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Riding the Roller Coaster. Teaching: The Highs and Lows

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Dedication

In dedication to Joan, Sean and John. You are my guiding lights and inspiration. I wouldn't have got this far without the support you provide and the belief which you have in me.



Thank you.

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Abstract

Research indicates that teaching is consistently listed in the top three professions which experience the highest levels of occupational stress (NUT, 2012). A survey (Teachers Assurance, 2013) found that teachers' reported stress levels were impacting their ability to teach. This survey found teachers were more likely to experience the consequences of stress, compared to staff in management roles. The Teacher Wellbeing Index (ESP, 2018) found an overwhelming majority (74%) of the 1502 respondents considered the inability to 'switch off' from work to be the major contributing factor to a negative work-life balance. This most recent survey indicates the current pressure on staff within education.

In this research, I aim to reveal how teachers experience their role and how they manage the daily demands on them. The review revealed limited research which focused on the factors that support and undermine the wellbeing of teachers with reference to the systems in which they function. I hope this research offers an insight into the factors that support and hinder wellbeing, as well as further developing knowledge of what retains some teachers in this stressful profession. In this study, I intend to do this by examining how teachers view their role, what empowers and stresses them, and how systems support or hinder their daily practice.

I applied a narrative approach from a critical realist perspective to hear the stories teachers told about their careers, as well as what supports and undermines their wellbeing. Participants were three full-time teachers, with at least five years teaching

experience, who had taught in a minimum of two schools (at least one was required to be a UK state school). Semi-structured, narrative interviews were undertaken using an 'episodic' approach (adapted from McAdams, 1993) which highlighted changes over time. This approach allowed me to hear each individual's story about their role on a daily basis, as well as across their career, with regards to systems in which they were required to work. It also meant participants were able to identify and speak about key events, such as the factors which initially brought them to the profession and which factors continued to motivate them as teachers. Stories were analysed using The Listening Guide (Gilligan, 1982).

Findings across all three narratives indicate that teachers identify as having multiple roles. These varied roles related to personal values they associated with teaching, as well as systemic-led responsibilities. The roles which closely aligned to their values generally supported their wellbeing. However, at times there were differences between what they felt they should be doing as teachers and what they were being asked to do, and these instances undermined their wellbeing. Tensions within the narratives often related to professional judgements being questioned despite high levels of training; a disregard for the holistic vision of pupils, and increasing workloads which ultimately encroach on personal time. The language within the stories generally align themselves to narratives which are becoming more publicly widespread.

Key Terms: wellbeing, stress, socio-psychological wellbeing, environmental influences/factors, protective factors

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Chapter One: Introduction

In this study, I aim to explore class teachers' experiences of teaching and how they manage their wellbeing. This research area has been influenced by my own teaching experience and mental health issues affecting my colleagues. It has been further influenced by my attempts to understand which processes and systems best support teachers' wellbeing in light of government legislation, which results in changes to national expectations and expected targets within education. Additional influences include mixed messages, which result from government guidance aimed at supporting the social, emotional and mental health of education staff and young people (DoH 2011; DoH, 2015).

1.1: Interest in Teacher Wellbeing

My main interest in class teachers' wellbeing stems from my belief that teachers need to be able to model positive wellbeing to the children and young people that they teach. Therefore, the systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) around class teachers need to assist them effectively in prioritising their own wellbeing, before expecting them to be capable of nurturing the wellbeing of others. When I initially began this research, I considered running a mindfulness intervention with teachers to measure its effectiveness, if any, on their wellbeing and ability to manage stress. I became conscious that at the start of this research project, I was aligning myself with a narrative about teacher stress that was focused on the 'within' person view and disregarded the context in which they were working. Rather than problematising the system in which they were working, this initial perspective implied that stress is about the individual, and it is their responsibility to reduce it. I began to question whether

supporting teacher wellbeing is best done through interventions, which add additional workload, or whether this simply puts the responsibility on practitioners to manage their own wellbeing. My thinking has developed further because I believe that it is the systems in place which need to change. This is necessary in order to address the underlying issues which cause the teaching profession to be continuously listed as one of the top three most stressful professions (NUT, 2012). I believe these systemic issues contribute to many teachers leaving the profession within the first year five years of qualifying (Bachkirova, 2005; Gibbs and Miller, 2013).

1.2: Influences

I am aware that my beliefs will have influenced this research. This includes my belief that wellbeing, also referred to as social, emotional and mental health, is an important influence on teachers' capacity to teach well. When I was teaching, I noticed that teachers' careers and their ability to teach seemed to be impacted by their wellbeing. This is supported by educational research, which indicates that experiences in teachers' personal lives are closely associated with their ability and performance in a professional capacity (Goodson & Hargreaves, 1996; Acker, 1999). Within my practice, I was aware of education systems which seemed to nurture and protect the wellbeing of staff; countries outside of England appear to be investing in ways to prioritise and protect staff wellbeing (Aelterman, Engels, Van Petegem and Verhaeghe, 2007). Within my own local authority and nationally, I have observed staff whose social, emotional and mental health appear to be suffering. I would argue that this is due to conflicting messages from the government. Consequently, a

number of experienced teachers I knew were signed off sick from work as a result of occupational stress. There appears to be an ever-increasing rhetoric within teaching communities on social media which indicate the unsurmountable stress they are experiencing. This type of narrative is beginning to gain more exposure within some media outlets and there have been petitions made to the UK Government and Parliament website in relation to reducing teacher workload.

The National Children's Bureau indicates that the number of children and young people suffering from poor social, emotional and mental health is increasing (NCB, 2017). NUT surveys (2012; 2014) indicate the same pattern for teaching staff. However, record numbers of children, young people and adults are waiting an increasingly long time to access help. Following an international review on teacher stress and burnout, Kyriacou (1987) highlighted one of the reasons that teachers' wellbeing should be a global concern is due to concerns that it may affect their ability to provide quality first teaching and build positive relationships with their pupils. While interest in class teacher wellbeing is starting to gather momentum, the focus tends to be on 'firefighting' highly escalated situations through the use of initiatives or strategies, rather than addressing underlying SEMH issues. I hope this research will contribute to the current literature on teacher wellbeing by offering a direct and detailed expression of the lived experience of practitioners and how they manage their social, emotional and mental health.

1.3: The Role of a Teacher and Their Identity

When I was a teacher, I would discuss with colleagues the need to juggle the multiple 'roles' of a teacher. Now, as a trainee educational psychologist, my area of research interest is met with enthusiastic nods from teachers, due to the fact that someone outside of their profession is acknowledging their daily plight. As a teacher, I felt I was acting out different roles on a daily basis. This included as a performer for my class, an administrator for senior leadership, as a listening ear to contain concerns, and as someone who could boost morale in colleagues. These ideas about needing to perform different roles and have multiple identities resonate with Goffman's theory on identity (1963, 1959) which highlights the constructions an individual makes within the current social situation, that then allows them to adjust their behaviour so the most believable and relevant performance can be seen by others. This can lead to questions about authenticity and which version of the 'self' is visible at any one time. I was interested to discover if and how teachers' experiences of the various pressures within the role influence their career.

1.4: Synopsis

In summary, I had a personal interest in the subject area of teacher wellbeing. The literature briefly outlined above indicates that this is an international issue of importance, because teacher stress is something which is experienced worldwide and is a focus of international research. Some examples of international research included in the literature review were carried out in Australia (Cross, Lester and Barnes, 2014), Finland (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010), America (Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia and Greenberg, 2011), Norway (Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli, 2006) and Canada (Cooper and Olson, 1996). As well as being important on a global

scale, I felt that listening to the stories of teachers would be valuable in several ways. Firstly, they would have the opportunity to reflect and share their own particular story. Secondly, it would be valuable because their individual story would be heard on a larger platform. Consequently, this may give hope to other teachers and it may help shape systemic educational policies and practices of the future.

1.5: Positionality

I had a very positive teaching experience and was curious about others within the same school system who did not.

1.5.1: My Experience of Wellbeing

I trained as a primary school practitioner and started out as a teacher in the Early Years of a school which took pupils from the age of 3 to 11 years old. My own wellbeing, although I did not know it by that name at that time, was supported by working hard during term-time balanced with travelling during school holidays. This involved working long hours which extended well beyond the school day and also into my weekends. I unthinkingly gave my own personal time because I wanted to do the best I could for my class. I worked long hours during term-time but used the holidays to regenerate by educating myself through travel experiences.

During the school term, my focus was dedicated to the children in my class and seeing them develop as little people with personalities, not just as numbers on a spreadsheet. Whilst I used the school holidays to rejuvenate myself by travelling.

Throughout my teaching career, I visited over fifty countries. I was able to travel because of my teaching career but I also used travelling to enable me to teach. I balanced work and travel opportunities throughout the ten years that I was a teacher, which enabled me to maintain my wellbeing.

As a class teacher, particularly within the Early Years, I felt incredibly fulfilled. I loved seeing my class learn and their accomplishments seemed almost palpable by the time spring term arrived. I learnt something new every year. In fact, when I began teaching my intention was to later train as an educational psychologist; at that time two years teaching experience was a pre-requisite. What actually happened was that I fell in love with teaching. It offered me a framework, the school day, but it also provided excitement and variation because no day was ever the same.

1.5.2: Colleagues

My initial partner teacher, who was also the Early Years Coordinator and my mentor during my first year of teaching, was someone who I found to be an enthusiastic teacher. As a partner teacher and mentor she was engaging and supportive towards me. As an Early Years Coordinator, she had good ideas but seemed to find the additional responsibilities filled with tensions. These related to expectations, with regards the curriculum, leadership of people within the team as well as their continual professional development (CPD).

1.5.3: Nurturing My Professional Development

My attention was drawn to the wellbeing of teachers when the Early Years Coordinator, who was no longer my partner teacher, was signed off on work-related sick leave. I recognise that my identity as a teacher was multifaceted, depending on who I was interacting with (e.g. peers, class or parents) and what role was required of me at the time (Beijaard, Meijer and Verloop, 2004; Cooper and Olson, 1996) but I would not describe myself as a natural-born leader. However, I embraced the opportunity by taking on the interim role of Early Years Coordinator. As time passed, I recognised that I had begun to flourish in this role. I realised that I had a particular leadership style to offer as Early Years Coordinator and I took on the role on a permanent basis. I was able to be democratic and supportive. I wanted to work as a team and the group of staff in the Early Years, who I was now responsible for, generally engaged with my collaborative leadership style (Kanter, 2003). For me, the role of coordinator developed me, both professionally and personally, in ways I had not expected. Due to the confidence I had discovered, taking on a leadership role alongside my teaching, I later became Literacy Coordinator and even considered moving towards becoming a Deputy Head. After being supported by my school to attend training in this area, I realised that I did not feel I had the attributes and qualities needed to be a long-term Deputy Head.

1.6: Summary

I loved teaching. It offered me opportunities to develop myself on a personal and professional level. I taught for far longer than the two years required because every year offered me something new to learn. I would have probably stayed as a teacher, and never fulfilled my earlier goal to become an educational psychologist, if I had not

found the system in which I was expected to teach be so stifling towards the holistic development of each child within my care.

1.7: Guide to How This Research Should Be Evaluated

Yardley (2007) offers a framework which can be used to evaluate the validity of this qualitative research.

1.8: Enhancing Validity in This Qualitative Research

In order to enhance the validity of this research I kept a paper trail and undertook participant feedback (Yardley, 2007). The paper trail of my analysis and analytic decisions were contained within my research diary and allowed me to document the judgements which influenced the research from the start of my journey, when I initially had a research interest in the area of teacher wellbeing, to the final draft of this thesis. Part way between a paper trail and detailed analysis was a trail of meaning offered in each transcription in the column on the right-hand side of each transcript. These comments noted my initial responses to the narrative. Participant feedback was obtained through member checks with each individual when they were asked to comment on the analysis of their story using their individual I-Poems taken from the Listening Guide (Yardley, 2007; Lincoln and Guba, 1986; Gilligan, 1982).

Yardley's framework for evaluating qualitative research is not prescriptive, as she acknowledges all research studies vary, therefore they can be ratified in different ways. This research is valid because it meets the essential criteria in the framework

as advocated by Yardley, thereby making it trustworthy. As indicated in this introduction to my research, I believe that I have inevitably influenced the knowledge which has resulted from this research (Yardley, 2007). In transparently acknowledging my beliefs and assumptions, and continuing to do so in my research diary, this research has rigour which connects to the trustworthiness and authenticity of the data generated (Lincoln and Guba, 1986; 1985).

Narrative inquiry allows the stories shared to be interpreted from multiple viewpoints. For instance, myself as a researcher first listening to the story; the participant hearing the analysis; you, the current reader of this research will be making your own interpretations and judgements. Multiple realities need to be studied holistically because each piece of information is interconnected; furthermore, they are effected by the current context (Lincoln and Guba, 1986; 1985). In illuminating the complexities within the powerful stories which were shared, the insights from this study will hopefully show themselves to be useful in other situations which have similarities to the narratives revealed in this research (Yardley, 2007; Lincoln and Guba, 1986).

1.9: Framework for Evaluating the Validity of This Research

The core principles necessary to evaluate the validity of qualitative research in accordance with Yardley's (2007) framework are: sensitivity to context; commitment and rigour; coherence and transparency; impact and importance.

1.9.1: Sensitivity to Context:

Qualitative methods, such as narrative inquiry, allow meaning to emerge from the research which have not been predetermined. Complexities and subtle interactions can be considered from a perspective of curiosity and develop new understandings and meanings (Bruner, 1991). Sensitivity to context was established in this study through the literature review which indicated a gap in research on teacher wellbeing which I hoped this research would inform. Formulating open-ended questions allowed the participants to tell their story as freely as possible with an emphasis on what was important to them. To facilitate their story-telling, participants were offered a choice on their preferred location for each interview to take place.

1.9.2: Commitment and Rigour:

I chose the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 1982) to analyse each narrative interview, which aligned closely to the purpose of my research, because I wanted to hear the story each teacher was telling. Using an episodic approach, which McAdams (1997) uses in life story interviews, allowed me to frame my questions across time periods and to highlight the highs and lows across the day and career of each teacher. The insights I developed through the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 1982) were facilitated by the person-centred approach I took within the interviews and had a foundation in my personal experience of being a teacher.

1.9.3: Coherence and Transparency:

The paper trail which I kept throughout the research process recorded my interpretations, judgements and decisions throughout the process. My intention was to ensure the reader would be able to follow how I had conducted this research and analysed the resulting data. Reflexivity was utilised in this research so the reader would be aware of what experiences had influenced me as a researcher. Hence, my reasons for sharing my background, reasons for interest in teacher wellbeing and my assumptions with you, the reader.

1.9.4: Impact and Importance:

This research is important because it has given a voice to the stories of the participants who made this research possible. The research has impact because it informs how systems have influenced the wellbeing of these three teachers. Finally, the research expands the existing research on teacher wellbeing and it alludes to the complexities of this subject area.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1: Introduction

The overall themes which shaped my literature search were: the role of the class teacher; stress experienced by and influencing teachers; environmental factors; and strategies used to alleviate stress and nurture wellbeing. Whilst not a stand-alone theme in itself, individual factors was a re-occurring subject area in the literature. My initial literature search used the term 'wellbeing' and 'class teacher', which produced numerous articles focused on coping strategies and the use of interventions to support the wellbeing of the students. Using the synonym 'pressure' along with 'teacher' yielded articles which focused on how class teachers spend their time and address their excessive workload. The first material I found which directly linked teacher wellbeing to student outcomes was research from the University of Western Australia (Cross, Lester and Barnes, 2014), which found teacher stress to have a negative impact on pupils. This paper indicated a gap in UK research and published literature regarding a possible link between class teacher wellbeing, student wellbeing and academic attainment. This link is an important factor to consider, since the mental health of children and young people is currently high on government and societal agendas. The systems supporting class teachers' wellbeing is a gap in current literature. I wondered if this would be overtly expressed by class teachers' when they spoke about their experiences.

2.2: Wellbeing; What is it?

There are multiple definitions and even multiple ways to spell and phrase the term 'wellbeing'. Generally speaking, wellbeing has been described in terms of a person's

psychological wellness or mental health, separate from physical fitness and affected by environmental circumstances (Crosby, 2015; Antonovsky, 1979; Warr, 1987). Within this thesis the term mental health is viewed as the same as wellbeing and both terms are used interchangeably due to the relational aspects which impact them. The World Health Organisation defines mental health as being “a state of wellbeing in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community” (WHO, 2018). Mental health, or wellbeing, impacts our internal thoughts, how we engage with others and everyday life. It can be influenced, positively or negatively, by social, psychological and biological elements (WHO, 2018). Thus, in this research wellbeing and mental health are understood as the same construct.

A term which repeatedly occurred in the literature was ‘socio-psychological wellbeing’ (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010; Griffith, Steptoe and Cropley, 1999). Within a school environment, socio-psychological wellbeing may be viewed as “an active, collaborative, and situated process in which the relationship between individuals and their environment is constantly constructed and modified” (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010, p.737). This definition of wellbeing highlights that each individual’s wellbeing within a school community is influenced by their interactions with the different systems which exist within their environment. This “can affect the ability to concentrate and observe the environment, perceive audiences and interpret received feedback” (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010, p.737). Thus, class teachers’ level of engagement and their perception of autonomy within the workplace are functionally linked to how they experience their professional relationships (i.e.

with colleagues, pupils and parents or carers), as well as their sense of belonging within the school community. Their wellbeing is impacted by their competence and their beliefs about their role. The wellbeing of each class teacher is commonly a product “of pedagogical processes and school practices” (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010, p.737). Thus, this research will refer to the combination of social and psychological factors which are incorporated into socio-psychological wellbeing when referring to the wellbeing of class teachers.

2.3: The Role of the Class Teacher

An area of interest which was highlighted during the literature search was the various roles of the class teacher within their teaching role as well as their additional responsibilities. A quotation from a teacher speaking about their wellbeing eloquently summarised their role as being more than just teaching: “In one day we not only teach, we manage behaviour, plan lessons, assess learning, counsel students, carry out first aid, reply to a long list of emails, write reports, tidy classrooms, create resources, mark books and create displays – the list is endless” (The Secret Teacher, 2013). This list indicates the increasing expectations being placed on teachers with regards to their role and highlights the complex nature of the school day.

