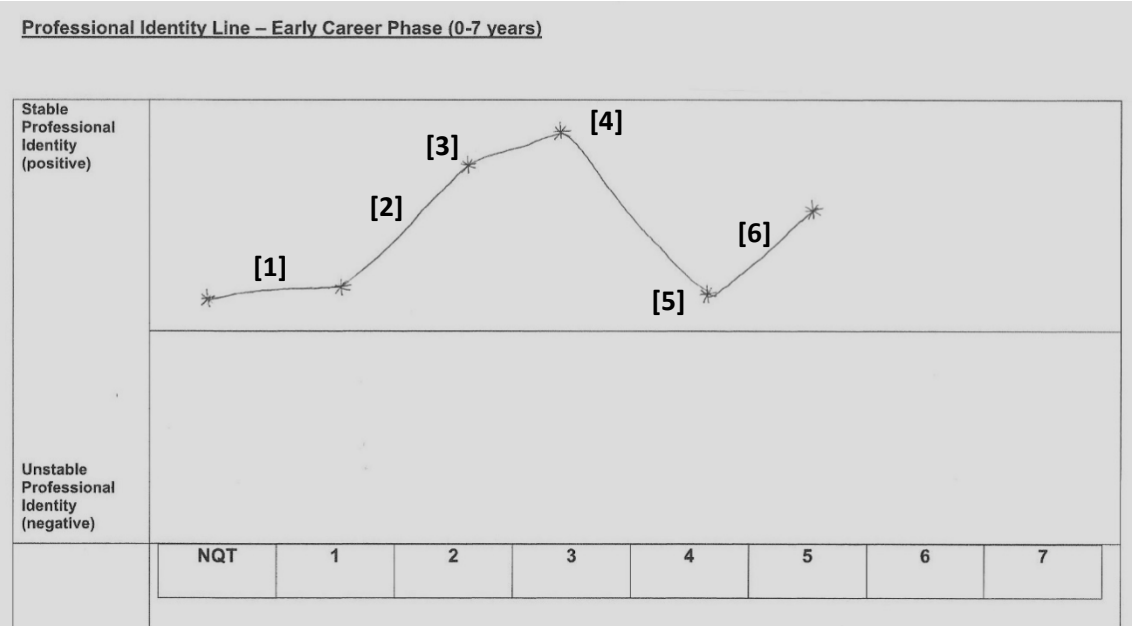
[4] – Situated. Felt that leadership of school was poor, using Ofsted as an excuse. Drilling to the test, then '*No maths lessons at all after SATs*'.

[5] – Situated. Change of school. Head hunted by a head teacher who he had met at a conference. Perceived to be stronger leader with vision for the school.

[6] – Situated. Change of year group, became Head of Year, felt like a '*baptism of fire*'.

[7] – Situated. Well supported by leadership team and other staff (school has coaching programme). Growing confidence. Opportunities for CPD. Many other Teach First teachers in school. Feels that everyone in school shares same values and vision. Commitment high.

Sophie – 5 years in teaching



[1] – Situated. Started high. Felt well supported by mentor and other staff during NQT year. Received formal and informal support from colleagues, but still experienced some confusion about identity …'*it feels like you're a lot of different people, all in one*.' Temporary contract.

[2] – Professional/Situated. Growing in confidence. Permanent contract, feels like part of the team now.

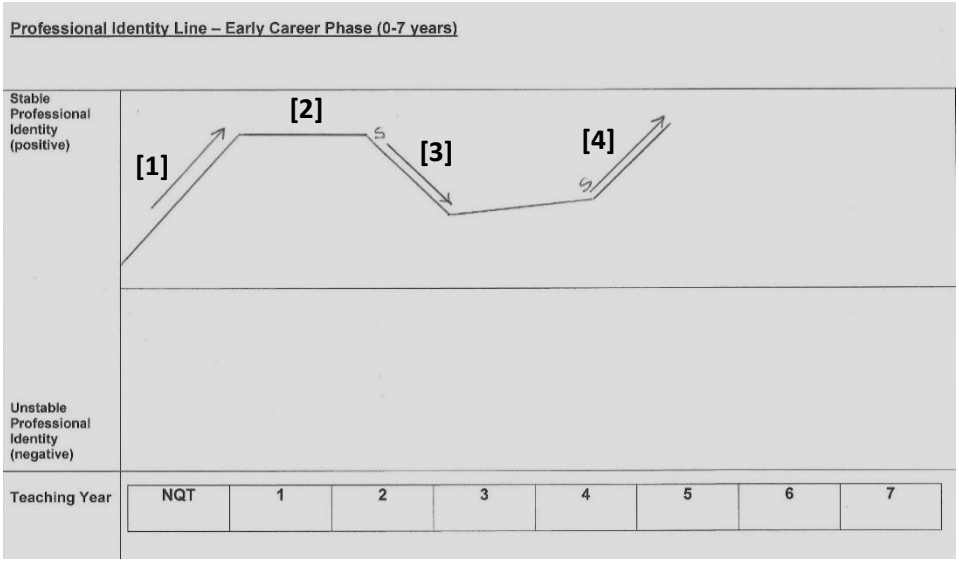
[3] – Professional. Went on a course in behaviour management. CPD increased confidence in supporting children with challenging behaviour.

[4] – Professional. Increasing confidence. Stayed in same year group, so deeper understanding of the curriculum. Knowing where children are moving from and to. Good cohort '*the loveliest children'*.

[5] – Professional. Change in role. Moved to work in foundation stage. Felt like an NQT again.

[6] – Situated. Support from head teacher and colleagues, and retaining EY TAs helped to increase confidence and commitment.

Cat – 5 years in teaching



[1] – Professional. Positive beginnings. Previously worked as HLTA in same school, so sense of self-efficacy high. Already part of school community '*Didn't feel like an NQT*.' Professional identity and commitment high.

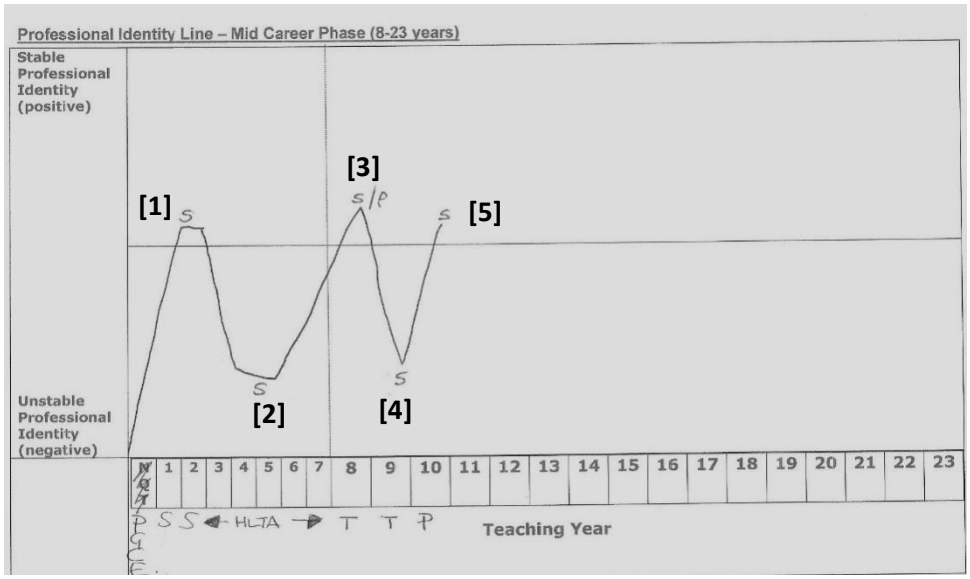
[2] – Professional. Sense of identity stable, enjoying teaching and relationships in school still strong.

[3] – Situated. Wanted to take on more responsibility, but one member of SLT was very negative. Felt frustrated. Started to question if she wanted to continue working in that school.

[4] – Situated/Professional. Member of SLT left. Given more responsibility. Has taken on SLT role of assistant head teacher. Feels able to influence school culture, feels valued, and has opportunities to share practice with staff in other schools. Professional identity increasing.

Mid-Career Phase Teachers

Ellie – 9 years in teaching



[1] – Situated. Began working at school as a supply teacher in one of placement schools.