In Canada, researchers have investigated the multiple elements of teacher identity. These multiple versions of the ‘self’ suggest teacher identity is continuously regenerated as a result of the environmental influences which interact and shape what it means to be a teacher (Cooper and Olson, 1996; Reynolds, 1996). The role

of the teacher is intrinsically linked to performance and identity, because practitioners perform different functions during the school day. A different version of their 'self' may be required at any one time (Goffman, 1959). For teachers, there are interactions with colleagues in staff meetings, rapport built with their class and communication with parents and carers. Interaction and communication, both verbal and non-verbal, help construct social identities which both the individual and others around them recognise as important in relation to the person (Goffman, 1981). Teachers are constantly responding to the current situation and attuning their behaviour to best fit this (Goffman, 1963). The role the teacher is 'performing' at any one time depends on the message they are delivering, and with whom they are interacting.

Due to the nature of schools and number of daily interactions which occur, teachers are required to use their skills in reflection to consider which role is most appropriate, at any given time. Whilst this may initially appear manipulative, these types of formulations are instantaneously occurring in most human interactions all the time: "Thus, when an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilise his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey" (Goffman, 1959, p.3) Due to the numerous roles a teacher performs in one day, they often have to quickly attune themselves to a situation so that they respond in an appropriate manner. This indicates a working day which is filled with variability or instability.

Teachers' role is also connected to what they value as important within their professional identity. The values they hold in high esteem, with regards to the type of teacher they aspire to be, are informed by their previous and current personal experiences, as well as frequently fluctuating social, occupational and political contexts (Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons, 2006). Sometimes external (political or institutional) and internal values may be in conflict with each other and this can create an incongruence between what a teacher values and what they are expected to do, such as statutory testing. Thus, teacher identity and how they view their role "may be more or less stable, and more or less fragmented, at different times and in different ways according to a number of life, career and situational factors" (Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons, 2006, p. 601).

2.4: Stress

Teachers Assurance a financial services provider surveyed teachers in 2013. The survey found that the levels of stress being experienced by teachers was affecting their ability to perform their roles effectively. The same survey found that 76% of teachers felt that their level of stress was having negative implications on their health. Over half (56%) revealed that if they were less stressed, they would be better at their job. 64% of respondents indicated an increase in their stress levels because of the threat of Performance Related Pay. Moreover, the survey found that it was class teachers who were more likely to experience the consequences of stress, rather than staff in senior or middle management roles. The Office for National Statistics stated that there was an 80% increase in the number of teachers dying by suicide between 2008 and 2009 (NUT, 2012). These figures indicated that the

number of teachers dying by suicide were between 30% and 40% higher than the national average for all occupations. It should be acknowledged that it is not usually possible to establish a direct causal connection between teacher stress and teacher suicide.

A significant proportion of teachers describe their job as stressful (ESP, 2018; Griffith, Steptoe and Cropley, 1999; Borg, 1990; Kyriacou and Sutcliffe, 1978). Even so, like the term 'wellbeing', there is little consensus over the precise definition of the term 'stress'. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), a national regulator for work related health, safety and welfare, describes stress on their website as "the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed upon them" (HSE, 2013). Kyriacou (2001) does offer a definition of teacher stress as being "unpleasant, negative emotions, such as anger, anxiety, tension, frustration or depression, resulting from some aspect of their work as a teacher" (page 28). Excessive workload and working hours are two of the most commonly reported stressors by teachers (ESP, 2018). These are exacerbated by a plethora of government initiatives, or changes to the taught and assessed curriculum, as well as the pressure associated with assessment targets, data analysis and inspections (HC, 2017). Further stressors include: systemic concerns within a school including the ethos and unsatisfactory professional relationships with colleagues; worry related to appraisal and performance related pay; difficulty managing pupil behaviour compounded by class sizes; insufficient resources; and a lack of professional development opportunities (HC, 2017). The House of Commons Education Committee produced a report on the recruitment and retention of teachers (HC, 2017) which recognised the necessity for training opportunities as an area of need,

which must change in order to retain teachers once they are trained. The threat or initiation of capability proceedings was another area classed as a stressor by teachers (NUT, 2012; 2014). The social and emotional demands required of teachers can negatively affect their socio-psychological wellbeing (Bricheno, Brown and Lubansky, 2009). It has been recognised that these stressors, experienced in excess or for prolonged periods, have been associated with a negative impact upon the physical and mental health of teachers. Stress can lead to further problems, such as depression (Schonfeld, 1992), psychological distress (Punch and Tuettemann, 1991), burnout (Kyriacou, 1987) and absenteeism (Chambers and Belcher, 1992). These complicating factors have consequences for the teacher suffering as well as those around them.

When a class teacher returns to work following a stress-related absence, there continue to be repercussions (ESP, 2018). The levels of engagement and empowerment experienced by the returning class teacher may be different as a result of their absence. As well as their belief in their own professional capabilities, the returning teacher may perceive their belonging or acceptance among their colleagues as different (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010). In this paper, the researchers referred to a term called 'pedagogical wellbeing'. This term referred to teachers' occupational wellbeing being formed through teaching and learning practices within the school environment. The pedagogical wellbeing perceived by the returning class teacher could be viewed as a vital resource with regards to their occupational resilience (Masten and Reed, 2005). The way in which the returning class teacher approaches their return, and the support they receive from the systems around them, will adversely or positively impact how they resume their duties, how

they perceive the situation and thus the feedback they receive from others. Consequently, these factors will influence their own self-image as a teacher. One strategy, with regards to returning to work after a period of absence, which is considered good practice is facilitating a phased return to work (NEU, 2019). The guidance provided by the National Education Union (NEU) on phased returns to work recognises that coming back to the workplace after a period of leave can be overwhelming and can impact morale.

2.5: Environmental Influences

Factors which help support wellbeing include: social support at work; a harmonious work atmosphere; distracting behaviours outside work, such as watching television or engaging in other activities; and avoidant coping strategies, for instance daydreaming (Griffith, Steptoe and Cropley, 1999). Whilst disengagement from and suppression of completing required work activities may have a positive impact, thereby reducing stress in the short term, it may lead to further complications in the longer term if distraction activities mean that there is an insufficient amount of time or energy to complete compulsory work.

Coping with change has been identified (Kryiacou, 2001) as an issue which can impact on class teacher wellbeing. This may include the absence of a colleague. Absenteeism in connection to poor wellbeing is relevant to the theme of environmental influences due to the impact it has on the remaining members of staff, who may be expected to take the reins or 'step up' into the class teacher's role. In addition to their teaching duties, the regularity of changes to the curriculum and an

increase in administrative tasks have been shown to have increased the working hours of class teachers considerably in recent years (HC, 2017; DfE, 2014).

Teachers indicate that they spend an unnecessary amount of time on tasks which are connected to their accountability for pupil progression and Ofsted inspections (ESP, 2018; HC, 2017; DfE, 2014). A survey on teachers working in local authority and academy settings, which was conducted by the NEU in 2017, yielded responses from 8,173 practitioners (NEU, 2018). Whilst teachers are allocated a proportion of their timetable out of class for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time, the NEU survey found that this is insufficient when considering the level of detail required for planning, marking, paperwork and data analysis (NEU, 2018). The majority of teachers, when asked to respond to this and other surveys on workload, stated that some of these tasks are far removed from their daily job of teaching a class and from the initial teacher training which they received (NEU, 2018; DfE, 2015b). Teachers are currently required to adapt to a considerable number of changes during their daily working lives. It is likely that individual teachers have varying ability to adjust to and cope with these constant changes.

The recruitment and retention of teachers is recognised to be a continuing challenge across England (HC, 2017). Figures from the Department of Education indicate that 30% of teachers leave within the first five years of qualifying (DfE, 2015b). Over 10% of qualified teachers leave within the first year of qualifying (DfE, 2015b). While the reasons for this are complicated and vary according to personal circumstances, if this becomes an ongoing trend, it will create a crisis. Teacher shortages are currently recognised as a government priority which needs to be remedied (HC, 2017). In October 2016, Jack Worth from the National Foundation for Educational Research

(Worth, 2016) shared with the House of Commons Education Committee that “the proportion of teachers leaving, not retiring, has increased from 6% five years ago to 8%” (HC, 2017, pg. 15). Whilst the explanations for these figures are not fully known and likely to be complex, it is probable that they are connected to the stress of teaching.

Educational settings are complex contexts with various levels and practices, some of which are contradictory (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010). Environmental factors which interact to create a class teacher’s pedagogical wellbeing are their everyday relations in their workplace. In Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen’s study (2010), these interactions are defined as: firstly, teacher-pupil interactions; secondly, peer interaction with colleagues; and thirdly, teacher-parent interactions. Teacher-pupil interactions may negatively affect wellbeing if the teacher believes they are unable to meet the needs of their students. On the other hand, the teacher may experience an improvement in wellbeing when they feel they and their class are working together for a shared outcome. An example might be a class assembly. Peer interactions with colleagues may be detrimental to wellbeing if a teacher experiences bullying from peers. However, wellbeing may be upheld if they are involved in a supportive forum, such as support groups for professionals (Stringer et al., 1992; Hanko, 1999).

Teacher-parent interactions may negatively impact wellbeing if, for example, there is a parent who constantly requires their time at the end of each school day. Teachers may experience uplifted wellbeing if they receive positive feedback about their teaching from a parent during a parent-teacher consultation. School environments offer “opportunities for agency, avoidance, opposition, and resistance, and as a consequence there is inevitable tension in interactions between different actors in

the context” (Lahelma, 2002 in Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010, pg. 378). Thus, there are numerous interlinked relationships within the school environment which can impact on the wellbeing of the class teacher; these may vary and be context dependent, which means it depends on whom they are interacting with. Thus, teachers can be both challenged and uplifted by their daily working practices (Hakanen, Bakker, and Schaufeli, 2006).

The environmental factors which influence teacher wellbeing are varied and complex. These systems include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Individual protective factors will be reviewed in further detail in a later section, but it is evident that personal and exterior systems interact and consequently impact teachers’ sense of wellbeing.

2.6: Strategies Which May Promote Wellbeing

There are numerous existing programs to support the wellbeing of students. For instance, Public Health England (2015) commissioned the development of a toolkit for schools and colleges to measure, support and monitor the wellbeing of children and young people. Another example is the Keys to Happier Living Toolkit, which is an evidence-based program for children between the ages of seven and eleven based on ‘Action for Happiness: Ten Keys to Happier Living framework’ (King, 2016). While it is positive that the importance of wellbeing is becoming a more prominent narrative, these approaches focus on the individualisation of pupil mental health. This is parallel to the ideas which are beginning to be explored in relation to teacher wellbeing in public discourses.

The 'B Mindfulness in Schools Project' advocates for the use of mindfulness with school staff as an effective strategy to alleviate stress. The term mindfulness means the capacity to guide attention to experience as it happens, to be present to each moment with wonder and acceptance (Kabat-Zinn, 1996). There is a growing evidence base which demonstrates that mindfulness is effective at improving the social, emotional and mental health of adults (Baer, 2006). Studies have shown that mindfulness can be useful for addressing a variety of social, emotional and mental health problems, such as stress, depression and anxiety, which are commonly reported teacher stressors (Kuyken, Weare, Ulcomunne, Vicary, Molton, Burnett, Cullen, Hennelly and Huppert, 2013). Mindfulness can assist users to feel an improvement in their sense of wellbeing and how they interact with others (Baer, 2006). A point worth noting is that many of the systemic reviews of mindfulness being undertaken are written by advocates for the approach, for instance, Weare and Nind (2011). Despite this potential vested interest, the language used in conclusions is generally tentative in nature and indicates that the use of mindfulness in adult populations shows some promise in differing contexts (Baer, 2006). However, studies on the use of mindfulness in teaching populations are currently a limited but growing research area. An example of where teacher wellbeing is being studied is at the University of Western Australia (Cross, Lester and Barnes, 2014). Programs which positively impact on teacher wellbeing with an evidence base are limited to research in America.

One particular mindfulness-based professional development program which has been designed to nurture teachers' social and emotional capabilities is Cultivating Awareness and Resilience in Education (CARE for Teachers). It also aims to improve the nature of classroom interactions by cultivating the skills required to create and sustain a nurturing classroom. The CARE for Teachers curriculum originated in 2007 at the Garrison Institute, New York. Randomised research trials into its effectiveness have examined the impact of the program on elementary class teachers, classroom and student outcomes. When compared to control groups, the program has been found to improve teachers' wellbeing, as well as their ability to effectively support the emotional wellbeing of their students. (Jennings, Brown, Frank, Doyle, Oh, Davis and Greenberg, 2017; Weare, 2013; Jennings, 2011, Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia and Greenberg, 2011; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). When compared to control groups, both qualitative and quantitative research using CARE has positively impacted classroom behaviour and learning as well as teacher-pupil interactions, and has fostered a positive classroom climate at a statistically significant level (Jennings, Brown, Frank, Doyle, Oh, Davis and Greenberg, 2017; Weare, 2013; Jennings, 2011, Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia and Greenberg, 2011; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). The evaluative data arising from studies of CARE are significant because they have been replicated to show that it is an effective programme for improving teacher wellbeing. The studies have used relatively large samples. The study with the smallest number of participants had 31 (Jennings et al., 2011) which included individuals who had been involved with piloting CARE. There were 224 participants in the most recent study (Jennings et al., 2017). This study, using a large sample, examined the effectiveness of the program for teachers in New York city and the impact it had on their classroom practice. It is important to note that

two of the researchers, Patricia Jennings and Richard Brown, were part of the team who originally developed CARE and therefore they may have a vested interest in the research promoting the benefits of the program. Nonetheless, the studies have been completed with large samples of teachers and had positive findings. The approach within the CARE program, as well as the general findings, may have something to offer educational policy and practice in England. The key point is that cultivating a culture with lower teacher stress will benefit students socially, academically and emotionally, as well as practitioners who continue to find enjoyment in their work.

In the UK, some teachers and schools apply 'human givens' to their work. The 'human givens' approach (Griffin and Tyrrell, 2015) is a holistic framework which emphasises the need for humans who are healthy in both mind and body, in order to be able to nurture the next generation successfully. The approach encourages meeting both physical and emotional needs so that we are able to survive, adapt and evolve individually and as a collective. The principles are based on ideas from humanistic psychology and draw on the influence of psychologists such as Maslow (1971), who promote the idea that our basic needs must be met before we are able to progress to higher order levels of self-actualisation and intrinsic values (BPS, 2014). Teachers and schools which use the 'human givens' approach claim that it empowers them by providing ways of attaining and preserving a 'good' state of wellbeing (HGJ, 2010). The effectiveness of 'human givens' on adolescents' wellbeing has been suggested in a small case study (Yates and Atkinson, 2011). A limitation of the study was that findings could not be generalised as there were only three participants. Whilst the effectiveness of 'human givens' as an approach appears promising, no study has yet been conducted with class teachers as the

subjects. Part of the framework which 'human givens' advocates involves rapport-building and goal-setting. Having whole school systems adopt principles which hold rapport-building and goal-setting in high regard may be useful for creating a culture of genuine autonomy amongst staff. It may also create an ethos where teachers and students feel valued as individuals.

Between the basic needs and self-fulfilment needs of Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1987) lie psychological needs. Psychological needs include belonging and esteem. Having a strong sense of belonging is associated with a range of positive outcomes for physical and mental health (Sayer, Beaven, Stringer and Hermena, 2013). Self-determination theory explains that the need for relating with others, as well as competence and autonomy, is essential for wellbeing (Roffey, 2013, 2012; Deci et al., 1991). Teaching staff who were offered group consultation (usually fortnightly) to discuss particular cases of difficulty in their work reported that the consultation group made a direct positive contribution, leading to a reduction in stress and fewer feelings of segregation between them and their peers (Stringer et al., 1992). They also reported that they found the group was supportive on a practical and psychological level (Stringer et al., 1992). The teacher feedback indicated that having the opportunity to reflect on problems, being able to share experience, expertise and ideas, as well as planning alternative ways to approach the situation, were some of the main positive effects of participating in a group consultation with peers. Group consultation for staff in this manner was facilitated by an educational psychologist or a staff member who had received training. The inclusion of an educational psychologist as an external consultant was felt by participants to be beneficial to the group. Either way, having the opportunity to gather as a group to

discuss and problem-solve issues benefited participants by reducing their sense of isolation and the degree of self-blame which they burdened themselves with (Bozic and Carter, 2002). Similar findings have come from studies involving the use of reflecting teams for peer support, in which teachers reported the importance of valuing collaboration, unity and reflection time (Ohlsson, 2013).

While it is clear that strategies to improve and promote the wellbeing of teachers are currently being developed and implemented in certain areas, this is yet to become a widespread practice. It is noteworthy to acknowledge the emphasis put on the importance of teachers' wellbeing, by some training providers who aim to empower trainees with strategies for managing stress and improving their wellbeing in relation to their work, and to other areas in their life (Jennings, 2011). Similarly, there are ongoing professional development opportunities offered which assist in the development of teaching practice and managing wellbeing through supportive colleague forums. These highlight the importance of reflection time, receiving recognition for the work done in difficult circumstances, and the acknowledgement that others are in a similar situation (Jennings, Brown, Frank, Doyle, Oh, Davis and Greenberg, 2017; Weare, 2013; Jennings, 2011; Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia and Greenberg, 2011; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009).

2.7: Protective Factors

The literature indicates that there are many challenges facing teachers when managing their roles. For example, it is cited that "Teaching stress is not a simple function of exposure to the sources of difficulty, but may be modulated by

psychological and social resources” (Griffith, Steptoe and Cropley, 1999, pg. 518). Given the indications, it may be fair to assume that at some point across their teaching career, educators may struggle to maintain a balanced sense of wellbeing. Coping strategies which are used to alleviate the impact of stress, such as smoking, alcohol and medication, influence mental and physical health (Steptoe, 1991). There are numerous resources which teachers may utilise in order to manage their wellbeing and reduce their stress. The chosen approaches may also influence their perception of their own wellbeing. Griffith, Steptoe and Cropley (1999) found teachers’ perception of stress was most influenced by social support and coping methods for stressors. This includes actively engaging with the problem or choosing to avoid and disengage from the issue. Due to the fact that we are all individuals, and that we respond to different levels of stress in a range of ways, there is no universal approach to alleviating stress and promoting wellbeing which is effective for all people. However, some of the individual strategies which teachers use to manage their stress levels and promote their wellbeing which the literature highlighted will now be outlined.