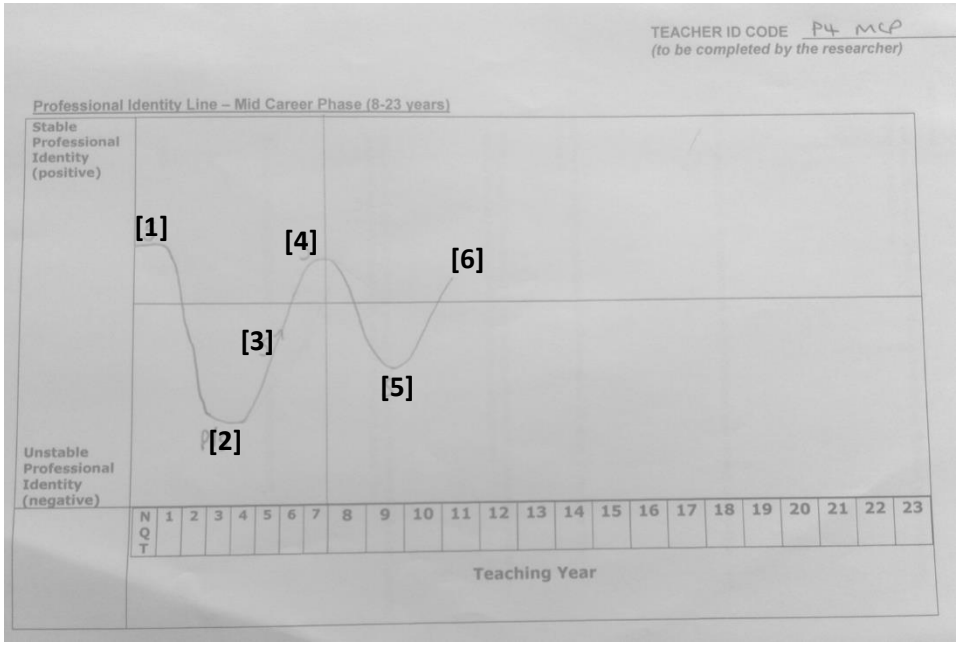
[2] – Professional. Couldn't get permanent contract as a teacher, so had to work as HLTA. Didn't feel valued as much as when she worked as a teacher.

[3] – Situated/Professional. Begins NQT year on temporary one year contract. Confident in role, as had been doing supply teaching and HLTA teaching previously.

[4] –Professional. New assessments for Year 2 introduced. Felt stressed and pressured to reach what she considered to be ridiculous target levels. Didn't like putting lower achieving children through tests that they would fail. First time considered leaving the profession.

[5] – Situated. Working more collaboratively with a colleague. Increasing confidence. Got permanent contract.

Nigel – 10 years in teaching



[1] – Situated/personal. Easy beginnings in first school. New father. Committed to role.

[2] – Personal/Situated. Dad died. Growing family. Tensions with work/life balance. Felt unsupported by head teacher. Decided to leave school.

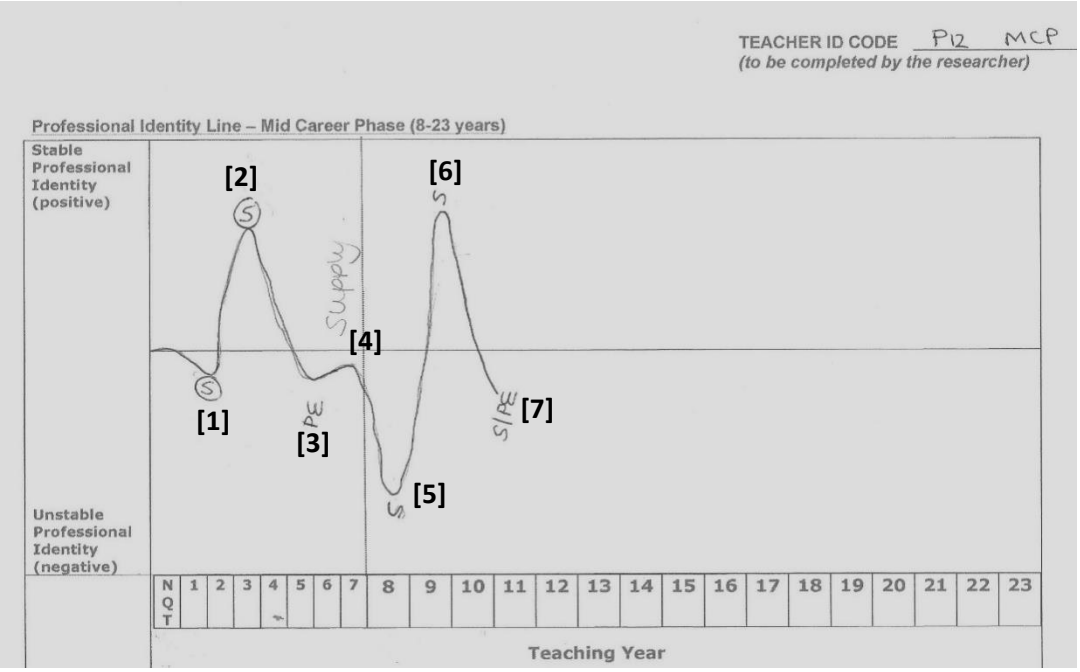
[3] – Situated. Change of school. Increasing sense of self efficacy.

[4] – Situated. Given opportunity to run forest school. Feeling valued. CPD for middle leaders.

[5] – Situated. Didn't feel that head teacher trusted his professional judgements. Overlooked for promotion. Low commitment to school.

[6] – Professional. Change of school. Feels able to make a contribution to school policies/community. Increasing commitment.

Katie – 11 years in teaching



[1] – Situated. Felt victimised by leadership at school due to a difficult pregnancy where she had to take time off. Name removed from staff list when on maternity leave.

[2] – Situated. Positive relationship with head teacher.

[3] – Personal. Second pregnancy. Supply work & temporary contracts.

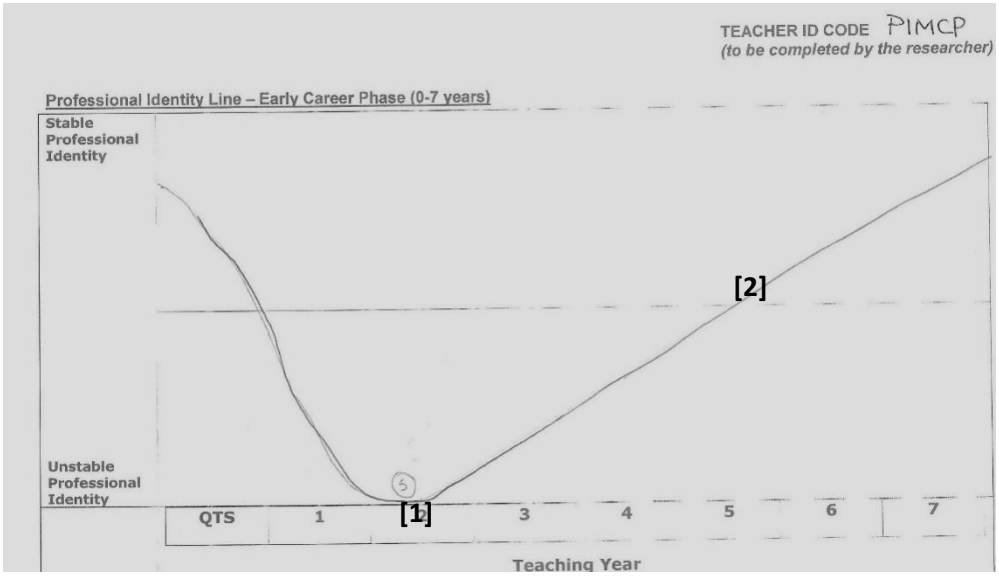
[4] – Situated. Long term supply, began to feel like part of the team.

[5] – Situated. Overlooked for permanent position. Considered leaving profession.

[6] – Situated. Working for a head teacher who she respected. Positive school climate.