Cooper and Kelly (1993) found in their study on occupational stress that head teachers who used coping strategies described as palliative (including the use of alcohol, smoking and medication to reduce stress) reported higher levels of stress resulting from excessive workload and interactions with staff. Whilst using these strategies may have helped to alleviate stress initially, consistent use in the longer term increased stress levels. A survey of 335 Norfolk primary school teachers found that there were six strategies which teachers viewed as being most effective in

reducing their stress levels; these can be viewed in Table 1 (courtesy of Cockburn, 1996, pg. 403).

Table 1. The six most effective strategies in reducing teacher stress

	<i>Thought of and . . . tried but generally ineffective</i>	<i>tried and generally effective</i>
Ensuring that you understand the work you are about to teach	5.4%	69.3%
Thorough lesson preparation	12.5%	68.7%
Finding the humour in the situation	14.6%	68.6%
Abandoning sessions which are not going well	4.2%	62.7%
Discussing your concerns with teachers	15.9%	62.5%
Setting priorities	15.0%	62.4%

One of the most effective strategies which teachers felt reduced their stress was 'discussing your concerns with teachers'. This is a strategy which was referred to earlier with regards to utilising group consultation and other networking forums for problem solving. Being able to rely on social support from others has consistently been found to reduce stress and improve wellbeing, along with providing additional positive outcomes (Cohen and Wills, 1985; Shumaker and Czajkowski, 1994). Secondary school teachers with high levels of burnout reported receiving lower levels of social support than their colleagues who experience lower levels of burnout (Pierce and Molloy, 1996). In other studies investigating the connection between social support and levels of burnout, it was found that the support provided by colleagues was more significant in safeguarding against the stress leading to burnout than other sources of social support, such as family and friends (Greenglass, Burke, and Konarski 1997; Greenglass, Fiksenbaum and Burke, 1996). These differences between social networks may be explained by the additional

understanding that teachers feel their colleagues can offer because they are in the same profession. It may also be connected to the appreciation and recognition of difficulties that colleagues can offer due to having shared or similar experiences.

Being able to reflect and be self-aware are important skills within teaching. Being self-aware is essential in order to reflect on events, thoughts, feelings and actions so that a teacher can try and improve in case they are in a similar situation in the future (Jennings, 2014). This 'pro-social' theoretical model proposes that the teacher-pupil relationships, classroom management style, and the social and emotional learning are intrinsically connected to developing a positive and nurturing classroom climate (Jennings, 2014). 'Pro-social' theory suggests that class teachers who are socially and emotionally competent can maintain more empathetic relationships with pupils, can utilise successful classroom management strategies and are more able to effectively teach elements of the curriculum which include social and emotional elements (Jennings, 2014). These teachers are more aware of students' engagement in their learning, and engage in positive reinforcement rather than reprimanding strategies to influence pupil behaviour (Jennings, 2014). Teachers who are socially and emotionally competent can act as role models in pro-social interactions, moving from simple theory to applying the model in practice. In a cyclical nature, the positive classroom environment is proposed to directly impact on the pupils' social, emotional wellbeing and their academic outcomes (Jennings, 2014). Thus, improvements in the classroom climate and the school system as a whole and in the classroom climate may strengthen the enjoyment a class teacher experiences when teaching, empowering them in their role and developing their dedication to the profession. Receiving positive reinforcement from different

elements of the teaching role may, in turn, create an affirmative 'feedback loop' strong enough to preclude teacher burnout (Jennings, 2014). Skilled, motivated class teachers are likely to encourage practical learning strategies which can be applied in different contexts. This would lead to achieving the best levels of engagement and learning outcomes in their students (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010).

2.8: Moving Forward

School environments are complex settings due to their multiple levels of organisation and practice. Some of these practices are contradictory, for instance, attainment and pastoral agendas. There are some examples of whole school approaches, such as 'human givens' which focus on a holistic view of children, young people and adults within the setting (HGJ, 2010). Despite aspiring to incorporate principles such as 'human givens' in school environments, the attainment agenda for local and national government generally takes precedent when decisions need to be made. Using humanistic approaches means recognising that individuals' basic needs should be met before higher-order ones can be successfully fulfilled (Maslow, 1943, 1954, 1987). This is the case with children and young people (Bennathan and Boxall, 2000) as well as the adults who support them. If research indicates that basic needs must be met before higher level ones can be successfully achieved, then it is essential that the systems on which schools are founded, and which they implement into their daily practices, should be evaluated and made fit for purpose. This argument is proposed by Robinson and Aronica (2015), who draw attention to the fact that schooling was created for industrial purposes; these principles are now outdated. Rather than continuing with mass production exam factories, it is proposed

that having a more creative education system which celebrates individual talents (Robinson and Aronica, 2015). They argue that having a broad and balanced curriculum would prepare young people today to enter the workforce of tomorrow. This is an important point because many jobs of the future have yet to exist. Whilst slightly outside the direct area of this thesis, this is a pertinent point when one considers that young people can sometimes flourish in systems which are classed as 'alternative' provisions, due to the curriculum and nurturing they receive. The literature demonstrates that schools are complex systems and it begins to explain some of the constraints which exist within the systems. It has also illustrated some of the conflicts between the aspirations of teachers and powerful forces which influence educational contexts. These tensions may be central to the currently limited interventions available to teachers.

According to the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) wellbeing tables, pupils in the UK are among the least happy pupils when compared to students in other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (OECD, 2017). PISA currently rates class teachers in Singapore, South Korea and Finland as amongst the best trained, highly motivated and well-compensated (OECD, 2017; Robinson and Aronica, 2015). Students rating at the lower end of the 'happiness scale', as well as teachers rating at the lower end of the 'scale for motivated and respected teachers' seems to indicate that there are issues within the English education system which need addressing for the benefit of all. The current system may work effectively for some teachers and students. However, if both teachers and students are unhappy within the existing education

system, this may indicate the need to gain an understanding of teachers' views on the profession which could inform systemic practice on a wider scale.

2.9: Gaps in the Literature

There is very little known about how class teachers perceive the principle sources of motivation and burden in their daily work (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010). The literature indicates that the role of the class teacher incorporates both highs and lows daily (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010; Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2006; Kryiacou, 2001). The emerging research, listed within the cited literature in this review, have been mainly quantitative in nature. The emergent findings have indicated the less stressed teachers have better outcomes for their own wellbeing and their classes (Jennings, Brown, Frank, Doyle, Oh, Davis and Greenberg, 2017). Self-reported surveys (ESP, 2018) provide the opportunity for large scale studies to be conducted. Generally, surveys offer closed questions which lack flexibility and adaption to individual contexts. A qualitative study would give the opportunity to further explore the details and underlying reasons that teaching seems to be such a stressful profession. While many teachers may manage their stress or maintain their wellbeing, there is a point at which an increasing number of class teachers are unable to manage the challenges which daily teaching and additional role adopting roles create. The literature search did not uncover research which gathered teachers' views on their role, such as what empowered them, what stressed them (both in and out of the school environment) and how systems (related to the school and government legislation) supported or hindered their daily classroom practice. It would be useful if this piece of research could inform this gap in the literature.

Accessing teachers' views using a narrative methodology will enable me to explore these in more depth. Hopefully, this will lead to richer and more complex explanations of what supports and undermines teachers' wellbeing, whilst taking into account individual and environmental contexts.

2.10: Conclusion

In this literature review, I have presented some existing research which focuses on the factors which support and maintain wellbeing of class teachers with an emphasis on systemic and ecological frameworks. The literature also explores what undermines teachers' wellbeing, what causes them stress and how they respond to these pressures. The literature highlights the impact that a teacher's role and identity have on their daily work and interactions, and this seems to be closely linked to their wellbeing. The evidence suggests that their role and identity can have further influence on the classroom climate and the students. However, there appears to be a gap in the literature regarding exploring teachers' views and experiences in depth. Thus, this research will focus on teachers' experiences of teaching in the hope of uncovering what can best support their wellbeing across a time span, or across their career. The literature, and the gaps I have identified within it, lead me to the following two research questions:

- 1) What are teachers' experiences of the daily demands of their role across their career?
- 2) What supports and undermines the wellbeing of teachers?

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, I justify the approach used within my research, explain why I chose the participants, outline how I addressed ethical issues, explain the use of data gathering tools and choice of analytical tools, and clarify the procedure used within my study.

3.1: Design

My research questions stemmed from wanting to uncover the existing tensions in the systems in which teachers work. I also wanted to try to understand the personal meaning and value teachers associate with their career. As my ideas progressed, I realised that narrative research would allow me to explore with participants how they experienced their careers and wellbeing. Narrative also allowed for each participant's experience to evolve as they shared their story, because the agenda was open and led by the narrator's experiences (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000). This was important because it would allow me to provide an original contribution to existing literature on teacher wellbeing through the use of narrative research. I wanted to add to the current literature on teacher wellbeing and stress by exploring the subject matter in a deeper, richer way than would be possible with a more quantitative method.

3.2: Philosophical Assumptions Underpinning the Research

“Interpretation is inevitable because narratives are representations”

(Reissman, 1993)

Having an understanding of the philosophical assumptions of a researcher is important because these inevitably influence what is being studied and how it is being studied, as well as the findings and outcomes. Ontology refers to *what* is being studied and the different ways of viewing the world. It concerns the types of things which we assume to exist in the world. Epistemology focuses on *how* these things should be viewed and studied. Sharing my assumptions and influences will assist the reader in understanding how I positioned myself as a researcher.

3.2.1: Critical Realism

There are some clear assumptions with which I approached the research which should be highlighted at this point. I took a critical realist stance because I felt that there was something 'real' which I was attempting to make tangible through my interactions with each participant. For this research, myself, the participant, or both of us together were attempting to 'know' about their experience of being a teacher with regards to the systems at play within their workplace. However, as a researcher, I understood that this 'knowing' which we were trying to uncover was not a concrete and fixed piece of information. There was a plasticity to the knowledge I gained through the research because the meaning was fluid and contextual.

“Critical realism (e.g. Bhaskar, 1978, 1986) offers a set of criteria for evaluating claims about reality as well as a methodology for investigating the social world ...events are generally co-determined by multiple mechanisms. Thus, the objective of critical realist science is not to predict outcomes but explain events and processes” (Willig, 1998, pg. 101).

This view of critical realism supports my use of a narrative methodology because of my focus on explaining events. I consider these events to be situations which can be observed or experienced. They come to be understood through the results that arise from them. With regards to the teacher interviews in this research, I expected to see links between the value each participant associated with the role and how they managed the different aspects of their profession.

Reflection Box:

I believe there is a 'real world' that exists outside of us and as Collier (1998) purports, pre-dates us (e.g. societal values). Moreover, there is the existence in which we exist and how our perceived experiences construct our reality within the world. For me, our reality exists within our particular social context. Critical realism aims to reveal the 'truth' within the world as we perceive it. On an epistemological level, it is the quest for the real whilst acknowledging that this will be different depending on how we perceive it (Brown et al., 1998 page 79)

Critical realism "recognises that each discipline may uncover real and distinct structures, mutually irreducible; yet that in explaining the open system of social life we need to appeal to all these structures and so draw on all these disciplines" (Collier, 1998, pg. 49). This highlights the importance of remembering that the same experience can be perceived in differing ways by different people. For instance, a sunny day may be experience by one person as a joy-filled day because they can wear their flip-flops. For someone else, they may find the exact same weather bothersome because they have to dress in formal attire for work, thus feeling uncomfortably hot. The context shapes how we each experience situations and events.

3.2.2: *The Influence of Postmodernism*

Postmodernism questions whether a single version of 'truth' exists; it allows for various interpretations to be taken from an experience. Making use of different methods is an approach to knowledge and inquiry which can be described as postmodernism. This study uses a mixture of techniques, which included semi-structured, narrative interviews using an 'episodic' approach (adapted from McAdams, 1993) and the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 1982), in order to better approximate 'truth'. Therefore, I identified with postmodernism as an approach for my gathering of data and interpreting it to create new knowledge.

Multiple voices, perspectives or 'truths' can be described as dialogism. Dialogical work allows for each 'voice' to be heard in its own right before collectively hearing what the multiple 'voices' say together (Bakhtin, 1981). This postmodern philosophy also influenced this research because I used a narrative approach to allow the 'voice' of each participant to be heard separately, before putting these 'voices' together and examining what they said collectively. When analysing the narratives in this research, the Listening Guide (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2003) was utilised. During the third step, I listened for contrapuntal voices (more detailed explanation will be referred to in '3.7: Procedure'), which allowed for a choral quality to be heard when listening to the interviews. This is because the different 'voices' were heard simultaneously and in relation to each other, which fits well with dialogical research.

3.2.3: *'Truths'*

This narrative inquiry attempted to identify a certain degree of 'truth'. It is possible for something to exist as true or a 'truth' in a particular moment within a given context, but as previously alluded to, I believe that this is a provisional understanding. Therefore, multiple perspectives can co-exist. A situation or event may be viewed through many different lenses. What is displayed through each lens is irrefutably real, but the fullness of reality is not available through any single lens (Bhaskar, 1986). The 'truths' which resulted from the analysis and findings in this research were co-constructed through what was said in the interviews and how my own experiences and values influenced my interpretation of what I heard, read and saw. Creating these 'truths' or realities was important for being able to advocate a particular view or give 'voice' to teachers, either individually or collectively.

3.2.4: Institutional Power

Foucault (1997) wrote about the naivety or dangerousness of accepting one idea or 'truth'. He proposed that upholding one idea or 'truth' could be used for social control. Foucault advocated that accepted 'truths' within a society relate to the prevalent and accepted discourses and in this way, they become truth. For this reason, accepting a 'truth' as true without questioning or critiquing it could be seen as dangerous or naïve. This would silence other 'truths', causing vulnerable or powerless groups to inevitably lose to more dominant groups. Foucault's writings are pertinent to the social justice aspect of this research.

Foucault's work within institutions (Foucault, 1997) lends itself to this research when considering the education system as an institution in its own right. Within teaching

there are culturally constructed discourses which are viewed by teachers and others in education as commonplace and regular practice. There are also common discourses about education and teachers which are maintained by those outside of education. Foucault discusses the impact of discourse in education:

"Education may well be, as of right, the instrument whereby every individual, in a society like our own, can gain access to any kind of discourse. But we well know that in its distribution, in what it permits and in what it prevents, it follows the well-trodden battle-lines of social conflict. Every education system is a political means of maintaining or of modifying the appropriation of discourse, with the knowledge and the powers it carries with it" (Foucault, 1972, pg 227).

I was hoping that this research would begin to deconstruct some of the established discourses about education and teachers. Discourses are established through what is spoken and in what remains unsaid. Thus, there are complex layers to establishing a particular discourse, which involves what the speaker says and the practices "involving the relationship of knowledge and power" (Madigan, 2011, page 41). I wanted to discover whether teachers would talk about systems in schools which support and undermine their wellbeing in a direct way, or whether talk of systems would remain unspoken. I hoped that the findings would challenge some of the accepted discourses about practitioners and education, which would hopefully be empowering for teachers. For instance, I hoped to find an alternative narrative which would problematise the system, rather than the individual teacher.

3.2.5: Reflexivity in Qualitative Research:

Narrative research is interested in human action, storytelling and experience. Being reflective was important within the study because as a human, I can reflect on my behaviour and can partake “in second-level reflection on those reflections” (Parker, 2005, page 137). The research diary was an important component of my research. It offered me a place to record and consider how I was shaping the process and also to consider how I was implicated in the research. It allowed me to be transparent about my awareness of the meanings I was constructing throughout the research process. The research diary encouraged me to explore how my involvement influenced and informed the research (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999).

I kept a research diary so that I could track my thoughts, observations and evolving understanding of what the participants shared. This allowed for my subjective experience to move from a “‘merely subjective’ into a self-consciously and deliberately-assumed position” (Parker, 2005, pg. 26). In doing so, I was able to draw upon my subjective experience as a source and associated position throughout the research process (Parker, 2005). The research diary gave me space to reflect on the research. It meant that I had a place to note down my involvement with the research and its findings (Willig, 2008). On a practical level, the research diary meant that I could keep notes in one place, which helped me track my reactions to the data gathered and the evolution of these over time.

3.2.6: Interpretivism

“Narratives are interpretive and, in turn, require interpretation” (Reissman, 1993, page 22). Interpretivism allows all kinds of information to be valid knowledge. The

world around us is not straightforward because it is perceived by each of us in different ways, at different times. Words and events carry distinct meanings in every case. An interpretive view acknowledges that “our analytic interpretations are partial, alternative truths that aim for believability not certitude, for enlargement of understanding rather than control” (Stivers, 1993, page 424). We each use a range of skills, which include knowing the current context and information from our past experiences, when interpreting a situation or event. Interpretation is subjective and there are multiple methods which we can utilise to help us interpret (Bruner, 1990).

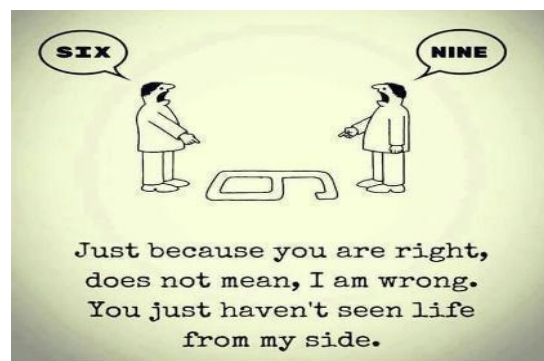
3.2.7: Other Assumptions

As previously discussed, narrative research is concerned with human stories. With this method of research, it is important to reflect upon how I am impacting it. I am aware that I will have brought some beliefs and assumptions about teachers and teacher wellbeing to the analysis within this research. These assumptions are closely connected to my hopes and the potential value of this research.

Due to my own lived experience, I believe that wellbeing and stress exist. I believe that everyone has their own perspective because of their own lived experience. Therefore, each person has their personal understanding of what wellbeing and stress means to them. Another assumption which I uphold is that I believe the ability to teach is impacted by a teacher’s wellbeing. I also feel that certain systems can nurture and protect ‘good’ social, emotional, mental health. These assumptions influence my ontological viewpoint as a critical realist, as previously outlined. The literature which I reviewed acknowledges the role of class teachers as stressful, so I

began my research with this assumption. The aim of this research was to further contribute to the literature on teacher wellbeing, by exploring teachers' experiences of teaching and how they manage their wellbeing.

3.3: Rationale for Narrative Methodology



Adopting a postmodernist approach to the research meant that narrative methodology was a good fit for my work. The stories shared with me came to be understood through multiple lens. Meaning was construed from inside and outside. The storyteller had a relationship with the story they were sharing and as the listener to the narrative I made sense of the story using my own experience and perspective (Blumenfeld-Jones, 1995). I contextualised meaning within each story not just through spoken words but also the non-verbal clues which they shared. This information helped to develop my interpretation of what each storyteller said.

I focused on teachers' experiences of teaching in the hope of trying to uncover what best supports their wellbeing. Using a narrative method allowed me to illuminate what their experience of teaching was, how it made sense to them and how they responded to their experiences. Personal stories are complex and the purpose of

them is not merely to share details about the person's life; "they are the means by which identities may be fashioned" (Rosenwald and Ochberg, 1992, page 1). This explanation about the use of narrative was particularly important in relation to my first research question. This is because I wanted to try to discover how teachers constructed their values, aspirations, roles and identities through the stories they would share.

3.3.1: Why Storytelling?

Storytelling allows for storytellers' experiences to become the experiences of the listener or reader. "There is an important sense in which a story speaks uniquely to each listener" (Merttens, 1998, page 65). The listener, or reader, is also afforded the luxury of interpreting the story for themselves (Merttens, 1998). Narrative research aims to discover how someone makes sense of an event or events that they have experienced (Parker, 2005; Willig, 2008).

3.3.1(i): Changing the Story

One of my intentions of using narrative inquiry was to give a stronger voice to teachers and consequently, provide the opportunity for policy makers to reflect upon and analyse these stories after publication of this thesis. Merttens (1998, page 71) suggests:

"Stories enable those who are embedded in professional practice to 'go on from here', not only in the sense of being able to continue with their professional activity

but, importantly, in terms of being able to generalise and subsequently prescribe or advise, to theorise and then transform the practice.”

Generally, teachers tend to get negative press coverage because of the ‘thin’ narratives which are portrayed about them when they are featured in the media, such as during teacher strikes. I wanted to give each participant the opportunity to present a ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973), a space to be able to share the things which give them delight in their work, as well as highlight the trickier aspects of their job which are the ‘unseen’ parts of their role, such as planner, administrator.

3.3.1(ii): Storying the ‘Un-storied’

Narrative inquiry recognises that individual lives are constructed from numerous events. Many of these are not acknowledged by the person as important and therefore are not shared with anyone (Béres, 2014). When these ‘un-storied’ events are verbalised, they may initially seem to be very ‘thin’ (Geertz, 1973). It might be that ‘un-storied’ events seem ‘thin’ because they are relatively simple. This may be due to possibly not being considered, or integrated meaningfully, within more familiar and ‘well-told’ stories. As the listener hears the story being told, they can assist the speaker to ‘thicken’ the story by eliciting more details (Geertz, 1973) from them. I attempted to do this by asking questions of the teachers about their experiences which they may not have previously had time to reflect upon. As stories are further shared, they become thickened and more robust (Béres, 2014). White and Epston (1990) propose that only a small proportion of an individual’s life events can be storied during any particular time and that much of the lived experience exists outside of the dominant narratives in that person’s life. Thus, offering an occasion to

uncover experiences which may not have been previously storied can offer the opportunity of growth and development (White and Epston, 1990).

3.3.1(iii): Deconstructing the Dominant Narratives

I hope this research will have an impact by contributing to cultural narratives about class teachers and education more generally. With this in mind, I have sought to uncover the cultural discourse surrounding class teachers and how they see themselves. A narrative approach allowed me to look at both the 'big' and the personal stories which are highlighted (Freeman, 2006; Squire et al., 2014). I felt that narrative would be a valuable approach as "respondents narrativise particular experiences in their lives, often where there has been a breach between ideal and real, self and society" (Reissman, 1993, page 3). 'Narrative breach' in this instance occurs when there is an incongruence between what is constructed as the 'ideal' and as the 'reality'. This breach within a narrative can be heard through language and linguistic choices when describing events (Bruner, 1991).

I also hope that the use of narrative will allow potential discrepancies to emerge between the value each storyteller places upon being a teacher and the expectations of them as a result of the systems within which they work, as well as how this impacts their wellbeing. Step three of the Listening Guide, listening for contrapuntal voices (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2003), highlights the tensions which exist between different voices within their narrative. It also indicates the journey that each storyteller has come on to bring them to a place where they accept they are 'good enough', be that at home or at work. I am interested in tensions

between the systems in which teachers work and the personal meaning and value which they attribute to their work. Therefore, Reissman's (1993) reasoning validated the case for the use of narrative within my research, due to the possible narrative breach between personal values and system expectations when considering the literature on teacher stress and wellbeing. More importantly, I felt that narrative inquiry had the potential to provide the teachers I spoke to with the opportunity of empowerment through sharing their stories. I felt narrative inquiry had benefits for the personal stories as well as the 'big' ones because a "primary way individuals make sense of experience is by casting it in narrative form" (Bruner, 1990, page 4).

3.3.2: Narrowing the Lens: The Twists and Turns within Storytelling

Using narrative inquiry allowed each participant to be a storyteller; they were able to tell their own story. This allowed for richer details to be shared rather than being limited to pre-defined, more closed questions. This meant each participant had the scope to respond in an open-ended way.

I adopted an 'episodic' approach in the narrative interviews, which involved participants recalling events or situations from throughout the course of their career. By using an 'episodic' approach, I was able to focus on changes over time in the stories which were shared. This meant that I was able to hear each individual's story about the everyday highs and lows of their role, as well as across their career, with regards to systems in which they were required to work. This was my reasoning behind using an adaption of McAdams (1993) interview schedule, which involved key

events in each participant's teaching career. The questions used are included in Appendix One (pg. 160).

Using an episodic technique within the narrative interviews allowed participants to identify and speak about key events and turning points. This included how they first began their career and an exploration of the factors which continue to keep them in the profession. It offered the focus I was searching for in what would have otherwise have been a very broad research question. Using a 'key events' questioning approach within the narrative interview allowed for free association across the themes. This means that questions were kept as open as possible to allow each participant's story to emerge in their own words whilst also retaining the lens which illuminated changes over time and daily ups and downs, with regards to systems which I wanted to emphasise in the research.

3.3.3: Insider or Outsider?

During the research, I felt as though I was partly an insider and partly an outsider, as a researcher. This was due to my previous experience of teaching, making me an insider, but now no longer working as a teacher, making me an outsider. Inviting stories through narrative interviews (Reissman, 1993) highlighted the changing language within schools. For instance, wellbeing was not something which was a consideration when I began my teacher training, but by the time I left full-time teaching it was a prevalent term. For me, this clarified my distance from my previous 'insider' position. Using a broad focus on the experience of the teacher, but also using key events to shape the questioning, lent itself to gathering information with a

focus on structures and systems. This allowed participants to explore current situations within their work, for example whether they had experienced a recent Ofsted inspection during any of their identified key events, and if there had been a change in the school's rating which was relevant to their wellbeing. As an insider, I was aware of these systems and privy to some of the culturally constructed discourses within teaching communities.

3.4: Quality Issues

3.4.1: Generalisability

While the data gathered through the use of this narrative inquiry is not generalisable, it informs the reader about each individual teacher. However, wider meaning may come out of each individual's story. This is because a story may be transferable to another class teacher who recognises a 'truth' within the research which resonates with their own experience; "even though qualitative projects are locally focused, they nonetheless contribute to knowledge in more general ways" (Marecek, 2007, page 63).

3.4.2: Social Justice and Unintended Consequences

One of my aims of this research is for it to serve as research for social justice. Social justice has long been associated with both philosophy and politics since the writings of Aristotle (Rackham 1926, Kraut, 1997). Social justice is concerned with the interests of both individuals and general society. Social justice acknowledges that individuals and general society are interdependent; it also relates to a balanced distribution of benefits and accountability (Griffiths, 1998).

In this research, social justice is relevant as it uncovers the stories of teachers who had not previously shared them as coherent narrative; it also takes account how systems or authority affect their wellbeing, as well as conflict and consensus (Griffiths, 1998; Ball, 1987). It acknowledges both the individual (teacher) and the collective group (students, colleagues, society more generally) as being dependent on the wellbeing of the storyteller to either teach them, support them or help educate the workforce of tomorrow. I hope that the research highlights the tensions that exist within the teaching profession, both internally and externally. I also hope that it offers an alternative and more well-rounded version of the experience of the teacher, as opposed to the more negative current discourses about teachers. The aim of the research was to give a voice to the individual participants, a space for them to share their thoughts and feelings on their role and wellbeing, and a platform upon which their voices can be heard.

The theory behind using narrative inquiry as a research method is to hear and interpret what participants share (Reissman, 1993). One possible benefit of the research is that it may have been therapeutic in nature. I use this term tentatively, as the aim of the research was not to be therapeutic. However, there was an element of the interviews which was “therapeutically inspired” (Kvale, 2007, page 283) with regards to considering the individual and teacher-culture. Having a personal relationship with participants is a feature of psychoanalytic research or interviews (Kvale, 2007). This relationship was established between the participants and myself prior to the interviews because we already knew each other. The personal

relationship was further strengthened during the interviews through informal conversation, creating a warm, empathetic rapport, active listening and being attentive. These were the only elements inspired by analytical research which featured in the interviews. The main aim of therapeutic work is to change or transform the person receiving the intervention (Kvale, 2007); the aim of this research was to create further knowledge about teacher wellbeing.

By being given a space to vocalise their thoughts, feelings and opinions, participants may have found that after the interviews, they continued to reflect on their narrative. Participating in the research may have made the teachers reconsider their current thoughts and feelings. It may have impacted their beliefs to reflect on their views which they would be unlikely to have much time to consider in everyday life.

Prior to the research, I did consider that the interviews may have unintentional consequences as a result of the depth of reflection each participant engaged in for the study. I thought that this may be due to teachers recognising the key roles they play in difficult circumstances and identifying more clearly the reasons that keep them in their teaching career. Reflecting on this potentially emotive topic had the possibility to trigger various consequences and outcomes for participants. I was mindful of these potential consequences during the research project and raised these within my university ethics application, when I highlighted the potential harm of the research and how I was going to manage appropriate protection and wellbeing of the participants. I also shared the potential risks and benefits of taking part in the

research in the information sheet (see Appendix One) which was shared with participants prior to taking part in the research.

The narrative interviews allowed participants a platform to share their story and this offered the opportunity of recognition for each teacher. It also offered them containment, in line with Bion's idea of containment (1962) "where emotions are constantly passed between people" (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000, pg. 46). This allowed for the acknowledgement of painful memories which were shared. It also allowed me to offer empathetic containment, which permitted the affected participant to explore the discomfort further within a safe environment, if they chose to.

3.4.3: Rigour

To maintain rigour and keep track of how my thoughts about the research and data changed over time, I kept a research diary. The reasons for this were to develop my skills of reflexivity, to maintain a transparent and unbiased approach as much as possible, and to demonstrate how I interpreted the data.

The data and analysis was trustworthy, rather than having validity or reliability.

Trustworthiness is about establishing four criteria: namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba, 1981). Credibility refers to how confident I am that the findings are true and accurate, as understood by my interpretations and generally agreed with by the participants'. Transferability means that the findings are applicable in other contexts. Dependability means providing enough information that

the study could be replicated. Confirmability relates to the neutrality of the research findings, including being transparent about any biases so that my interpretations do not distort the findings. The accuracy and rigour of this trustworthiness was facilitated through the reflexivity recorded in my research diary. It was also facilitated through my awareness of my biases because these could be transparently identified and shared with the reader. I aimed to be aware of my biases by rereading, reflecting on and updating the notes made in my research diary as the research progressed. See the section titled 'Reflexivity in Qualitative Research' for a more comprehensive discussion of the value of reflexivity in this research.

Once I analysed the interviews and interpreted the data, I completed a member check (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). This involved me arranging another meeting with each participant and talking through my research after I had analysed the interviews. This offered each participant the opportunity to hear about how their stories had helped to create the research. It also allowed them to share their thoughts on my interpretations of their stories. The feedback gathered from each participant was an integral element in my final analysis because it helped me to create a comprehensive account of the research (Marecek, 2007).

'Authenticity' within research can be described as giving "direct expression to the 'genuine voice', which 'really belongs to' those whose life-worlds are being described" (Winter, 2002, page 146). The authenticity of this narrative research resulted from empathic inter-subjectivity and reflexivity (Blumenfeld-Jones, 2006). Reflexivity and authenticity were present for the participants and myself as the

researcher, not just in our relationship but also in our reflections during and after the interviews.

3.4.4: Participants

I used purposive sampling and intentionally chose teachers who I already knew; I will discuss my reasons and the potential implications within '*Ethical Considerations*'. I wanted to bring cohesion to the research by having participants who shared some common factors. Therefore, participants met the following criteria:

Each participant was a full-time teacher, because I felt practitioners working part-time or as supply teachers may have differing narratives and I wanted to bring cohesion to the stories. I am aware that there are staff in schools taking classes who may not be fully qualified teachers. Again, while I considered that these would have had valuable narratives to offer, I felt that it was important to restrict the study, in relation to the job description and responsibilities which participants are expected to undertake as full-time class teachers. I believe that there are distinct aspects to full-time teachers' working lives which may not be experienced by the previously mentioned groups.

I thought there might be cohesiveness between the narratives which full-time qualified teachers could offer because they work in school five days a week.

Teachers working part-time may be in school three days a week and complete work outside of school on the additional two days. Full-time teachers need to manage their

workload by using evenings and weekends to try to get everything done and I thought this was likely to be particularly stressful. Even so, having this as a criterion would allow for different types of training routes prior to qualifying as a teacher. It would also allow for different types of additional responsibilities which many teachers have alongside their class-based teaching. The parameters of working five days a week in school would give each teacher a similar baseline with regards to the number of hours remaining each week outside of contracted time during a week.

Each participant had at least five years of teaching experience. I chose this so that change over time could be heard within the stories that they told. I felt that this amount of time meant that the teachers would have experienced curriculum changes. Government research (HC, 2017) indicates that almost a third of teachers leave within the first five years of qualifying, so I wanted to hear why these particular teachers had stayed in the profession.

Each teacher had taught in a minimum of two different schools and at least one was a UK state school. I hoped this would mean that they could draw on the experiences which different school systems offered them which positively or negatively affected their wellbeing. The three participants had spent at least five years teaching in UK schools, and two of the participants had worked in international schools. While I did not add a caveat that participants were required to have taught abroad, I felt that the experiences of teaching overseas would potentially enrich the details shared about comparisons between different systems.

I identified the individuals to participate in the research because they met the outlined criteria. I felt that they had knowledge and experience relevant to the study which would be valuable to the topics being discussed (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). As I already knew the participants, I was aware that they were willing to participate in the research, were articulate when communicating their experiences aloud and had a reflective manner which I felt would benefit the narrative approach (Bernard, 2002; Spradley, 1979). Having criteria each participant needed to meet meant that there was a unity between the participants who had varied experiences of teaching.

3.5: Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations of the research involved making considerable deliberations. The approval letter from the university ethics board can be viewed in Appendix Twelve.

3.5.1: Working with participants who I already knew

Knowing the participants meant that I employed “sensitive and ethical negotiation of rapport” (Willig, 2008, pg. 25) between myself and participants. As I was asking questions and stories of a personal nature, I thought that it was essential for a good rapport to exist prior to the narrative interviews. This was because I wanted participants to feel comfortable describing their personal stories.

I felt that knowing each person was also important for the participant to feel assured that I would be sensitive in relaying my interpretations of their story during the member check. Discussing my interpretations with each participant at the member check, which involves seeking alternative and similar responses, is a method utilised in ethnographical studies to thicken analysis (Miller, Hengst and Wang, 2007).

Having a background knowledge of the participants was important for me as a researcher, as it influenced how I was interpreting their story. It was also important for them to have background knowledge of me when preparing to tell their story and deciding how it should be told, (Bruner, 1991) because it contributed towards the inter-subjectivity and rapport. This meant that each interview was set in a context in which both the storyteller and listener had prior encounters with each other's "life-world" as teachers (Spadley, 1979).

I was aware that working with participants I knew could cause particular biases. However, I felt that the use of a narrative methodology allowed me the transparency to reflectively consider how I was interacting with the data and the participants. For the purposes of transparency, I will now detail how well I knew each participant prior to the interviews. Una and I trained as teachers at the same time, but at different establishments. Following our studies, we kept in contact. Saoirse and I previously taught together, but she did not refer to me in her narrative. We also continue to be friends. Luke was introduced to me by a mutual friend shortly before I began my research. The three participants were enthusiastic about the research topic.

I was aware that my research had the potential to be emotive for the participants. Having an existing rapport with each interviewee meant that they felt comfortable in sharing with me because of our pre-established relationship. Knowing that I had previously been a teacher meant that the participants felt I understood the demands of their role. However, as I had no professional links to them, they could feel safe and speak frankly in response to the questions raised.

3.5.2: Ethical Principles and Application

The study followed ethical principles (BPS, 2018) to protect both the participants and myself as the researcher. This meant protecting the dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of participants, such as through the use of pseudonyms. I followed ethical standards with respect to storing and recording data. With regards to narrative research, in particular, I focused on several key issues. These issues were: ownership; intellectual property rights and interpretation; confidentiality; honesty and reflecting the truth; deception (which means how to avoid it); exploitation of the participants; informed consent; and hurt and harm (Plummer, 2001).