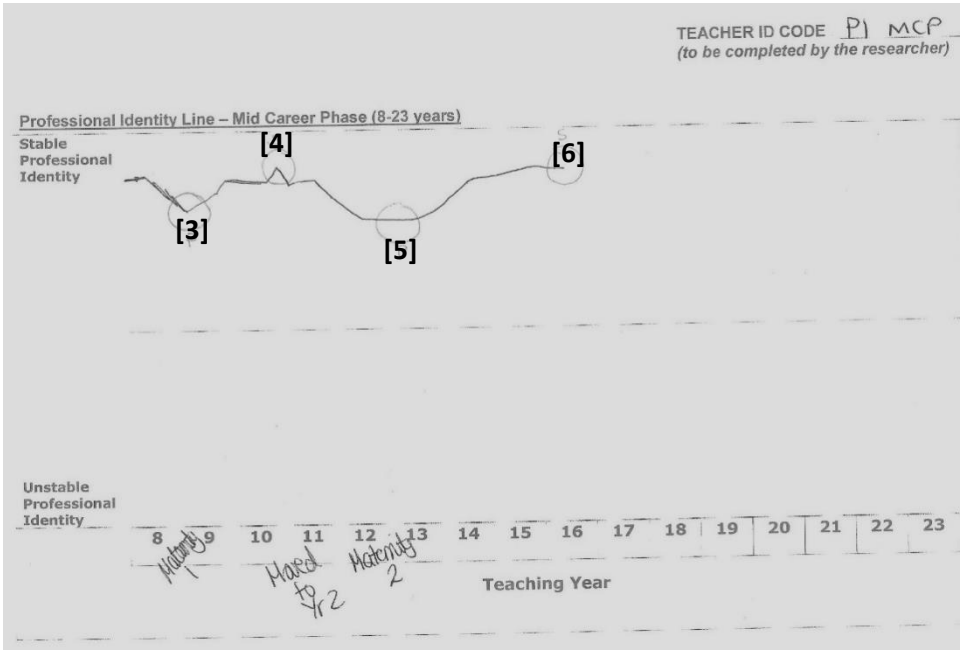
[7] – Personal. Low support from partner. Missing out on role as parent. Low commitment.

Emma – 16 years in teaching



[1] - Situated. Felt unsupported with challenging pupils in class. Low sense of self efficacy. '*[I] should've asked for help…[I] should've said*.' Signed off work with stress. Wanted to leave teaching.

[2] - Situated. Felt more supported. Feeling closer to colleagues, friendships forming. Feeling like part of the school community.



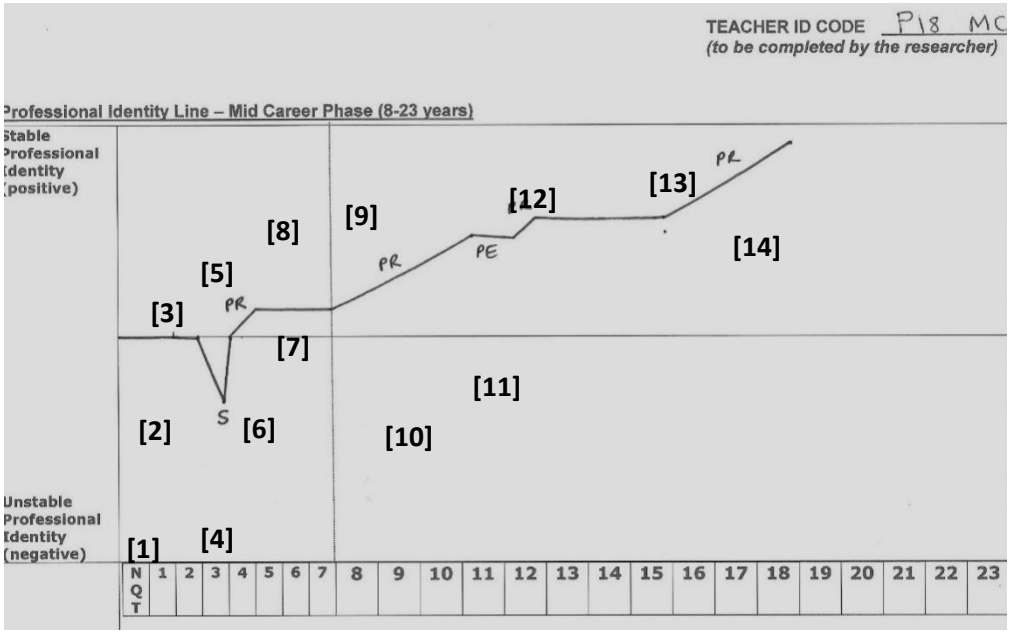
[3] – Personal. Maternity leave. Conflicting emotions. Reduced sense of professional identity.

[4] – Situated. Asked to teach in Year 2, felt trusted by head teacher.

[5] – Personal. Maternity leave.

[6] – Professional. Confident, systems in place. Increased sense of self efficacy. Feels valued and sense of belonging. Commitment high.

Ricky – 17 years in teaching



[1] – Personal. Unhappy in relationship. Negative influence on school work. Unable to prepare due to arguments at home. Poor Ofsted inspection.

[2] – Situated. Support and encouragement from head teacher. Increasing confidence and feelings of self efficacy.

[3] – Professional. Was asked to be a team leader for the year group. Felt valued.

[4] – Situated. Changed school. Challenging environment. Everything had to be relearned. Perceived weak leadership. Challenging behaviour, no support from leadership team.

[5] – Situated. Took kids on school trip. Had breakthrough moment where he felt a connection with his pupils. Realisation that he could make a big difference to their lives. Increased commitment.

[6] – Situated. Moved school. New role on leadership team of fresh start school. Long hours, challenges within the community.

[7] – Professional. Sense of achievement. Working in team to turn school around.

[8] – Professional. Ofsted rated school as 'Good'. Feeling of learning lots from school leader.

[9] – Professional. Continuing professional development. NPHQ. Growing sense of self efficacy.

[10] – Professional. First headship. Feeling isolated.

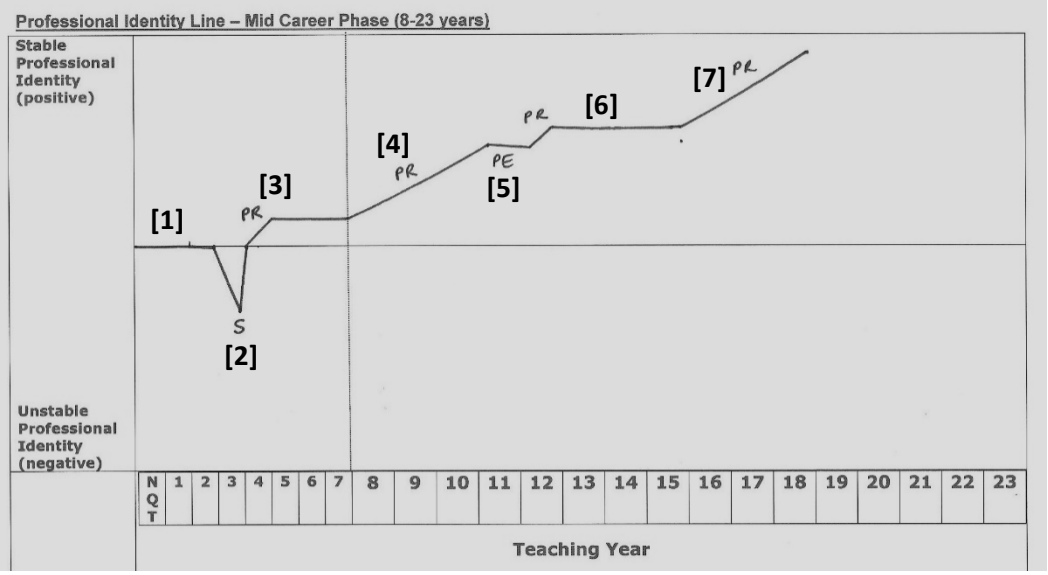
[11] – Professional. Getting to know strengths of each member of staff. Support from other head teachers in cluster.

[12] – Professional. Good Ofsted feedback. Affirmation of leadership skills.

[13] – Professional. Feeling of having made positive impact on school and developing staff.

[14] – Professional. Conflicting beliefs about education and government policies. Academisation.