In practice, following ethical guidelines meant ensuring that I gained and retained informed consent from each participant. I also completed a member check with participants to ensure that I interpreted their story in the way which was closest to their 'truth'. I also wanted to recognise any differences between these 'truths' and my interpretations. This was done by giving participants space and time between interviews to reflect on what they have shared. It was important that I allowed them

to own their views. Therefore, I did not verbally challenge their perspective of how they experienced their role and wellbeing.

3.5.3: Emotional Impact

The topic of wellbeing and how class teachers told the story of their career was a potentially sensitive topic. I wanted to ensure that I was empathic so that each participant felt understood and at ease when sharing. I did not want them to feel that they had somehow exposed too much about themselves or their story. Allowing space and time between interviews gave each participant processing time to settle their thoughts about the topic being discussed. I endeavoured to ensure that each participant felt comfortable when reflecting on their past and current career, but I was also aware that the conversations we were having had the potential to stir up sensitive feelings in the participants.

In order to do no harm, I was transparent with each participant about how and why I was conducting this particular research. I also made them aware of the interview questions and the topics for discussion prior to each interview (Holloway and Jefferson, 2000). When gaining written consent from each participant, I provided them with a written copy of the interview questions, so that they could start to compile their thoughts and reflections beforehand. This meant that each interview felt like a smooth and easy storytelling, with very little need for additional prompts.

3.5.4: Limitations

I realised that using a narrative approach and analysis could come with limitations. This regarded the need to be attentive to the social discourses that shape what the participants would say. More importantly, I knew that it was important to be attentive to the aspects of their careers which they felt unable to speak about. Personally knowing each participant, but not having professional relationships with them, hopefully helped to remove this obstacle.

3.6: Data Gathering and Materials Used

I wanted to hear the story of a teacher's struggle through their everyday work life and to illuminate the rich detail of what supports and undermines their wellbeing daily. I was interested in uncovering the factors which originally drew these teachers to teaching and whether this changed or remained the same over time. I wanted to hear their stories of the highs and lows (Hakanen, Bakker and Schaufeli, 2006), and the reasons why they continue to teach.

The data I collected was qualitative in nature. I used narrative interviews to explore the key events during the teachers' careers, including changing schools and their evaluations of these experiences. These stories were interpreted and made sense of by me as a researcher. I did this by listening to the recordings of the narrative interviews which encouraged participants to share the ups and downs of their career over time. Having analysed the recordings, I completed a member check with the participants to seek their views on my interpretation of their stories and to query certain aspects further; as Reissman, (1993, pg. 2) has written, "interpretations are inevitable because narratives are representation." The use of narrative and "the story

metaphor emphasises that we create order, construct texts, in particular contexts” (Reissman, 1993, pg. 1). It was therefore important that, if the participant disagreed with my interpretation, I would differentiate between my own view and theirs where possible (Stivers, 1993).

3.7: Procedure

I initially spoke informally to teachers about the research I was proposing to do. I noted their interest, and with their permission, contacted them with an information sheet (Appendix One) and consent form (Appendix Two) via email. Each participant responded by agreeing to a date for the initial interview. On the date of the interview, they completed and signed a consent form.

Two of the interviews took place in person and one was conducted using FaceTime because that teacher works abroad. Each participant was provided with a copy of the questions in the information sheet and was encouraged to consider these prior to the interview. The narrative interviews were recorded using audio recording devices. The first interview lasted 38 minutes, the second 90 minutes and the third 91 minutes. At the end of each interview, the participant was reminded that if they felt they had further material to add, a follow up interview could be arranged. I also shared that I might have further questions for them after I had analysed the data, which would require me to contact them again. Even if neither of these scenarios happened, the participants were aware that I would make future contact with them to do a member check once their interview had been transcribed and analysed.

3.7.1: Eliciting Stories

Each participant was asked the same set of questions and was probed further, where appropriate for their particular story. Each was asked to give some background about their teaching career. Full transcriptions can be viewed in Appendices Five (Una), Eight (Saoirse) and Eleven (Luke), and a brief introduction of each participant is given at the beginning of the Analysis chapter. I used 'episodic' interviews which were adapted from McAdams work (1993) and offered an "organising narrative framework" (McAdams, 1993, pg. 257). McAdams' (1993) version involves asking about 'life chapters' and 'key events'. Within this research, the 'life chapters' referred to the background of the participants' teaching career and the factors which initially drew them to teaching. The 'key events' in McAdams work (1993) refers to 'high' and 'low' points in the life story and any 'turning points'. In the narratives shared in this research, 'key events' were incorporated by asking about 'best' and 'worst' moments, as well as the impact of changing curriculums and schools.

The following questions framed the storytelling within each interview:

- What made you want to become a teacher?
- What is your best moment since being a teacher?
- What is your worst moment since being a teacher?
- Have there been any turning points in your career?
- Have there been any significant people influencing your career?
- Have there been any curriculum changes which have been implemented during your teaching career? How did these affect you?
- How did changing schools impact you?

- How does being a teacher make you feel?
- What would the title of your story be?

3.7.2: Next Steps

Following the narrative interviews, the Listening Guide (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2007) was applied to analyse the transcriptions. This involved three steps of successive 'listenings', each with a particular focus. The Analysis chapter will cover each step in more detail. Following the analysis, I emailed each participant their own personal 'I' poem with a short summary of its purpose. I sent this email prior to the member check, so they would have some time to reflect on the 'I' poem before we spoke.

In the email I explained that an 'I' poem was a personal poem for each participant that had been created by listening out for the 'I' statements within their interview. Each line within an 'I' poem consists of the I pronoun, associated verb and sometimes a few additional words. I divided each 'I' poem into stanzas and used the questions I had posed as the dividing point between each stanza. Each phrase in an 'I' poem is recorded in the chronological order spoken.

I used the 'I' poem as a visual resource to be shared with each participant prior to the member check so that they would have a short, written record in relation to the research. This meant that they had the opportunity to read through the 'I' poem before we spoke during the member check. Having access to the 'I' poem before the member check meant that each participant had time to process their thoughts after reading through the poem. This allowed us to have a discussion about the voices

which I felt were prevalent and for me to learn whether they shared a similar or differing opinion.

After I had emailed the 'I' poems, I spoke to each participant individually over the phone for the member check. During these, I shared an overview of my analysis which focused on the voices I had identified in their story. I asked each participant for their opinion about the analyses and whether these voices resonated with them or not.

Chapter Four: Analysis

4.1: The Listening Guide

Using the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 1982) involved repeatedly listening to the narratives of the interviews with a different intention in mind each time, followed by carrying out an interpretative summary after each listening (Woodcock, 2016). The Listening Guide lent itself well to this narrative research. This is because it is a psychological method which involves listening for multiple voices and how they resonate with each other, and is attentive to what is spoken and what may be unspoken (Gilligan and Eddy, 2017; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2007). The guide is a systematic framework but also encourages the user to engage with the framework in a dynamic way:

“The Guide resembles other qualitative methods in incorporating aspects of thematic and narrative analysis as well as elements of a grounded theory approach, but it differs in specifying a series of ‘listenings’, including the innovative Listening for the ‘I’ (the first person voice of the speaker) and Listening for Contrapuntal Voices (the counterpoint of voices that speak to the researcher’s question)” (Gilligan and Eddy, 2017, pg. 76).

The Listening Guide (Brown and Gilligan, 1992) allowed me to analyse the interview transcripts, whilst also being able to place an emphasis on voice and human relationships. The guide allows participants who have previously been voiceless or at the margins to be given a voice and an opportunity to be heard.

4.2: Step One - Listening for the Plot

During the first listening of the interview and reading through the transcript, the focus was on listening for the plot and background information. This involved listening for the 'who', 'what', 'where' and 'when' within each story. During this listening, I listened for themes, repetitions and images, as well as the contradictions which may have been present and whether there were any absences. I noted down my responses to the recording and reflected on things the narrator said which made me feel connected to them, and parts of the narrative which did not resonate with me. I considered what my thoughts and feelings were towards the speaker and to what they were saying, and I tried to identify my responses to the narrator. Whilst being aware of the subjectivity of this analysis, I aimed to explore the various connections and interpretations which I made as a listener, so that I could discuss them when carrying out the member check with the participant.

4.3: Step Two – 'I' Poems

I re-familiarised myself with the research questions before the second listening. This listening focused on the voice of the participant, or the 'I' within the story. This listening identifies the first-person pronouns within the narrative which are used to create 'I' poems (Debold, 1990). This allowed me to listen to the storyteller's voice and how they spoke about themselves. The 'I' poems allowed the musicality (Gilligan and Eddy, 2017) and rhythm of the participant's voice and story to be heard. This is because by focusing on the 'I', a free-fall of association or associative logic (Gilligan and Eddy, 2017) can be created. Emphasising the first-person voice in this way allows the stream of consciousness throughout the narrative to be heard, but without

the restrictions that complete sentences provide. 'I' poems can encapsulate something which the speaker does not directly state but which is essential to understanding the intended meaning of what is said (Gilligan et al, 2007).

The 'I' poems were created by identifying every first-person pronoun, as well as the verb that followed, and additional words of importance (Gilligan et al., 2007). These are each highlighted in yellow on the transcripts. I opted not to include 'I' statements from responses to supplementary questions due to the length of each poem.

Maintaining the same order, these phrases were copied from the transcript into a new document (see Appendices Three [Una], Six [Saoirse] and Nine [Luke] for individual 'I' poems). Each phrase was inserted on a new line in the order they were written in the transcript. I created stanzas by separating the lines with headings which related to the questions I had asked. These included: Background, Why Teaching? Best Moments, Worst Moments, Turning Points, Significant People, Curriculum Changes, Changing Schools, As a Teacher I feel..., and A Title. . These headings were the same for each participant.

4.4: Step Three - Contrapuntal Voices

Finally, I listened for the contrapuntal voices within the narrative. This allowed me to further examine each voice and how it related to each previous listening (Woodcock, 2016). The initial two steps of the Listening Guide involved ascertaining the landscape of each story and the plotlines, and incorporating the first-person language of the narrator. The third step of the Listening Guide built on these

previous two stages. This final step, which consisted of several 'listenings', allowed me to notice and distinguish between the aspects of the transcript which spoke to the initial research questions (Gilligan et. al., 2007). This involved being attuned to what was spoken and what was said differently at different times, and being attentive to what was unspoken or silenced by other voices. It involved listening for the ways that different voices interacted.

4.5: Member Checking

Having completed the three steps of the Listening Guide, I emailed each participant to share their personal 'I' poem. I included a brief explanation of an 'I' poem within the main body of the email. Prior to this contact, I had confirmed with them the arrangements of when we would speak on the phone for the member check. Please see a copy of Appendix Thirteen for a copy of this email.

During the member check, I shared some of the analysis from the Listening Guide (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2007). I focused this on the relevant 'I' poem and included the voices which seemed prevalent to me within their narratives. During the member checks, there was confirmation from each participant that I had encapsulated their personal story which reflected how they identified as teachers and to their profession. I did not change my interpretation of the stories as a result of the member check; instead each member check confirmed my understanding and analyses.

4.6: Transcriptions

After each interview was complete, I transcribed the interview verbatim. Once the transcription was complete, I numbered each line, indicated each time there was a new speaker and added a reflection column on the right-hand side. I also included symbols in the transcriptions.

The following symbols were used to alert readers of the transcripts to non-verbal communication:

Symbol	Example	Explanation
(())	((laughing))	Non-verbal action
(.)	(.)	A brief pause in the narrative
(digit)	(4)	Longer pause, with number of seconds inside the brackets
[]	R: Is it hard to [park up at school L: It's very]	To indicate speech overlap, when the participant and researcher spoke at the same time.

Next, I printed a hard copy of each transcript and listened to each interview a minimum of five times. Initially, I listened for the plot, and then for the creation of 'I' poems, and finally for the contrapuntal voices (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2007). With the relevant interview in front of me, I listened repeatedly to the interview and used a different colour highlighter to identify the particular aspect I was focusing on. Plot themes were highlighted in red, 'I' poems in yellow and

contrapuntal voices in either pink, green, teal, light blue or light grey, depending on the voice they represented. Once I was satisfied with this, I transferred this information to my electronic version of the transcript by changing the colour of the text, editing the font and adding further notes and reflections. After these steps, I completed a member check with each participant before writing up the analysis.

4.7: Applying the Listening Guide

4.7.1: Introducing Una

Una is currently a drama teacher with additional responsibilities. She trained and taught in London and the South-East of England before emigrating to teach abroad in Turkey and Egypt. She has now settled in Singapore in her ideal job. Following maternity leave, Una has recently returned to her school in Singapore. She wanted to be a teacher from a young age and initially thought that she would be a primary school practitioner, before realising that she could combine her love of drama with her desire to be a teacher, if she chose to teach at secondary school level. Una's interview was conducted at the start of the academic year using FaceTime, due to distance restraints. During the interview, we were both in a room on our own at home. She describes herself as a thirty-five-year-old, middle-class, Caucasian female who is based in Singapore and has been influenced by European and African cultures.

4.7.2: Una - Step One

During the first listening, I felt that the terrain of Una's narrative sounded optimistic and came from a place of security. The plot seemed to focus on independence,

exploration and ambition. Her independence was conveyed through the absence of any reference to a supportive partner or family network. People who featured in Una's story were students, parents of students, colleagues as well as mentors, her current principal and her daughter. Her young daughter is the only family member of whom she spoke. Exploration arose as she listed the countries in which she had taught. Una described herself as *"ambitious"* (Appendix Five, pg. 211, line 461) and this is a theme which was quietly present as she took on new roles in different places. Her ambition is evident when she speaks about students' achievements (Appendix Five, pg. 186, lines 43-50), new additional responsibilities (Appendix Five, pg. 195, lines 191-193), working alongside inspiring staff (Appendix Five, pg. 199, line 258) and being a learner herself (Appendix Five, pg. 211, lines 460-465 and lines 470-474). This latter storyline, which focused on ambition, was later replaced by a sense of contentment and enjoying the present. This was apparent when Una said *"Then very recently I realised that actually I'm okay with not progressing in my career at the moment because I'm learning lots of different stuff"* (Appendix Five, pg. 211, lines 466-468). This sense of contentment was reinforced when she said, *"Maybe I'm just happy to do what I am doing and just learn what I am learning and enjoy this time rather than pushing forwards and learning and growing"* (Appendix Five, pg. 212, lines 474-477).

There were multiple changes of location which arose as Una shared her movement from country to country. Despite this potential for disruption or tension, it seemed to be a harmonious story. The changes in location created a momentum in the shared story. The images which stood out for me related to her whole life constantly moving; this seemed to culminate in her moving towards her 'ideal' job where she is currently

able to focus on her teaching practice and her role as a learner. Throughout the story, even when the storyline moved from ambition to contentment, it was embedded in a context of assurance; she knew that she was meant to be a teacher and that remains a staunch truth for her.

Throughout Una's storytelling, there did not appear to be any emotional hotspots as her responses were very measured. Her passion for and enjoyment of teaching was obvious. While there were times of challenge across her career (Appendix Five, pg. 188, lines 79; 84-85; pg. 188, lines 237-238), her description of these incidents did not indicate that she saw these as times of distinct difficulty which needed to be overcome. The story she shared was practical and concise yet comprehensive. It seemed that she had prepared for the questions in advance. At the same time, she also had a reflective nature during the interview when she recalled a curriculum change she was unhappy about (Appendix Five, pg. 202, lines 319-321). I recorded the reader response to the narrative in the right-hand column in Una's transcription, under 'Comments on Transcription', as well as in my research diary.

4.7.3: Una - Step Two

Una's 'I' poem can be read in full in Appendix Three (Pg. 165). In it, there are harmonious blends of activity, reflectiveness and agency. During our discussion in the member check, Una shared that she felt I had summarised her teaching story in an accurate way. She requested a written summary of the interview to add to her reflective record for the school year. This request demonstrated the personal value she attributed to taking part in the research.

Activity was present in Una's story throughout her 'I' poem. The verbs which followed the 'I' made Una sound both active and purposeful: "*I qualified, I moved, I taught, I went.*" These appeared to reflect the movement associated with teaching in different countries as well as the leaving, departures and arrivals related to beginning in a new place. The purposefulness of these verbs seemed to have led Una on a journey of progression from one teaching role to the next. This ended with transporting her to her ideal job in a supportive school with fantastic resources.

The action which was apparent in Una's 'I' poem contrasted with the amount of time she spent reflecting. Reflexivity and emotional embodiments of reflection were demonstrated in every stanza through the term "*I thought*", which was a repeated phrase. This was further ratified during the member check, when Una shared that she had been discussing her reflective nature in school earlier in the week, and also through her request for a written account which summarised the voices heard in her narrative.

Agency was apparent in 'Changing Schools' (Appendix Three, pg. 175-176) and 'A Title' (Appendix Three, pg. 177-179) due to the terms "*I choose*" and "*I can.*" This agency connected to Una's independence, which was conveyed by the choices she has made as she has progressed her career and moved between countries. Her agency was also conveyed through absences. While she mentioned significant people to the development of her career, Una did not speak of a supportive network outside of work. Whilst this does not mean that she has no strong support network,

instead it may suggest that she views her decisions about her career independently. It may also imply that Una intentionally has tried to compartmentalise her work as separate from her home life due to working internationally, where the boundaries between home and work may be blurred. For instance, the family doctor is on the school site. Thus, the agency coming through her 'I' poem may relate to a conscious attempt to separate home from school.

Consistency came across in the 'I' poem when Una stated, "*I always, always*" (Appendix Three, pg. 165). There seemed to be an unwavering certainty that she knows what she is doing as a teacher. Una is secure in her knowledge that she is meant to be a teacher. She believes that there is no preferable career for her. Una's passion for teaching also appears consistent through the repetitions of "*I love*", as well as "*I absolutely love*" and "*I really, really love*", when talking about being a teacher. Within the 'I' poem, there was some conflict with regards to consistency within the stanza 'Turning Points' (Appendix Three, pg. 168-173), when Una expressed, "*I knew*" and "*I didn't know.*" However, when the apparently negative "*I don't*" was expressed, it was in the form of a double negative and was utilised with a rhetorical effect. For instance, "*I don't know many other people who do*" (Appendix Three, pg.177) was a comparative statement stating that Una is unaware of many people who love their job as much as she does.

A sense of change over time came across in the 'Significant People' (Appendix Three, pg. 173-174), 'Curriculum Changes' (Appendix Three, pg. 174-175) and 'A Title...' (Appendix Three, pg. 177-179) stanzas through the following phrases: "*I had,*

I became, I have, I think, I was, I am, I realise, I can.” The language was optimistic, reflective and positive. Something which may slightly contradict my earlier point about Una’s use of language indicating that she compartmentalises her personal and professional life arises within ‘Turning Points’. She spoke of previously compartmentalising, but since having her daughter reflected:

“Now I look

On the flipside I see all the things” (Appendix Three, pg. 173)

This indicates that she felt an overlap between her personal, home experiences and her role as a teacher; her teaching and mothering roles impact one another.

Una’s ‘I’ poem spoke of the importance of *“making a difference”* (Appendix Three, pg. 172). Reference to making a difference was repeated several times in the ‘I’ poem. It seemed that she saw an intrinsic link between being an educator and helping young people to make a difference in their own lives and in the future.

4.7.4: Una - Step Three

As I listened to and read Una’s narrative, I identified the following distinct voices which I have named: Accomplishment, Challenge, Pastoral, Protection and Realisation. At times, these voices were interwoven. A collection of quotes representing each voice can be seen in Appendix Four (pg. 180). Further examples are available in Una’s full transcript in Appendix Five (pg. 184).

I felt that the voice of Accomplishment was focused on Una’s success as a teacher and this was intertwined with how she viewed her role. Una revealed the value of

teaching to her was holistic in nature. She spoke about making a difference to young people's lives, not just giving them an academic education. When the opportunity to make a difference was not apparent, it seemed to influence how she perceived the value of her role:

"I felt like I was making a difference again with children not just teaching them but actually making a difference to their lives" (Appendix Five, pg. 195, Line 196-198).

Within this statement, the voices of Accomplishment and Pastoral were interconnected because this statement indicates how incredibly important making a general impact on students' lives is to Una, with regards how she sees her role as a teacher.

The Accomplishment voice was present when Una spoke with passion about her current school and available resources:

"And my current school is... Incredible. And I absolutely love it ... it is a very wealthy school and they have a lot of resources, not just physical resources, people resources as well, and so a lot of the admin stuff was taken off of me and I could just focus in on my teaching" (Appendix Five, pg. 195, lines 200-205).

Within Una's narrative, there is a sense that taking on multiple roles as a teacher has a positive outcome. The roles she emphasises are pastoral in nature, rather than being linked to administrative tasks. Una's voice of Accomplishment is strongly interlinked to her Pastoral voice within her narrative. At one point when Una spoke about the more pastoral roles of a teacher, there was some tension between Accomplishment and the voice of Challenge:

“It also does still make me sad that those children, like in England, you know, obviously not all of them but that they do need that, sort of social worker type aspect as well” (Appendix Five, pg. 193, lines 160-163).

Although she appreciates making a difference to young people’s lives, she is aware that some of these roles are necessary due to undesirable circumstances. It appears that Una recognises that a pastoral role can become a necessary ‘social work’ type role when children and young people experience greater adversity. This pastoral role seems valuable to Una because to her it means she is making a difference to the young person and this is associated with her voice of Accomplishment. While this is an important aspect of her role, it also links to tension because it saddens her to think that young people are in situations where such a role is necessary. Therefore, it also links to her voice of Challenge.

The voice of Accomplishment was again present when Una spoke about experienced colleagues whom she found to be inspiring:

“At my current school, I work with another drama teacher and he’s really inspirational in terms of, my actual drama teaching, like all of the strategies that he uses, he’s given me more innovative approaches” (Appendix Five, pg. 199, lines 254-258).

These positive influences appear to have an impact on her daily practice. This was connected to her voice of Realisation because she recognised that she has ample time to further her ambitious nature, but for now she is content in her present learning environment:

“And then very recently I realised that actually I’m okay with not progressing in my career at the moment because I’m learning lots of different stuff, and then a slight

different focus on now that I've got family of my own to think about, and that's okay"

(Appendix Five, pg.211, lines 466-470).

She repeated similar sentiments later:

"Maybe I'm just happy to do what I am doing and just learn what I am learning and enjoy this time rather than pushing forwards and learning and growing" (Appendix

Five, pg. 212, lines 474-477).

There is security within Una's narrative. She is secure in knowing that teaching is her ideal profession. She is currently working in a system which is a supportive learning environment for herself as well as for her students. This again links back to the Pastoral voice, when she shared the importance of role modelling learning and failing:

"It's about showing the kids, that it's okay being in that place of not knowing and it's okay to try something out and it's okay to fail. And I think that is a really important message for children to see" (Appendix Five, pg. 199, lines 262-265).

4.7.5: Concluding Thoughts on Una's Narrative

Una must feel like she is in a privileged position, to be able to feel fulfilment in each of the optimistic voices in her narrative. Her whole narrative was generally cohesive, with the voices of Protection and Challenge playing minor roles. Una gave one example of being protected by the school system when she spoke of the strong approach the school used when addressing parents. This voice of Protection indicated that her school use an empathetic yet firm approach so that all parties

concerned, parents and carers, young people and staff, understand their decision making. It also seemed that these situations were an exception and I got the impression that there was a feeling of unity between students and staff within her current school, due to the clear guidelines and code of conduct which all parties are expected to abide by. The prevalent voices present in Una's narrative were positive and mainly focused on Accomplishment and Pastoral, with Realisation being apparent towards the end of the interview. I was left with the impression that Una believed the systems in which she works, and the expectations placed on her as a teacher, result in Una having a thoroughly supported and nurtured wellbeing.

4.7.6: Introducing Saoirse

Saoirse trained as a teacher in Canada, before moving to England for work opportunities. Her earliest memories relate to her aspiration to be a teacher. Saoirse's initial supply teaching job in London led to her securing a full-time role in an inner-city school. She handed in her notice when Saoirse recognised she needed a break from full-time teaching to review her career options. Another period of supply teaching led her to a full-time class position in a school which appeared to hold wellbeing in high esteem. Following an Ofsted inspection, the focus on teacher wellbeing appears to have been reduced. Saoirse has additional responsibilities as well as being a class teacher. Her interview took place at the beginning of the school year in the lounge of my flat and we were alone throughout. She describes herself as being a female in her early thirties, who has been influenced by her Canadian upbringing and has recently become a British citizen.

4.7.7: Saoirse - Step One

During the initial listening of Saoirse's story, I felt that it was set within a frame of wanting to make a difference to the lives of children. Her own educational experience as a child in school was described as a generally positive experience and featured inspiring role models for her future teacher identity. Even when she experienced a teacher who she did not have a positive experience of, Saoirse used this experience to inform herself about how she would go on to teach.

Saoirse's story had two main settings. Initially, the geographical base was Canada, where autonomy and professional discretion were prevalent in her description of being a teacher. The school environment had a collaborative ethos. Saoirse described colleagues and students working in co-production to create a personalised education for the pupils in her class. While this positive partnership created a sense of reward for her, there was an issue: there were no available full-time teaching positions on offer in Canada. The second scene was based in England. Saoirse found that teaching work was readily available. However, there were multiple compromises within the second setting, which was located in south-east England. The trust and positive attributes which had been dominant in the Canadian setting were replaced by pressure (both national and school-based) and a prescriptiveness which created an internal tension with regards to how Saoirse viewed her role as a teacher. There was a sense of struggle and suffering in Saoirse's narrative because she felt, at times, like she was not doing the best she could for the children in her class. This was because of the expectations the senior leadership within the school had of Saoirse, as a Year Two practitioner who was preparing her class for SATS. Within Saoirse's narrative, it was apparent that she felt that local and national

systems lacked flexibility with regards to considering staff and pupils in a holistic manner.

The clearest difference between the first and second scene was how professional judgements seemed to be constantly questioned in England. In Canada, Saoirse described teacher observations and feedback as being helpful for professional development (Appendix Eight, pg. 273, lines 723-728). Rather than being critical, an appreciative approach was adopted, which seems to be missing from her experience in England (Appendix Eight, pg. 273, lines 726-732). Despite the constant internal struggle of being forced to choose between different priorities, the highs (for Saoirse, these were mostly connected to relationships) associated with her role whilst teaching the Year Two SATS group in London made the experience worthwhile for her.

4.7.8: Saoirse - Step Two

Saoirse's 'I' poem can be read in full in Appendix Six (pg. 214). Her 'I' poem highlighted her struggle between the role of teacher she was required to take on due to educational systems and the value she has associated with her role. The language in the poem is emotive and has elements of physical embodiment through the repeated use of terms like "*I felt*" and "*I remember.*" Her delight in teaching is apparent through the repeated use of the term "*love*" – "*I absolutely loved it! I really loved*" in the 'Background' (Appendix Six, pg. 214-219) and 'Turning Points' (Appendix Six, pg. 224-228) stanzas.

A thread running through the whole poem, and the first stanza (Background, Appendix Six, pg. 214-219) in particular, relates to memories. These had a longitudinal element through the repeated refrain: *"I remember."* These appear to have positive associations with her view of teaching: *"I was, I played, I could, I knew."* This stanza also epitomises how Saoirse has envisioned her role as a teacher since her childhood. The phrase *"I think"* is reiterated throughout the poem repeatedly, and demonstrates her reflective nature. In the second stanza (Why Teaching? Appendix Six, pg. 220-221), the memory of wanting to be a teacher is imprinted since an early age: *"I always knew, I wanted to work with children, I had some absolutely amazing teachers."* The 'I' poem highlights how being a teacher has been a long-term aspiration for Saoirse.

There is a shift in the language within 'Worst moments' (Appendix Six, pg. 222-224) and 'Turning Points' (Appendix Six, pg. 224-228); the vocabulary and energy within the stanzas become more mixed. The previous positive language is replaced by uncertainty. Internal tension becomes more apparent, as the internal conflict arises between what school required her to do and what she felt was best for the children in her care. This sense of helplessness is carried over into the 'Significant People' stanza (Appendix Six, pg. 228-231), where there is a focus on interaction with her line manager. The language used, *"I was stripped, If I'm allowed, I don't, I didn't, I lost, I was worrying, I couldn't, I'm overtired, I'm stressed, I am constantly worried and anxious"*, is in stark contrast to the original optimistic language at the start of the 'I' poem. There appears to be frustration, anger and sadness in the language used in this section. Despite Saoirse's identity being linked to her being a teacher, she seems to be reflecting on whether she can carry on this role. There is a turning point

within this stanza, when Saoirse says, *“They knew I was a good teacher”* (Appendix Six, pg. 230). This woman, who had spent most of her childhood preparing to be a teacher and was now an experienced, reflective teacher, could no longer see the skill set she had to offer. Saoirse rediscovers herself through the belief that others have in her. She describes the support and belief her family offered her particularly during her year of teaching Year Two: *“My parents have always been extremely supportive and have always built up my confidence ((laugh)) even when I have not been confident in myself”* (Appendix Eight, pg. 268, lines 614-616). This is both a heart-warming point and an incredibly sad one. The reassuring element is that Saoirse has people who were able to give her this encouragement. The poignant aspect of this statement relates to the fact that, at that time, she was no longer able to see this for herself. It raises the question of how much she had endured to bring her to such a hopeless place. When Saoirse talks about the support her parents offered she says *“They said and reaffirmed that they knew I was a good teacher and it was what I was always meant to do”* (Appendix Eight, pg. 268, lines 617-619). She goes onto say, *“My family have really built up my confidence to want to carry on in my teaching career. And my husband is a fantastic influence on me because he reminds me that wellbeing is really important”* (Appendix Eight, pg. 269 lines 631-634).

The stanza titled ‘As a teacher I feel...’ (Appendix Six, pg. 237-238) includes mixed language. *“I can’t leave”* is a repeated refrain which seems rather hopeless because she does not appear to have a choice. Then, there is a shift to more hopeful statements: *“I still remember them, I think teaching is amazing.”* The fluctuating

language within this 'I' poem seems to epitomise the changeable emotional experiences, ranging from inspiring to saddening, which teachers face.

4.7.9: Saoirse - Step Three

Within Saoirse's narrative, I identified the following distinct voices: Optimism, Struggle, Nurturer, Relationships and Recognition. At times, the voices were intertwined with each other. A collection of quotes representing each voice can be seen in Appendix Seven. Further examples are available in Saoirse's full transcript in Appendix Eight.

There were four elements in Saoirse's narrative which connected to her Optimistic voice. These were: having professional discretion, working collaboratively, recognising the importance of wellbeing and the positive moments of teaching. Having professional discretion was referred to on a number of occasions. Saoirse shared that observations within the Canadian system were associated with appreciative inquiry and productive, constructive feedback:

"Obviously I was observed throughout my career as well and they had these positive observations and constructive feedback to give back to, you know, do better in certain areas. But I felt like I was given the discretion, the ability and opportunity to judge for myself what was best for the children that I was teaching. I didn't have to evidence every little thing because my (2) professional judgement was seen to be accurate because I have done all this training and I feel like this is what's different in this country." (Appendix Eight, pg. 273, lines 724-731).

This was a sentiment that was repeated later in the interview and Saoirse spoke about the positive impact this had on her environment and her ability to teach:

“You’re just trusted that you know what you are doing (3) and having that sense of trust and feeling like you are given that opportunity and responsibility to just do what you feel is best, is really (.) amazing and (.) it makes the environment and the whole idea of teaching so much more positive because it makes you feel like, you know, you are in control, you know what you are doing, you’ve been given the trust that you deserve after all the training that you have put into your career and that you continue to put in and you know what’s best for your children” (Appendix Eight, pg. 286, lines 1048-1057).

The next element of Saoirse’s Optimistic voice related to working in a co-productive nature with colleagues and pupils:

“I was working with my teaching partner who did the other half-days and we worked really well together and we had the same sort of ideas of what we wanted to do in the classroom, various investigative type learning where the children were guiding their own learning and they weren’t being ‘taught at’ but they were participants in their learning” (Appendix Eight, pg. 248, lines 101-107).

Relationships appear to have influenced Saoirse’s awareness of the importance of wellbeing:

“I have obviously learned from that experience in London that wellbeing is important, and I’ve made it a bigger priority for myself and I’ve learned that I can say no”

(Appendix Eight, pg. 279, lines 875-878).

Saoirse aims to prioritise her wellbeing when considering new jobs, even though this would not have previously been in her job searching criteria. She talks about the reassurance she received in the interview for her current role:

“There was a very big push for wellbeing because that was actually part of my interview when I originally interviewed for this position. One of the questions was ‘How do you look after your wellbeing as a teacher?’ which made me feel confident in that they recognised as a school that wellbeing was important” (Appendix Eight,

pg. 278, lines 863-867).

At a later stage, she goes on to speak about the impact that Ofsted had on this crucial element of wellbeing. This quote above highlights the importance she now places on her own wellbeing.

Saoirse’s final element of Optimism reveals how the positive moments impact her. These moments include going on a journey of discovery with pupils, when a difficult concept suddenly makes sense to them:

“I think in teaching you have so many amazing moments” (Appendix Eight, pg. 243,

lines 229-230).

“I think those are the absolute best moments that I (2) it just keeps me going is a teacher” (Appendix Eight, pg.253, lines 241-243).

In the quotes above and the one below, Saoirse indicates that a tension exists. It seems like she has, at times, questioned whether she wants to continue being a teacher when she mentions being brought back and 'feeling okay again':

"The rollercoaster shoots up in the air, you know, it brings you back on this high of feeling okay again and brings you back and it's brilliant and exciting and thrilling and rewarding because, you know, you're back where you want to be" (Appendix Eight, pg. 285, lines 1023-1026).

The use of 'again' seems to imply that there is a cyclical nature to teaching. This reoccurring nature of 'highs' implies that there is a counterpoint 'low' to balance it out.

The changeable nature of teaching is referred to multiple times throughout Saoirse's narrative: *"there were some ups and downs, highs and lows"* (Appendix Eight, pg. 249, lines 130-131). And again in:

"I was thoroughly enjoying it until we had Ofsted. Since then, it has significantly got worse the school environment and (2) we went from being a 'good' school to 'needing improvement'" (Appendix Eight, pg. 278, lines 852-858).

There seems to be a common element within Saoirse's narrative of trying to balance out the good with the bad:

"It's a very different environment to what it was. I feel like it was originally quite a positive influence for me but (.) I feel like that might be changing. However, one thing that is quite positive where I am at now is that I enjoy very much working with most of my colleagues" (Appendix Eight, pg. 279, lines 871-875).

Her frustration finally pushes into the foreground when she speaks of her frustration with the fact that her department in her current school were classed as 'good' by Ofsted; despite Ofsted not requiring any improvements in the report for her department, staff within the Early Years setting did not receive any recognition for what they had done well. In fact:

“Although we were rated ‘good’ we are still part of those learning walks and still part of all the additional training that is being put into the rest of the school, so it hasn’t been noted that (.) by the school in the sense that we actually have done well and we should carry on doing what we’re doing because we’re doing something really right” (Appendix Eight, pg. 280, lines 906-911).

As Saoirse continues her narrative, it becomes apparent that rather than the lack of recognition being central to her frustration, it is the time being wasted:

“So, it doesn’t really make sense to waste our valuable time that could be spend on our particular curriculum and environment and how to make it better at these staff meetings and training sessions that have nothing to do with us” (Appendix Eight, pg. 281, lines 920-924).

The point about a lack of efficiency and time-wasting is reiterated:

“That’s not thought about in this system ((laughs)) it’s not thought about the best use of teachers’ time and I think that’s why a lot of time gets wasted and isn’t efficient. And when there is that lack of efficiency, that’s when teachers become stressed because they feel they don’t have the time to do things that would best benefit the children” (Appendix Eight, pg. 282, lines 945-950).