Louise – 18 years in teaching



[1] – Professional. Working in reception, learning ropes. Steady.

[2] – Situated. Moved to work in a Year 2 class with high number of children with challenging behaviour. Felt completely unsupported. Not confident enough to say anything. Sens eof self-efficacy plummeted and 'nearly gave up teaching all together.'

[3] – Situated. Changed of school. Given responsibility in reception class. Felt valued by head teacher.

[4] – Professional. Began working with other schools and other professionals in education.

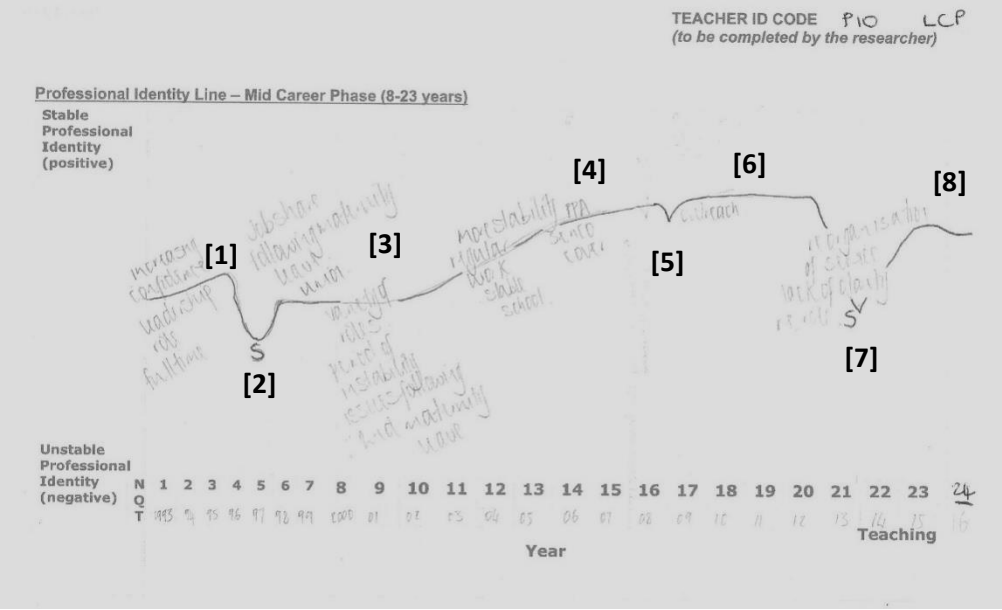
[5] –Personal. Moved house to different area. Felt that Early Years reputation which had been built in previous local authority was lost.

[6] – Professional. Got job in Early Years setting in special education school, and began learning about the need for a different practice in SEN settings

[7] – Professional/Situated. Promoted to Early Years lead, felt valued by head teacher.

Late Career Phase Teachers

Sarah – 24 years in teaching



[1] – Situated. Increasing confidence, increasing sense of self efficacy.

[2] – Personal/situated. Requested part time working after having first child. Request was refused by head teacher. Union involved. Reduced commitment to school.

[3] – Situated. Was able to work part time, but led to some instability after second child was born. On temporary contract.

[4] – Situated. Work became more stable, was offered a part-time role covering PPA and SENCO work which fit in with family commitments.

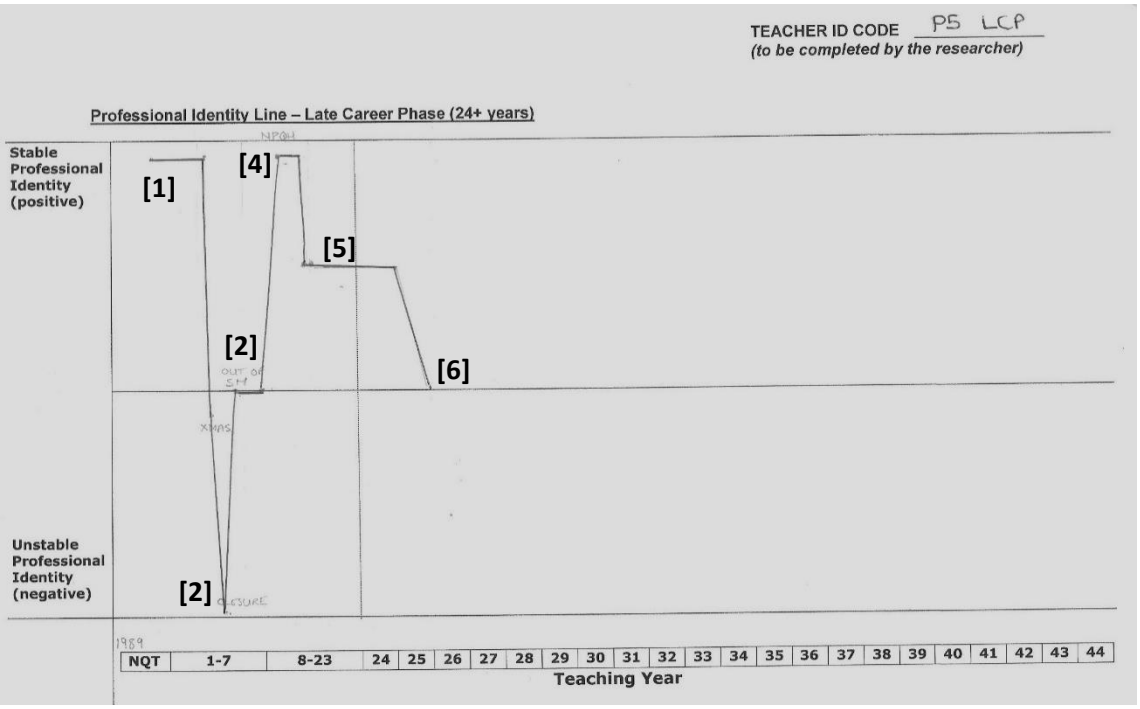
[5] – Situated. Worked in a school with a head teacher who did not value part-time workers.

[6] – Professional. Began working for outreach services, supporting pupils and teachers in different schools. Enjoyed evolving role. Shared vision with other staff in outreach service. Commitment increasing.

[7] – Professional. Reorganisation of outreach service. Lack of communication. Felt that role wasn't valued.

[8] – Professional. Became Deputy Head Teacher. Positive Ofsted. Felt more secure in deputy head teacher role.

Janet – 25 years in teaching



[1] – Situated. Easy beginnings. Increasing confidence. Commitment to role high.

[2] – Situated. Change of school. Shocked by different community/pupils. School placed in special measures.

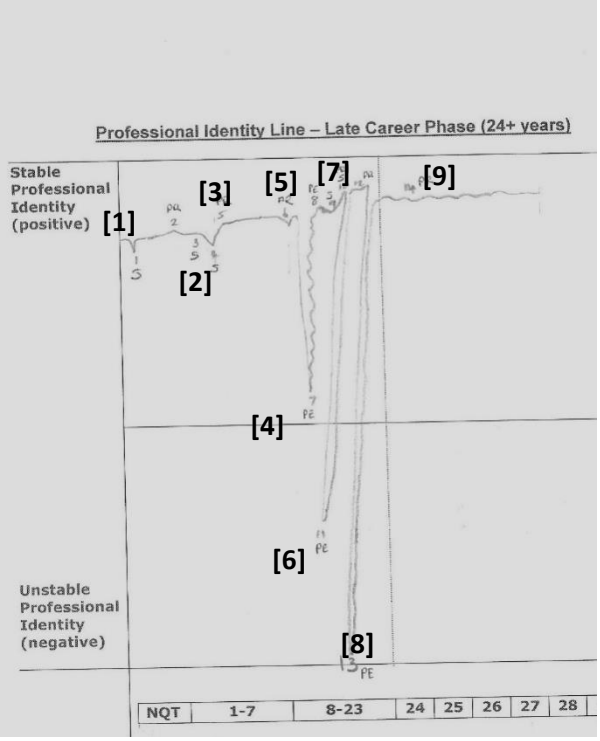
[3] – Situated. Supported by colleagues. Staff work together to bring school out of special measures.

[4] – Situated. Change of school. Head teacher who held same beliefs about school. Enjoying teaching and increased confidence.

[5] – Professional/situated. Enjoying headship, but restricted by government policies.