The frustrations which Saoirse experiences on a daily basis are exacerbated further when her narrative broaches areas of pressure. An example of this is with SATS:

“I think my worst (3) I don’t want to say moment but I’d say time as a teacher was when I was in Year Two teaching in St Teresa’s and (2) because of the pressure of SATS, Year Two SATS, and because of pressure from the school to (2) achieve targets that were set at the beginning of the year” (Appendix Eight, pg. 254, lines 250-254).

She goes on to say:

“And these targets are set and not based on, or flexible in a sense that they are human beings, they’re not just, you know, numbers or (.) points on a piece of paper they have a life and it means that because they are human beings things happen. And they’re going to have highs in their life and they’re going to have lows in their life, and throughout their life. And I think it’s really unfair that they have these expectations that they’ll achieve a certain target and that the rest of their life and what is affecting their day-to-day ability to be successful in education is not taken into account (.) and I also think it’s really unfair that (2) children of such young age feel such (.) intense pressure in their education that they need to strive to do well, that they’re being tested on (.) a lot of material that is really difficult for seven year olds” (Appendix Eight, pg. 254, lines 265-278).

The SATS testing also created a discrepancy between what she was expected to do by the school and what she wanted to do as a teacher:

“I feel like that was really, I don’t know the word, but sort of, stifled out of them in that time (2) and I felt like it was really unfair and it made me feel like I was a really bad teacher, and I know that I’m not a bad teacher and that is probably the worst moment for me. It was the worst time for me because I felt like I wasn’t doing my job which (.) was (2) the job that I originally wanted to which was to inspire them and help them

grow and feel excited and happy to be at school. And I felt horrible coming into work every day because I felt like I didn't know what to do, how to handle that year whether I should (.) just try and ignore the pressure from above that felt like it was on a daily basis, coming to me, asking me results and when I was doing the next tests and practice for SATS. Or if I should do what was in my heart which was actually to teach them properly and give them a well-rounded education and (.) and not have so much pressure on a group of seven-year-olds. But I'm not sure if I was experienced enough at that time (.) or maybe I was actually just too sort of (.) engrossed in the situation I couldn't look at it objectively to do what I feel like I do now, which is just to ignore the system as much as possible. But (2) yeah I feel like that I constantly felt (.) in a bad place during that time and (.) I felt like I wasn't happy with myself and I didn't feel good about myself and it really made me hate teaching and made me not want to, I didn't know how I would carry on a teaching career if it was going to carry on like that. Which made really sad because, as I've already said I wanted to be a teacher since I was four years" (Appendix Eight, pg. 256, lines 317-342).

This section of the narrative highlights the pain and inner turmoil Saoirse experienced as a teacher at this particular point in her career. There is a critical self-awareness, as well as a sense of regret towards those pupils doing SATs and her involvement in those tests. There is also a heaviness, loss and sadness about how the situation was making Saoirse feel. Through the narrative, she indicates that she was aware of the impact this time period had on her. However, it is difficult to know if Saoirse realised the extent of the impact the experience was having on her during her time in Year Two

4.7.10: Concluding Thoughts on Saoirse's Narrative

Saoirse's narrative clearly demonstrated that being a teacher has been a long-held ambition for her. During her own time as a pupil, she used her own experiences with teachers to develop her knowledge about the type of teacher she would like to become.

Although her narrative about teaching is optimistic, there is a sense of struggle within it as she reflects on her experience in the profession. Saoirse portrays teaching as being a professional role as well as a vocation. Despite the repeated struggles, the children bring her much joy. Saoirse's narrative indicates that if she could focus on planning, in the way most beneficial to her, that she would be better able to teach and meet the multiple needs of the children within her care. Within her story, Saoirse creates the impression that she would like to plan and teach informative and fun lessons. However, it seems that local and national policies require her to dedicate a lot of her time to other, non-teaching related tasks. This leaves her with little time or energy left to focus on what she views as the more important aspects of her role.

Saoirse's narrative suggests that she generally feels that systems, related to national expectations on children, do not allow for staff or pupils to be human. It also indicates that there is a precarious element within teaching, because things can change instantaneously. She compares these sudden changes to the experience of riding on a rollercoaster. It seems that Saoirse has reached a state of acceptance

about the systems in which she works and recognises that she needs to maintain her own wellbeing in order to be more available to her class.

4.7.11: Introducing Luke

Luke comes from a family of educators and decided to join the teaching profession after completing his undergraduate degree. He is secondary school trained and has worked in several different inner-city schools, teaching English. Luke has also taught supplementary subjects and led other departments, as well as being the Head of the English. After taking redundancy from a teaching and middle leadership post, Luke considered alternative options and considered retraining rather than returning to teaching. During this period, Luke realised he missed classroom teaching too much to leave the career permanently. If he does leave in the future, it is likely that he will move into something which is still linked to education. At Luke's current school, he teaches English to Year Eight, Eleven, Twelve and Thirteen students and is on the senior leadership team as an Assistant Head of Sixth Form. My interview with him place towards the end of the autumn term in his own home and we were alone in the kitchen throughout. He describes himself as a lower-middle class, middle-aged, British man from London.

4.7.12: Luke - Step One

Within the first listening, I identified multiple landscapes, tensions and contradictions in Luke's narrative. It was apparent that he had taught a range of subjects and maintained a role within the senior leadership team in different schools. Pressure within academy systems, as well as the possibility of his current school being

changed into an academy, created a tension within the narrative, due to the precariousness which seemed to be illustrated within Luke's narrative.

Luke presented himself as a strong, competent leader who fundamentally views the needs of the young people he is working with as central to his role as a teacher. Luke has experienced disappointment in the system, with regards to decisions taken by schools which he has not agreed with. The positive and negative experiences Luke shared indicate that he sees teaching as more of a vocation than solely a job. This means that it can be difficult to balance family relationships with wanting to commit his physical, emotional and mental energy to helping his students. Balancing home and school is a repeated site of conflict within Luke's narrative because while he is attempting to prioritise family life, work responsibilities also encroach on his personal time if he does not set appropriate boundaries. This leads to inner unease because despite wanting to help his pupils as much as possible, he never feels as though he is doing enough.

As Luke's narrative unfolds, he reveals that when he reflects on his role, he is concerned by what he is teaching students. He questions whether the skills they develop in school will prepare them for being independent when they leave school education. His person-centred beliefs, which are based on the right pedagogy for students, are at odds with the system in which he finds himself teaching. However, Luke feels the need to be inside the system to try and instigate change. Luke remains optimistic that positive transformations will occur.

4.7.13: Luke - Step Two

Luke's 'I' poem can be read in full in Appendix Nine (pg. 290). Tension and contradiction were evident throughout the 'I' poem through phrases such as "*I turned,*" "*I know that sounds*" and "*If I'm going to be really honest.*" The poem revealed a sense of pressure, which seemed to arise from the role of the teacher and the precariousness of systems. There also seemed to be internal pressure, which appeared to originate from wanting the best for young people, as well as trying to have quality time with and be reliable for his family.

In the 'Background' stanza (Appendix Nine, pg. 290), Luke comes across as competent, ambitious and willing to take on a challenge. In the 'Why Teaching?' stanza (Appendix Nine, pg. 290-291), there appears to be an openness and reflectiveness developing apparent in the following statement: "*If I'm going to be really honest.*" Luke's 'Best Moments' (Appendix Nine, pg. 291) within the 'I' poem were linked to his achievements and roles: "*When I became Head of English*" and "*I improved results.*" However, this differed from the full narrative transcript, in which his person-centred nature was far more apparent.

The 'Worst Moments' stanza (Appendix Nine, pg. 291-294) felt heavier in content. There was a smattering of the phrase "*I had*" throughout, which indicated a lack of choice about his actions or what was being expected of him. There was a sense of disappointment in this stanza: "*I wanted, I saw those members of staff, I just think that's a bit of a disgrace, I think that's wrong.*" The use of time was also prevalent in this stanza: "*I mean at the minute, I'm working ten to twelve hour days, What I do at*

work, What I take at work, What I take home, What I don't take home." These sombre points contrasted to the simplicity of the statement, "*I care*" which was present in this stanza. The statement "*I care*" seemed to signify a change in this stanza, as "*I'm very lucky*" was a repeated phrase following the "*I care*" statement. However, there was still uncertainty in his language. When reading this stanza, I felt that the words indicated some alteration between knowing and uncertainty.

'Turning Points' (Appendix Nine, pg. 294-297) brought a sense of anguish and desperation to the 'I' poem; "*I very nearly left*" and "*I left*" were repeated refrains. This stanza brought with it many differing voices. Luke self-identifies as previously having been arrogant, before later indicating a different side to him when he mentions nervousness and anxiety. The stanza has a transparent and authentic feeling which is perhaps created by the short statements. When talking about turning points in his career, Luke shares when he worked in Phoenix, which was one of his schools, he was close to leaving teaching behind. There is a sense of him being disorientated and drifting away from his sense of self: "*I took redundancy, I'm good at what I do, I took the cheque, I wasn't being treated like that, I took the deal, I was the only one, I took the money, I left, I was very close to stopping.*" When Luke speaks of retraining, there is a deep sense of loss regarding his wellbeing and close relationships: "*I was definitely drinking more, My wife and I's relationship changed, I was always stressed.*" There is also a deep sense of loss in the statements which highlighted how much he missed teaching: "*I missed it massively, I really missed it.*" Luke also indicates empathy for senior leaders in the final line of this stanza, when he says, "*I wouldn't want to be a head teacher trying to get the balance right.*" This statement

seems to indicate that Luke appreciates that there are numerous elements which need to be taken into account when leading a school.

Within 'Significant People' (Appendix Nine, pg. 297-299), Luke demonstrates that his self-awareness has developed over time. Luke expressed that he has received opportunities to develop and that he wants to offer similar chances to others, including both colleagues and students. 'Curriculum Changes' (Appendix Nine, pg. 299-301) includes multiple reflective statements, as the term 'why' is used repeatedly. Towards the end of this stanza, Luke's love of teaching becomes apparent once again.

'Changing Schools' (Appendix Nine, pg.301-303) establishes how much Luke 'wants' to achieve in his teaching career. He comes across as a proactive person and the stanza feels very active. This stanza feels very active and he comes across as a proactive person. For instance, *"I wanted to change whole school systems."* This stanza, along with others, constructs a character who is larger than life through phrases such as, *"I was a little too big for my boots, I would be quite aggressive, I would be quite bullish."* These statements make him seem like a purposeful and determined character. It is possible that in these statements, Luke is trying to create a particular image of himself which matches how he thinks he should be viewed. As the stanza continues, Luke demonstrates his reflectiveness: *"Looking back, I've had to change, I had to learn, I made loads of adjustments, If I were to look back, If I really look, If I look at the way."* He shows how he has applied his learning when he says, *"I've calmed down."* I imagine that these qualities have developed in Luke over

time and with experience. As well as acquiring these qualities, Luke seems to be saying that it is likely that he has developed his understanding of the situation and of the limitations of the system, as well as experiencing various disappointments over time.

The stanza, 'As a teacher...' (Appendix Nine, pg.303-305) features adjectives such as "*privileged*" and "*lucky.*" As this stanza unfolds, a sense of pressure becomes evident in the choices Luke has had to make regarding the quantity of his work and his family responsibilities. The statement "*I'm not willing*" is repeated, which shows his determination to prioritise his family above his work. Previously, before having a child, Luke would have completed work in the holidays to catch up on marking; which is no longer feasible due to his family duties. The 'I' poem includes numerous pressure points. There are tensions between what Luke is expected to do, the spontaneous nature of his job, being the teacher, worker and colleague he wants to be as well, and balancing all this with his family commitments.

4.7.14: Luke - Step Three

As I listened to and read Luke's narrative, I identified the following voices: Highs, Lows, Cultivation, Awareness and Balance. At times, these voices were interlinked with each other. A collection of quotes representing each voice can be seen in Appendix Ten (pg. 307). Further examples are available in Luke's full transcript in Appendix Eleven (pg. 311).

Luke's narrative begins with a positive statement, which has negative connotations intertwined: *"The reason why I like the job, for all the difficulties it's got, is the kids"* (Appendix Eleven, pg. 314, lines 85-86). Regardless of the different voices present in his narrative, such as being ambitious and a strong leader, young people are central to Luke's role and they keep him in the profession through the difficult times. Luke has felt a strong association with education from an early age because of how prevalent the profession was in his family: *"It was kind of entrenched within us"* (Appendix Eleven, pg. 315, lines 107-108). Whilst external motivators may have initially encouraged him in his choice of career, Luke is enthusiastic about being, and feels privileged to be, a teacher. This was clear in his interview through the use of statements such as: *"I do love the job. I'm very lucky to have the job"* (Appendix Eleven, pg. 316, line 116). A dominant voice throughout Luke's narrative, and again at the member check, was that education should be child-centred: *"Adults mess schools up, kids don't, so when you can just focus on the kids it's alright"* (Appendix Eleven, pg. 317, lines 146-147).

There was a great deal of pain and ethical turmoil within Luke's Low voice when he spoke about some of his worst moments in teaching. Interestingly, these were not directly related to teaching but to his other roles as an educator. They had physical, mental and emotional repercussions:

"I guess they could fall into two categories. One would be being attacked by students. I've had that happen 8, 9, times now. So, from being spat in the face to being hit with tables, I had knives pulled on me in my school in Goats Bush. It was

one of the reasons I left is that we were thinking of having a baby and Trudie was like 'that has to stop'

Researcher: Yeah

Luke: (.) going outside the school in Brookfields, in Bright City, and seeing, so I'd go and do bus stop duty and you'd see (.) blacked out windows and Porsche 4x4s pull up just out of the estate, right in one of the roughest estates around and you'd see all your little Year Sevens lining up and then someone inside the car would hand them their first package of the evening, their first delivery because they'd used Year Sevens to deliver drugs on the estate because they're too young to get arrested

Researcher: Okay

Luke: That was a pretty dark ((uncomfortable laugh)), pretty dark week that one. And there was nothing you could do. These people have so much power and such a threat that we were told as staff 'don't do anything'. So to be a member of staff standing 100 metres away from a kid being handed a package of drugs and not being able to do something that went against everything that feels natural to me with regards to looking after young people. That was pretty horrible. With regards to adults, taking staff through capability measures" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 317, lines 151-174).

In a short extract, Luke describes a number of issues which would not immediately be associated with the role of a teacher. These experiences had a negative effect on Luke. From my experience of teacher training, it seems unlikely that Luke would have been formally prepared for these events. These situations had an impact on Luke outside of work. The following extract demonstrates how the lines between work and home life can blur for him:

Luke: It's very] difficult not to take things home

R: Yeah

*Luke: I mean at the minute I'm working (.) 10 to 12 hour days. You come home (.)
you're exhausted*

R: Yeah

*Luke: But actually having Carys (.) my 20-month year old daughter (.) she's kind of
(.) made me turn things off and a little bit better, a little bit more regimented about
what I do at work and what I take at work (.) what I take home and what I don't take
home*

R: Okay

*Luke: It's (.) it's (.) not easy mentality thing to do because (.) because you care
((laughing))*

R: Yeah

*Luke: It's very difficult not to do something extra if you care. While I care about the
students, the people I work with and manage etcetera etcetera (2) it's always that
crossover between vocation and the job" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 321, lines 230-249).*

When Luke uses the term 'crossover' he indicates that being a teacher is more than a job. It seems to exist in a 'between space'; it is not quite a vocation and yet it is more than a job. This extract also demonstrates his awareness of the protective factors which are present in his life when he talks about his daughter and how he attempts to compartmentalise home and work. Luke later refers to the importance of getting the balance right (Appendix Eleven, pg. 322, line 256) and it sounds as

though this is a constant battle. The battle is trying to balance home and work so that he can be meet his own self-imposed standards in both areas.

The Low voice, which encapsulates the negative experiences in Luke's narrative, continues as he details the personal consequences he experienced when his previous school was taken over by an academy chain:

“And at that stage (.) I was very close to (.) stopping. I thought I'd retrain as an electrician. I would have gone and learned a trade somehow. (4) They were (.) they were pretty dark days actually (2) And when you look back on it you can see the things that were going on at that time. So, I was definitely drinking more, the idea of just coming home and just drinking to just turn off

R: Yeah

Luke: Didn't have a child at that stage so wasn't abusive ((laughs)) Our relationship, my wife and I's relationship, changed quite significantly. We didn't really spend any positive time together. I was always stressed. Most of the grey hair you can see now came at that time ((smiles)) So it was borderline whether to continue to be honest”

(Appendix Eleven, pg. 327, lines 366-377).

This extract illustrates how close Luke came to leaving the profession. However, despite these negative experiences, Luke does not dwell on the lows:

“So yeah, there have definitely been some unpleasant times. But those unpleasant times (.) For the first 10 years of my career they were challenging yeah

R: Yeah

Luke: But no thoughts about stopping or concerns about stopping at all. I have been happy for the last two years.” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 329, lines 404-409).

Relationships are an area of Luke’s narrative which appear to be meaningful. Colleagues and family have at different times being protective factors in helping Luke to manage his wellbeing and, at times, these have been transformative. Here, he speaks about the influence his mentor had on him when Luke was a newly qualified teacher:

“He showed me an awful lot (.) very calm (.) very peaceful (.) didn’t take any crap (.) stood up for his department, defended his department openly in front of the head teacher (.) who was a bit of bullish (.) a bull of a head teacher but she was very good at what she did (2) Yeah, he was a big help (.) told me I couldn’t say yes to everything” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 337, lines 588-593).

Luke explained that he and his mentor continue to stay in contact long after that first job. As well as the other positive and significant colleagues he has known during his career, Luke goes on to share that his first mentor, who he described as “*amazing (.) he was absolutely amazing. Kids under control, engaging, thoughtful, really passionate about what he did*” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 340, lines 650-652), left teaching due to the curriculum changes being implemented during his career. Luke describes his reaction to the profession losing such a skilled teacher as “*disturbing*” (Appendix Eleven, pg.340, line 665).