[6] – Professional. Tension between personal beliefs and government policies.

Norma – 26 years in teaching



[1] – Situated. Easy beginnings, but blip when accusation made about hitting a child, and was not supported by head teacher. Growing confidence, introduction of national curriculum, felt increasing sense of self efficacy.

[2] – Situated. Needed new challenge. Overlooked for promotion and not valued by head teacher.

[3] - Situated. Moved school. Very supportive line manager. Growing confidence.

[4] – Personal. Divorce. Same year dad and sister passed. Lost focus and energy for teaching.

[5] – Personal. Remarried. Supportive partner.

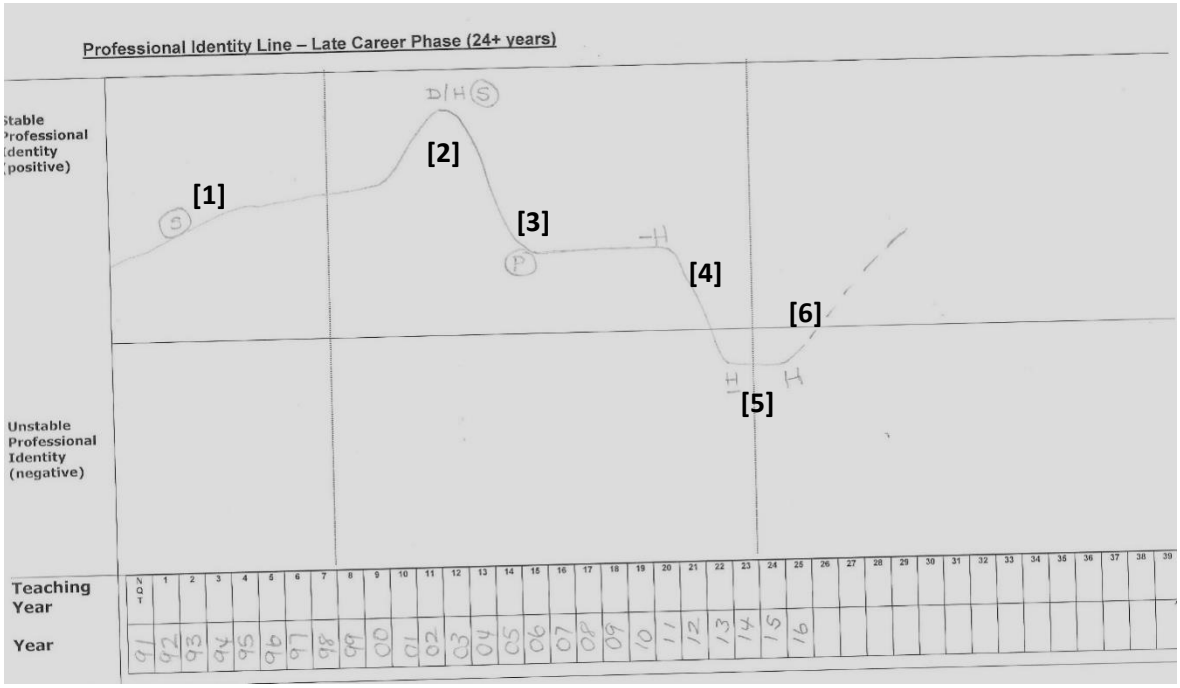
[6] – Personal. Became a mother.

[7] – Situated. Opportunity to work as mentor with student teachers.

[8] – Personal. Son diagnosed with life threatening illness.

[9] – Professional. New role working part time for university with student teachers. Bigger picture of primary education.

Julia – 26 years in teaching



[1] – Situated. Enjoyed first school. Steep learning curve. Increasing confidence.

[2] –Professional/situated. Was promoted to deputy head teacher in school, alongside new head teacher. Was able to 'shape things' in school. Positive sense of identity. High commitment.

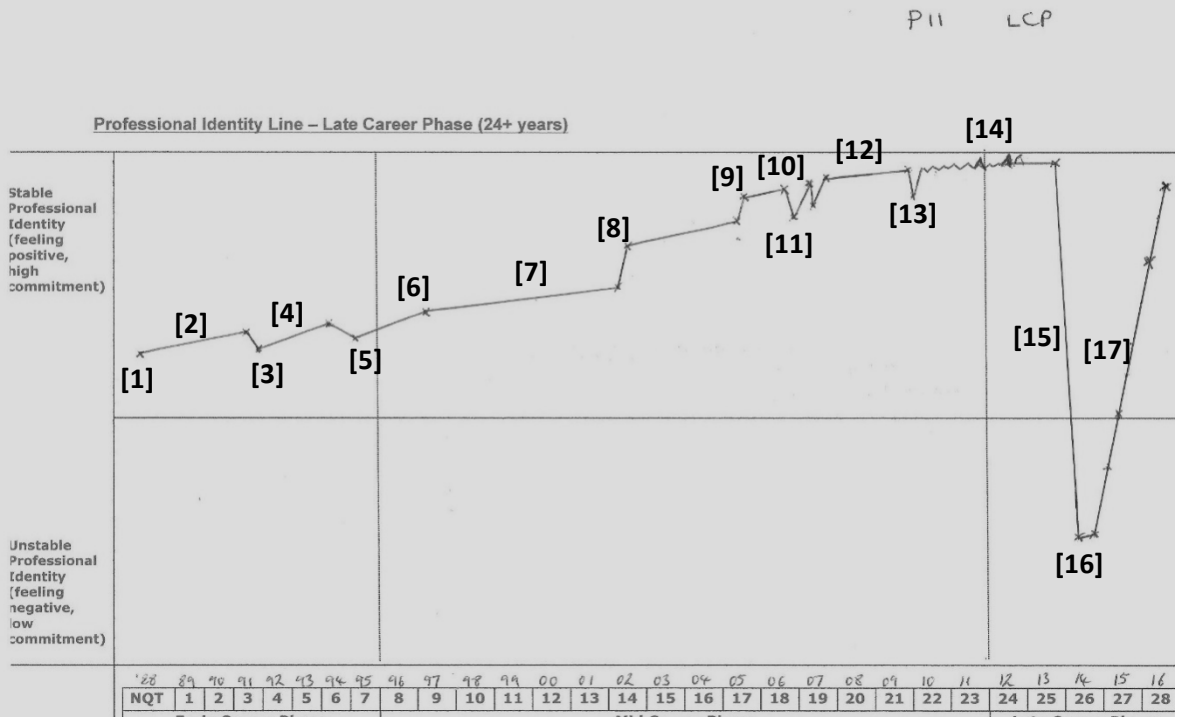
[3] – Personal. Due to young family and health issue, reduced hours and stepped down from deputy role. Felt 'a little bit lost' while adjusting from leadership back to teaching role.

[4] – Situated. Change of head teacher. Didn't feel valued as part time teacher. Experience not used. Negative influence on identity and commitment.

[5] – Situated. Another change of head. Uncertainty in school. Lots of staff leaving.

[6] – Situated. Beginning to feel as though new head teacher values her input. School has a focus again. Feeling positive about the future of the school.

Alan – 28 years in teaching



[1] – Situated. Confident start. Head teacher encouraged initiative.

[2] – Situated. Felt supported by other staff in school. Growing confidence.

[3] – Situated. Moved schools for promotion. Culture shock.

[4] – Situated. Growing confidence, learning from more experienced staff. Establishing position in school.

[5] – Situated. Change of head teacher.

[6] – Situated. Moved school for promotion to Phase Leader role. Confidence boost.

[7] – Professional. Applied for deputy head post. Unsuccessful but positive, affirming experience.

[8] – Professional. Moved schools. Promotion to deputy head teacher and given opportunity to do NPQH. Increased confidence. Positive Ofsted.

[9] – Professional. Became a 'beacon manager' using experience to support other schools in area.

[10] – Professional. Offered first headship.

[11] – Situated. Attacked by aggressive parent.

[12] – Professional. Positive Ofsted inspection. Growing confidence as head.

[13] –Situated. Realities of managing local authority review. Tensions with managing staff. Needed to change staffing structures. Negative feedback from staff.

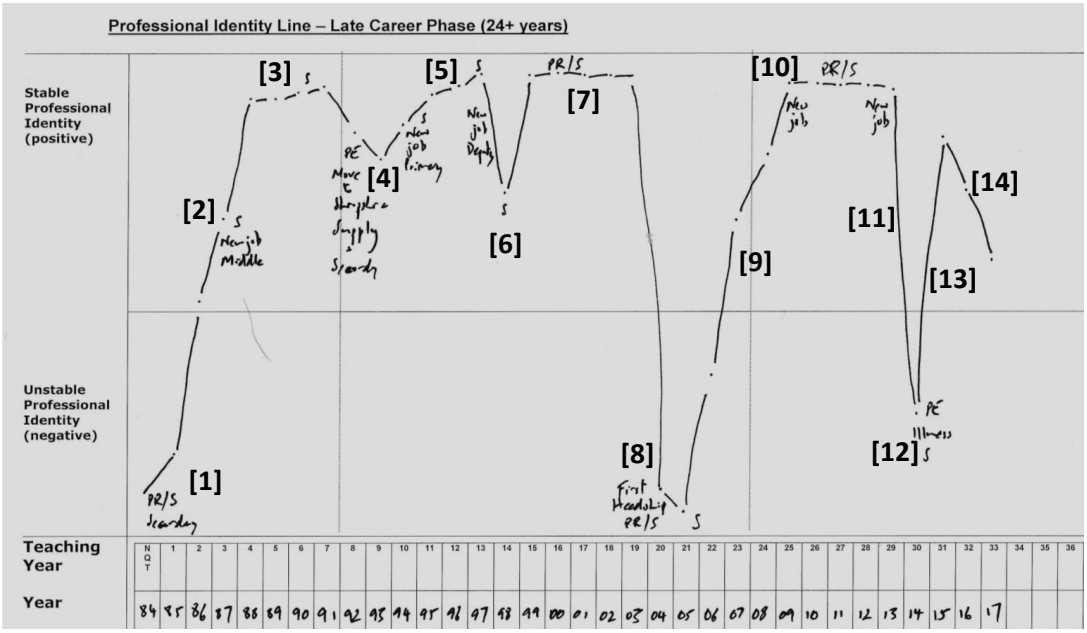
[14] – Professional. Ups and downs of overseeing new school build.

[15] – Personal/situated – Missing out on time with family due to work commitments. Hip operation. Poor relationships with chair of governors.

[16] – Personal/situated/professional. Burnout. Loss of identity. Left job.

[17] – Situated. Began working as a class teacher. Rediscovered passions for teaching.

Lee - 33 years in teaching



[1] – Professional/situated – Started working in 'tough' secondary school. As NQT unsure of self, low confidence '*I was racked with those sorts of uncertainties about myself*'

[2] – Situated. Moved to a middle school. New start. Preferred age group. Worked with experienced staff. Increasing confidence. Felt able to ask for help. Sense of professional identity increasing.

[3] – Situated. Did supply work and temporary contracts. Opportunities to work in different settings. Worked in a challenging school, but with great feedback and support. Increased feelings of self-efficacy and increased commitment to teaching.

[4] – Personal/situated. Moved house. Went back to work in secondary school. One class behaviour was challenging. Dented confidence. Questioning own efficacy.

[5] – Situated. Returned to primary. Growing confidence.

[6] –Situated. School in challenging area.

[7] – Professional/situated. Felt valued and trusted by head and wider community. Was promoted to deputy head. Felt that school reflected his own life '*I got on really well with the staff and the kids, and I loved it there*.' High commitment.

[8] – Professional/situated/personal. First headship. Felt isolated by existing staff. Deputy left. …*'that was the low point in my career*.' No support from colleagues or local authority. '*I didn't know what to do, I'd never done it before*.' No support from partner.

[9] – Professional/situated. Built trust with staff and parents. Relationships improved. Confidence growing as head teacher. School Ofsted rating improved.

[10] – Situated. Headship at different school. Stable identity. Positive sense of self efficacy. Was made an LLE (training middle leaders to become leaders) *'that was a very productive and purposeful time*.' Sense of purpose.

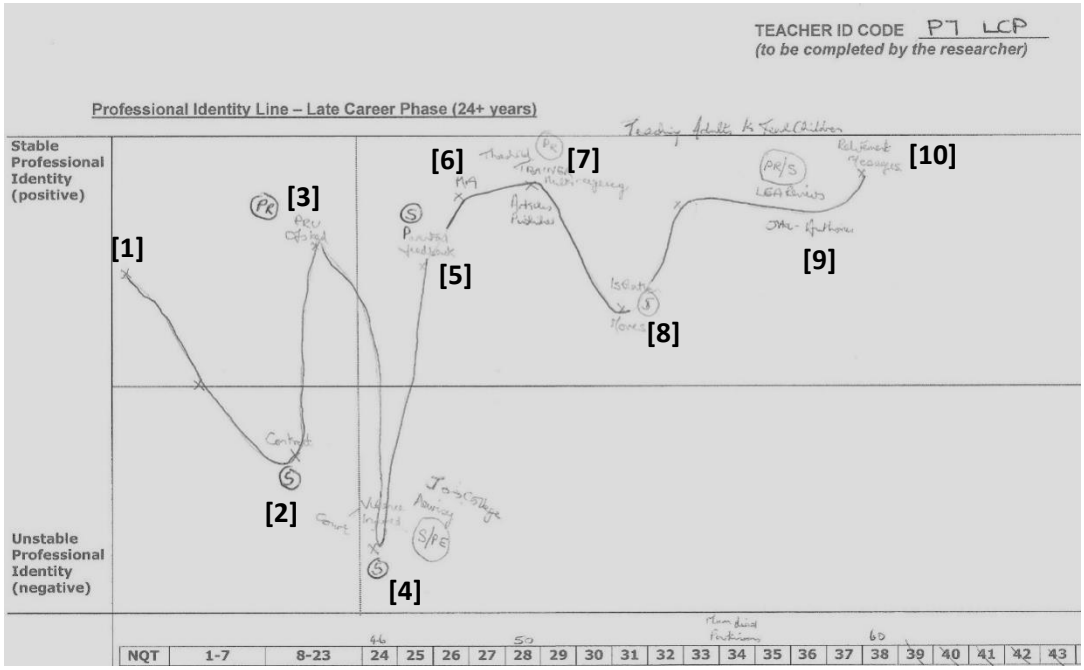
[11] –Situated. Took job in a challenging school with '*Need to Improve'* label. Could no longer do LLE role, as needed to be in a good or outstanding school to do role.

[12] –Personal. Illness. Had a period of time off. Struggled on return. *'I came back in February or something, but I wasn't myself. I wasn't up and running, and I didn't really know what was going on. It wasn't good. I didn't think I was good.'*

[13] –Situated. Support from colleagues and deputy.

[14] –Professional. Anxiety about Ofsted. Wants to leave school in good position for retirement.

Sue – 38 years in teaching (retired)



[1] – Situated. Positive start. Going to '*change the world*'. Commitment to teaching high.

[2] – Professional. Temporary contract. Feeling frustrated with uncertainty.

[3] – Professional. Positive feedback from Ofsted. Affirmation of good practice. Confidence boost, raised sense of self efficacy.

[4] – Situated. Two violent attacks took place at school. Parent attacked caretaker. Pupil threw chair at her. Didn't want to return to work after violent episode.

[5] – Situated. Support from team. Working together, making changes. Got to know families, speak to parents. Building relationships.

[6] – Professional. Did masters degree at university. Developing professional knowledge. Increased self-efficacy. Began to see consider the bigger picture of primary education.

[7] – Professional. Given opportunity to share knowledge and develop other teachers and schools in a new training role. Positive feeling of making a difference to other teachers.

[8] – Professional. Changes in local authority services. Service being moved around. Feeling '*like a nomad*'.

[9] – Professional. Began working in multidisciplinary team. Supported schools alongside ed psychs. Felt like an effective team. Put on conferences, carried out local authority reviews, worked with inspectorate. Highly committed.

[10] – Retired on a high. Felt like her work had made a difference to pupils and staff. Feels that she has left a legacy.

Appendix I Example of semi-structured interview questions

1. **Could you tell me about any relationships that you have in school which you consider to be important to you?**
   Colleagues/Mentors/SLT/Pupils/Parents
   How do the relationships develop?
   Influence of the staff room?

2. **Can you tell me about any support that you receive or need to perform your teaching current role/roles to the best of your ability?**
   Who do you plan with? Do you get chance to discuss plans? How does that feel?
   Are there advantages to planning together/alone?
   Feedback? Confidence? Likely to try something new?

   Who would you say supports you in your professional development?
   Who supports you emotionally?

3. **Tell me about your CPD opportunities.**
   Do TED days at school fulfil your own CPD needs?
   Can you give me an example of a really good CPD that you have experienced?
   What was it like?
   Was it subject related or policy related?
   In what way did it benefit you?
   Why did it work so well?

   Do you ever have the chance to work with other schools?

4. **Can you tell me about a time when you have had the opportunity to coach or mentored another teacher?**
   How did it feel?
   What were the benefits/challenges?
   Is the role of mentor acknowledged by others?

5. **Do you feel valued at school?**
   Who values you?
   What is important to you about being a teacher?
   Do you have shared values at school?
   Do you have any influence on what happens in your school? How do you feel about that?

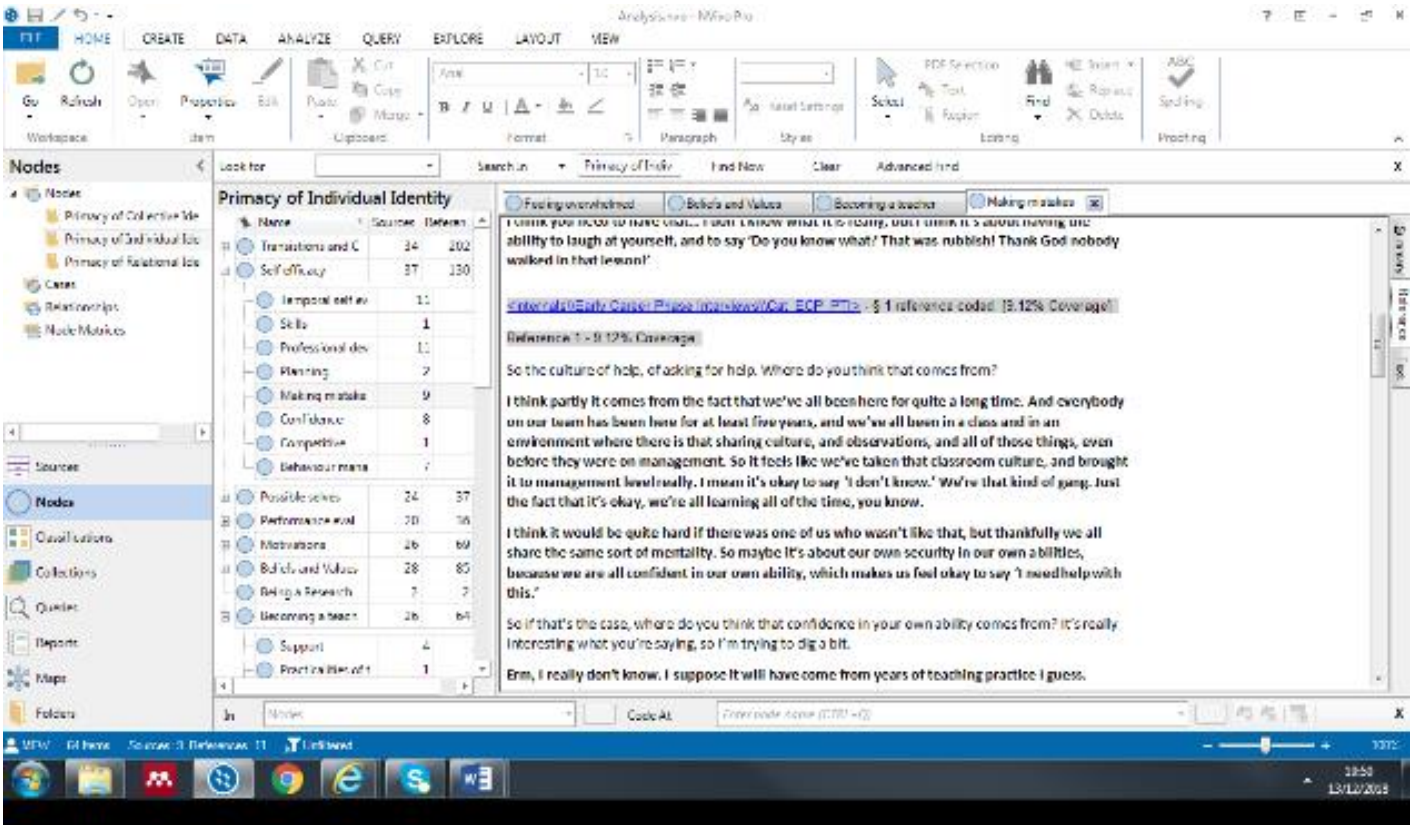
6. **Can you tell me how you manage your workload?**
   Are your expectations self-imposed or imposed on you?
   Does it impact on your personal life?
   Best tips?!

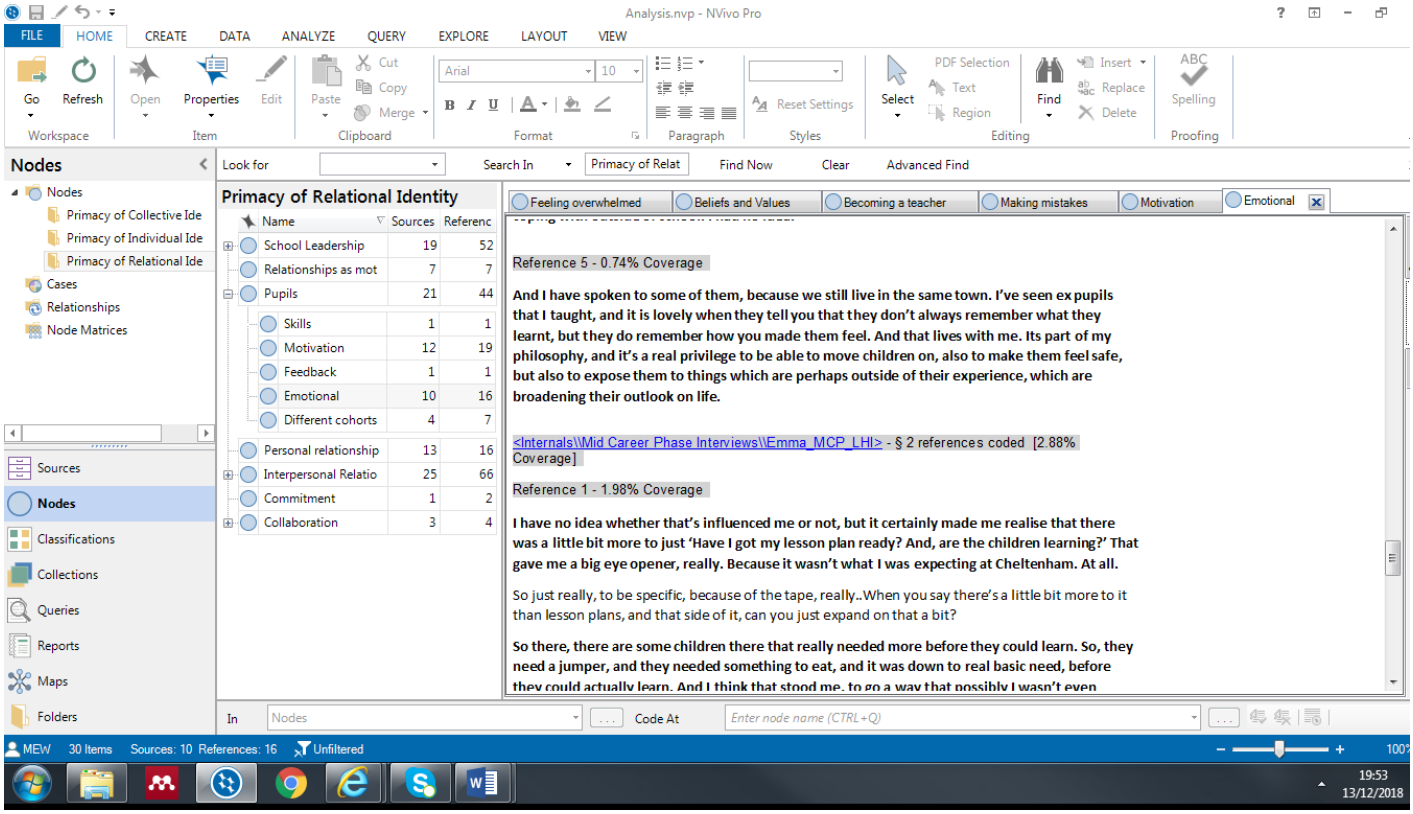
7. **What is you experience of Ofsted?**
   Does the overall effectiveness rating that Ofsted give your school influence the way you feel about your job? Can you explain your answer to me?

8. **How has this research project made you feel about your own professional identity?**

9. **Is there anything you would like to ask me about the study?**

Appendix J Screen shot of Nvivo data management during analysis



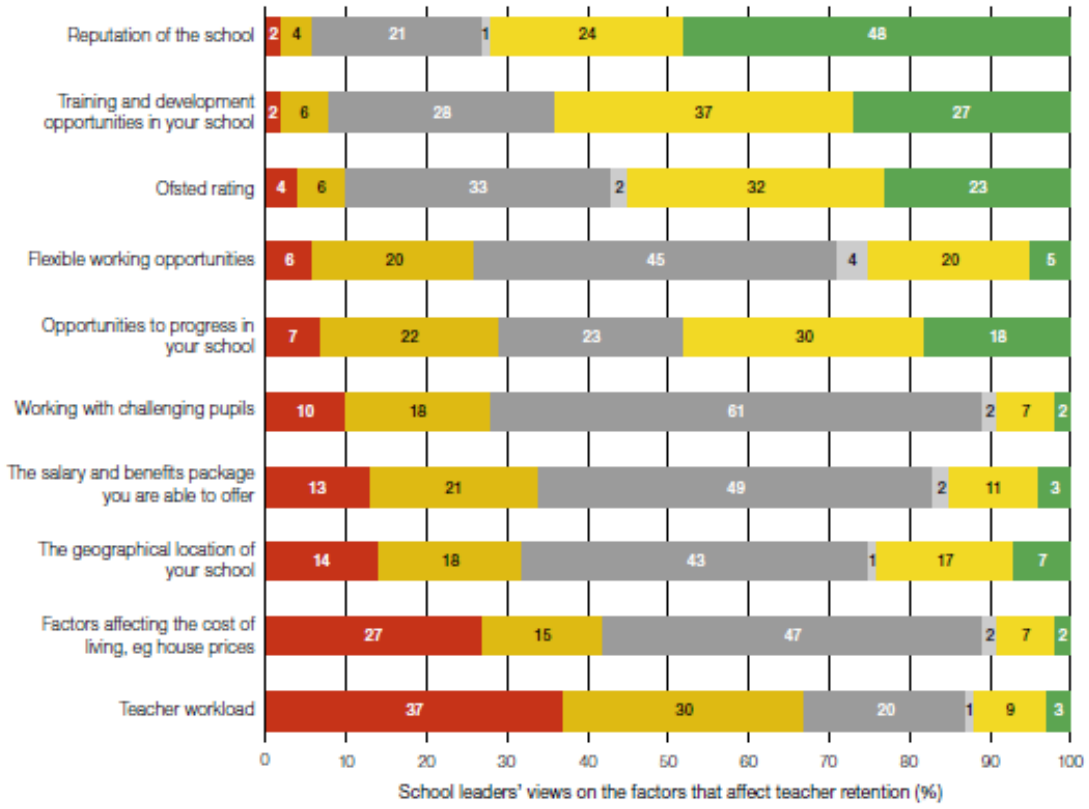


Appendix K School leaders' views (National Audit Office, 2017)

Figure 7

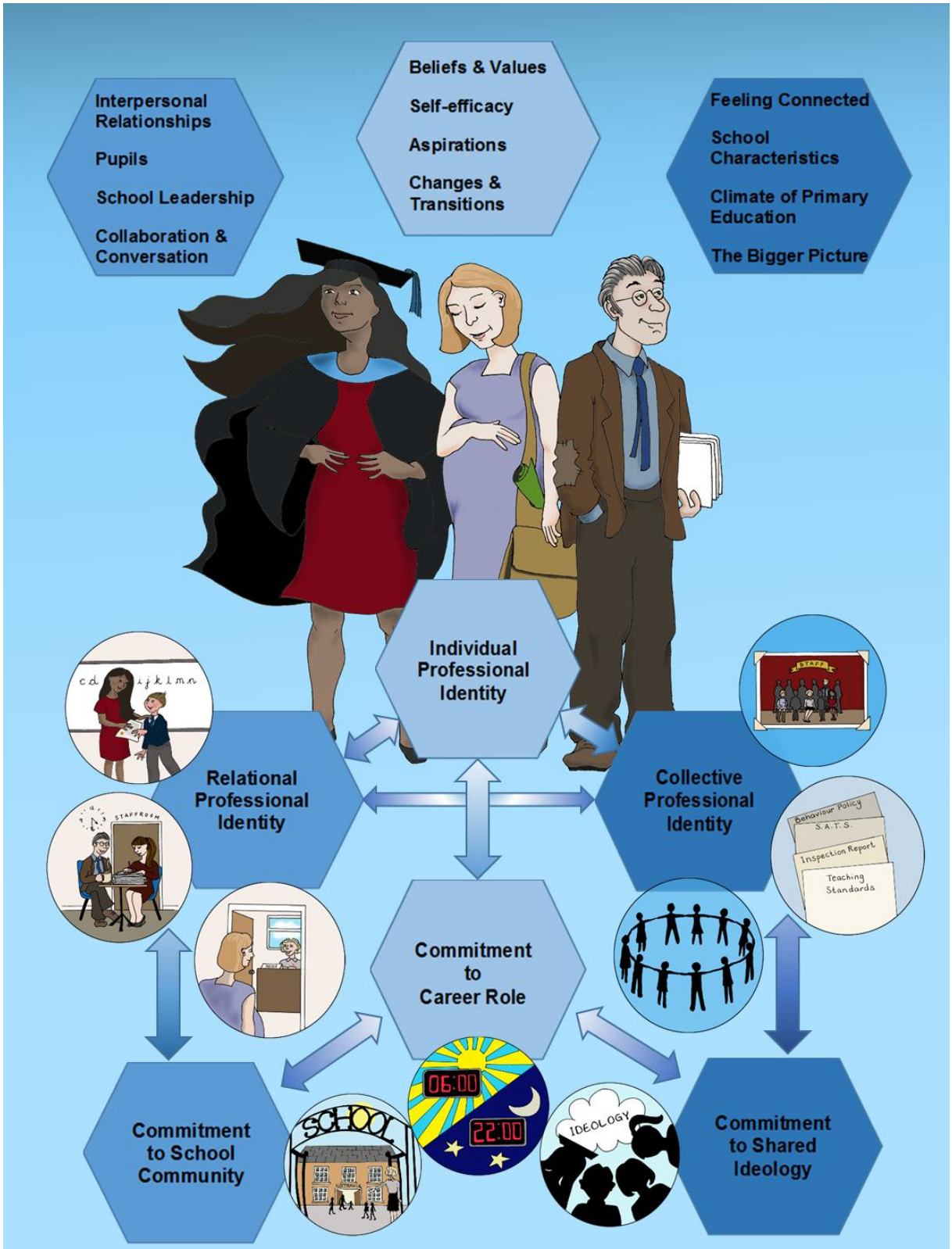
School leaders' views of the factors that affect teacher retention

School leaders consider that workload is the most significant barrier to teacher retention



Note

Appendix L Illustration of the Interconnections between Key Influences on Three Levels of Professional Identity and Focus of Commitment



This illustration has been developed in collaboration with illustrator Emma Cooper in order to recognise the human and relational element of teacher professional identity and commitment across a career. It is also my intention that this illustrated version of the theoretical model will help to engage a wider audience, which might include not only the academic community, but school leaders, policy makers and primary teachers themselves.