Luke’s voice of Cultivation spoke about his experiences of professional development throughout his career and how he had implemented this into his style of leadership:

“So people all helped me out and made sure I got CPD [continuing professional development] and I was given the right opportunities and I think it’s really important that I do that to other people. One for the health of the profession, two because it’s how people should be treated (.) and if you are managing somebody (.) in quite a lot of areas I’ve seen managers (.) almost keep a lid on those members of staff. Which is completely the wrong way round to do it. You need to give them all the opportunities you can (.) particularly if you’re looking to recruit and recycle staff into more senior positions in your own school. You don’t want your best staff going to another school. You want to keep your staff in your school. When they stay it means they’re being developed” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 342, lines 704-715).

This quotation sounds like it may have altruistic undertones but it also demonstrates Luke’s systemic thinking. He describes the benefit of investing in staff by providing them with professional development opportunities. This segment of text demonstrates that Luke is thinking about the long-term impact of having healthy staff who want to remain in a school. His focus is on providing teachers with further skills, so that they choose to remain in the school which they are invested in and in which they are valued as valuable resources.

The Low voice can be heard again when Luke talks about the grading system in exam year groups, the content within the new English curriculum and the pressure of targets and predicted grades on staff. There is additional content within the English curriculum, which puts pressure on pupils to be doing extra work. Luke explains that it is impractical to expect teachers to be able to cover the extra work in classroom taught sessions. Luke describes the issues:

“It’s no longer about just what you deliver in the classroom. They have to do independent stuff as well. Now you can get past it a little bit at GCSE by cramming (.) very much an exam factory instead of more creative, free teaching but you can’t do that at A-Level. There’s just so much they have to have under control. So that spoon-feeding at GCSE to maintain the GCSE scores does (.) do damage at A-Level. So, I refer to it as double jumping. We made this student jump as far as they can at GCSE. Literally squeeze everything out of them but when they get that GCSE result that’s used to set their targets for Key Stage 5. So, if they’ve managed to get an eight then all of a sudden their targets are A at A-level but they don’t then have that ability to work independently and autonomously and they don’t have that drive sometimes (.) at Key Stage 5 to do really well. And therefore the Key Stage 5 results regards progress drop off all the way. Then the school is labelled as an under-performing school” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 344, lines 740-754).*

Therefore, the consequence of teaching students to pass exams is that they are later less capable of having the required skills to achieve independently. Luke questions the content in the curriculum: *“But is it actually helping those students to be something? I don’t really know anymore”* (Appendix Eleven, pg. 351, lines 909-910).

The question he poses reflects his internal struggle – an ethical debate he encounters when he reflects on teaching.

Predicted grades represent another arena of discontent. Currently, grade boundaries are only set in the summer holidays when papers are being marked. This creates difficulties for teachers who have to make predictions at the start of the academic

year without clear criteria. Later, they will have their performance management assessed against their predicted targets:

“So, to be judged on your predictions (.) and to be setting students’ predictions for UCAS (.) or for sixth form entries, for a new course, for a new curriculum that they don’t give much exemplar writing on, they don’t give you much CPD on (.) it’s all kind of flapping around in the dark a little bit and you really don’t know (.) what’s going to happen on the third Thursday of August when the results comes out. Well, that creates an awful lot of pressure (.) it creates an awful lot of stress” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 346, lines 803-810).

He continues:

“You don’t quite know the level (.) there’s no level playing field. And what seems to be is that you could have a year group that is particularly strong (2) in comparison from one student from one year to the year before. One student could be much stronger because they moved the grade boundaries to fit that cohort” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 347, lines 812-816).

And finally:

“It’s not student-centric, it’s not balanced, it’s not fair, it’s not equal. It just undermines everything” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 347, lines 824-826).

Luke believes that the welfare of students, which he strongly feels is being overlooked, should be at the heart of the education system. The lack of focus on student welfare has implications for teaching staff:

“But you apply all those elements of the ambiguity of what the grades are, the lack of support, increased pressures, the class sizes, judgements on your pay, you’re not

going to be getting pay rise or a promotion because your class results weren't good enough" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 348, lines 832-836). All of that, if you accumulate it all, plus the hours, the marking, the expectations, all of it, put all of that together (.) those additional add-ons of (.) lack of clarity or a lack of knowledge or a lack of knowing what the outcomes are going to be within a certain window, I think that's pushed a lot of people a step too far and they've disengaged completely" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 348, lines 840-845).

The implications are that teaching staff are expected to give more. As Luke has illustrated, because teachers tend to care about the young people they teach, they will give more. In some cases, teachers will keep on giving until there is nothing left for their own personal life. Luke spoke at one point about a particular head teacher, who uses teachers in this way and then replaces them when they can no longer function within the system.

Luke's narrative moves in a transient way between his High voice and his Low voice. This creates a feeling of momentum with regards to being a teacher. Luke reflects on this see-sawing nature:

"But then that does have its flip side. So even if you have a really bad year, come September, you have a whole new set of kids. So, whether you've been successful or whether you've failed, you're always going to have a fresh set of kids. So, I find that quite refreshing. You're never down for too long. You've just got to go again, go again, go again" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 367, lines 1283-1289).

"It's still really exciting, you still don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. So, while I have my day set up per period (.) anything could happen (4) drugs, knives,

joy, could be sadness, kid going mental, kid coming in and giving you a Christmas present and you didn't even think that they liked you" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 370, lines 1358-1362).

"To connect it to rollercoaster, it's a real sense of momentum. It's really exciting sometimes. Sometimes your stomach does turn over because you don't know how you're going to deal with the next day or the next two days. You have parents coming in and trying to take you apart. You've got to stand really firm, you've got to hold on tight. You get all that done. You get off the rollercoaster and September comes round again and you get back on again" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 372, lines 1404-1411). "You just keep going on and on and on. Yeah, it's overwhelmingly positive ((smiling)). With the challenges and hiccups along the way" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 372, lines 1413-1414).

These quotations indicate the uncertainty and frequently changing contexts in which teachers work.

4.7.15: Concluding Thoughts on Luke's Narrative

Luke's narrative gave him a space to reflect on his role. Despite the awareness Luke has developed about himself, particularly as a colleague over time, he reflected that he rarely allows himself to think about his role and what it means to teach. This seemed to extend further when Luke shared that he does not reflect on how well his vision of teaching matches what is expected of him as a professional. Perhaps this is the reason that so many tensions arise in his narrative, because they are stories and thoughts which he has not repeatedly shared. Luke's narrative appears to have developed a richness and 'thickness' that narrative inquiry aspires to find and

develop. Narrative can be used to develop a deeper understanding of how someone constructs meaning from situations and events. In Luke's case, one of the outcomes of the narrative research seems to have been taking the opportunity to reflect on his career, role and wellbeing. During Luke's narrative interview, it became clearer that he is kept in teaching because of his enjoyment of working with young people and helping them to achieve. Despite this enjoyment, his overall narrative had an almost teetering feel which suggests that he might be on the brink of leaving the profession. This feeling was due to the discrepancies between his view of his role and the expectations on him.

During the member check, Luke shared that since Christmas, he had been reflecting on giving up his senior leadership role. He wanted to do this in order to focus on teaching. He had recently shared this decision with his school, who were supportive of his decision because they recognise him as a competent, confident teacher who has a positive influence on the school environment. The main reason for his decision was that he wanted to be more available and reliable at home, for example being able to pick up his daughter from the childminder's. He also wanted to be able to provide for his pupils better, including staying on top of his marking. Lastly, he wanted to be a role model to his colleagues by being the best teacher he could be. Luke feels confident that he will go back into senior leadership in the future when his daughter is older because he believes he is capable of doing the role.

4.8: What is Working Well and What Could Be Even Better

This section will consider what is working well within current educational systems and what could be changed to benefit teacher wellbeing.

4.8.1: The Role of the Teacher

In the literature review, the multi-element nature of the role of a teacher was introduced. This connected to workload and expectations, and was found to correlate with occupational stress. Within the narratives shared in this thesis, the teachers seemed to find satisfaction in the multiple roles they were required to undertake each day when these roles related to pastoral needs of pupils. However, they did not include administrative tasks when talking about which parts of teaching they found most fulfilling.

Funding is related to expectations of teachers. Teaching unions advocate that teachers should not routinely undertake administrative tasks, deeming anything which is agreed to once as at risk of become a routine undertaking. However, the teachers involved in this research indicate that they want the best for the young people in their care. If something is within their capacity, they are likely to do it so that their pupils do not miss out. Thus, the implication is that teachers will be required to say 'no' more often. This in turn will impact their own wellbeing and how they view themselves as a teacher. This may lead to disillusionment because of differences between their own expectations of themselves, what the system is able to provide and a desire to meet the needs of young people.

4.8.2: Undermining Wellbeing

The teachers within the study spoke about difficult situations within schools. Even when pupil behaviour was particularly challenging, none of the teachers identified children as being a stressor for them personally. Perhaps this was because they felt it was an unspeakable acknowledgement. I think it is more likely that these teachers understand that pupil behaviour is a form of communication. Each participant understood the need for consistency in their manner when working with young people. They also acknowledged the difficult home situations their students may come from; these teachers felt that they may be the only reliable, nurturing adult offering guidance to these young people.

The two teachers currently teaching in England spoke at length about the systems in place which were stressful. This included inadequate teaching staff receiving positive references in order to quickly move them on from their current school. Consequently, their positive references meant they secured teaching jobs in other local schools. Both Saoirse and Luke also referred to the amount of work required to maintain the status of a successful teacher. Assessments and resulting action to ensure good grades seemed to be a considerable stress factor, as well as bringing culpable staff through capability measures. However, this final point related to management responsibilities rather being a class-based stressor.

It is clear from the stress which teachers experience that the education system needs to change. Ofsted seem to be responding and listening to teachers. The newest Ofsted framework (Ofsted, 2019) aims to alleviate some of the frustration

teachers feel regarding workload, in relation to administration and data collection. For instance, Ofsted (2019, pg. 17) states that “Teachers and leaders use assessment well, for example to help learners embed and use knowledge fluently or to check understanding and inform teaching. Leaders understand the limitations of assessment and do not use it in a way that creates unnecessary burdens for staff or learners.” These amendments are aimed at giving teachers more freedom to focus on teaching, which is something all three participants said that they wanted. In reality, it still remains to be seen how this will impact teachers.

4.8.3: Interactions with Others

Schools are complicated systems in which to work. Teachers interact with pupils, other practitioners and parents. As previously stated, working with students was recognised to be a positive, uplifting and privileged position for the participants. Interactions with parents were occasional challenging, although these were exceptional incidents. Something which could be detrimental to or positively influence socio-psychological wellbeing was interactions with colleagues. When these were supportive and collaborative, wellbeing seemed to be more positive. When there were difficulties in staff relationships, these appeared to have a severely negative impact on wellbeing. In the narratives shared, this was particularly the case when there was a negative experience resulting from an interaction with a more senior member of staff who had been dismissive or disrespectful. The importance of relationships was one of the main findings in a study by Harris (2002), which investigated effective leadership in schools which were in challenging situations. The research found that the most effective type of leadership involved working

collaboratively and empowering others to act. These senior leaders viewed the school as part of the community and fostered positive relationships with those studying and working inside, as well as other community members.

Negative staff interactions can lead to teachers feeling disillusioned about their teaching and how valued they feel as a staff member. It can also lead to a disparity between their ideal and actual 'selves' (Cooper and Olson, 1996; Reynolds, 1996) as teachers because of what may be inadvertently modelled to young people about relationships and how to interact with other people. Constant negative interactions with colleagues can result in a sense of poor wellbeing due to feeling worried, anxious and stressed on a long-term basis. Thus, the physical and emotional availability of resources can positively or negatively influence the environment in which teachers work. Having supportive and authentic relationships with colleagues can add to morale even when working conditions are not ideal.

4.8.4: What Protects Wellbeing?

Relationships with colleagues featured as a significant protective factor when teachers felt they could rely upon and talk to them. A supportive network of family and friends outside of work was also found to be a protective factor. Within this research, support from home and inside work was a prevalent feature in each narrative. The implications for the workplace are that the best people in the right positions can nurture others to develop as practitioners. These supportive networks, along with improved and more efficient school systems, were reported to increase

the enjoyment of teaching. This is because teachers felt that they would have more time to plan interesting lessons if their time was used more efficiently.

Chapter Five: Discussion

The research began by posing two questions. These were:

- 1) What are teachers' experiences of the daily demands of their role across their career?
- 2) What supports and undermines the wellbeing of teachers?

With regards to the first research question, the narratives illuminated the ups and downs of each system in which each participant was working. The narrative interview questions, adapted from McAdams (1993), meant each storyteller was able to share their experience of the daily demands of teaching. The analogy of a roller coaster highlighted these highs and lows. The narratives also illustrated these across the course of their career. There was an uncertainty and precariousness about teaching within the English education system on a daily basis and across time. A thread which ran across each narrative was the significance of the children and young people who were in the care of each participant. In this discussion, I will explore the implications of this finding by highlighting the places where there was overlap in the narratives which were shared.

In answer to the second research question, the narratives highlighted the importance of relationships. Children and young people were a central aspect in each story; they are the reason the participants in this research are teaching. It was important to each story teller to be able to holistically nurture their students because that is how the teachers, within this study, saw their role. Within each narrative, perceptions and values related to each participants' view of their role and identity as a teacher and these were closely linked to wellbeing. Relationships outside of the classroom also

impacted on wellbeing; colleagues, especially peers and mentors, as well as family. When negative experiences were shared within the narratives, relationships supported wellbeing by reassuring and reaffirming the storyteller. The narratives, within this research, indicate the systems and structures in the English education system have a tendency to undermine teacher wellbeing. Within my daily practice, as a trainee educational psychologist, I believe the environments in which children and young people exist have a significant impact on their whole being. In the same way, it is the systems which teachers are part of which can support or undermine their wellbeing. Therefore, there is a need to be attentive to the environment in which teachers work and teach. In this discussion I will explore in some depth what supports and undermines the wellbeing of teachers and the implications for educational policy and practice.

5.1: Setting the scene

Having looked at the three accounts shared, I am going to structure this discussion in answer to the research questions by grouping the individual voices together into the following overarching voices:

Una's Voice of...	Saoirse's Voice of...	Luke's Voice of...	Overarching Voice
Accomplishment	Optimism	Highs	Positive
Challenge	Struggle	Lows	Negative
Pastoral	Nurturer	Cultivation	Role of a Teacher

Protection	Relationships	Awareness	Protective Factors
Realisation	Recognition	Balance	Transformation

I have grouped the individual voices together because they seem to cohesively fit together within these overarching voices. The Positive voice sounded like the high points in each participant's career or connected to positive parts of their role. The Negative voice in each narrative seemed to relate to the challenges which they faced. These challenges were professional and were also sometimes associated with difficulties at home caused by the demands of the job. The Role of a Teacher voice resonated in each account as the participants shared their views on the purpose of their role. The Protective Factors voice ran throughout each story, as factors inside and outside of work which helped each individual to manage their wellbeing. The Transformation voice in each narrative signalled a change. This was personal to each participant and seemed to signify an internal change in their understanding and acceptance of where they are in their careers. Each participant identified with Transformation when they vocalised their awareness that they were moving forward in a way which they valued but which may not necessarily be appreciated by others. The voice of Transformation seemed to be connected to experience, contentment and acceptance.

I will draw out voices which were evident across each of the participant's interviews and highlight similarities. Initially, I will illustrate where the overarching voices were present in all three narratives. Then, I will highlight overarching voices which were present in more than one account. Next, I will summarise my main findings. Finally, I

will consider the implications which the research may have for educational policy and practice.

5.2: Harmony Across All Three Narratives

There were a number of similarities across each of the narratives. Una, Saoirse and Luke each had a background story which explained their connection to teaching. I wonder if these long-term links are part of the reason they have remained in teaching. This is because teaching seems to be an embedded part of their identity and therefore it is more difficult to give up, even at times when they might seriously consider this as an option. Even though being a teacher is an established part of their identity, two of the participants gave serious consideration to leaving the profession. Saoirse felt unskilled for alternative roles and Luke believed he would retrain, if he left teaching. Luke also acknowledged that if he left teaching in the future, he would transfer to something connected to education. The primary factor which kept each of them in teaching was their enjoyment of teaching. However, this is only one aspect of their role.

5.2.1: The Role of a Teacher

Each participant alluded to the role of the teacher as a multi-functional one. This ranged from including aspects of social work, with regards to safeguarding responsibilities and pastoral needs, to meeting basic medical needs when children in class are unwell, particularly in the Early Years. It also included a nurturing, encouraging, parental type role, due to the amount of time spent with their students.

Luke summarised this by using the term 'loco parentis' which indicates how many roles a teacher needs to juggle to meet the needs of students in their care.

The Role of a Teacher voice was present in all three narratives. As the narratives unfolded, it became apparent that each teacher was concerned about and wanted to develop young people in a holistic way, as opposed to merely moving students onto the next curriculum level. In Una and Saoirse's narratives, this holistic view of the student was identified early in the interview. Within Luke's narrative, this person-centred nature of his teacher identity evolved more slowly, because initially, he seemed competency and leadership focused. As Luke spoke, he revealed more about the different roles required of him at any one time. At the centre of the different roles he takes on as a teacher, is pedagogy and young people. The holistic way each participant understands pupils is informed by the environments they are being educated in, having knowledge about their home situations, and understanding students as people with their own views and priorities. Each participant illustrated that they meet young people where they currently are so they can challenge them gently and offer a different perspective to help move their learning forward. In my view, these are values intrinsically tied to the role of a teacher, because they help to develop a young person's sense of self. As secure as the participants hold the view that this is important, these are not the measures of what makes successful teaching and learning within the current English education system. Systems attempt to put individuals into boxes which are not uniquely sculpted to them. The participants critiqued current educational practice for lacking a person-centred approach in practice.

In the literature review, Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen (2010) touched on the number of roles a teacher undertakes and the difficulties this can create. However, in the narratives shared in this current research, maintaining multiple roles appeared to be a positive feature of a teacher's role. The caveat is that these roles were focused on the pastoral side of teaching, rather than additional roles seen to be separate from being a teacher, such as being a data administrator. This corresponds to the workplace factors highlighted by Aelterman, Engels, Van Petegem and Verhaeghe, (2007) which impact on wellbeing and stress. They stated that job description, conflict within the role and ambiguity about job role as some of the most frequently cited workplace factors which influence teacher wellbeing. Without additional assistance to complete non-teaching roles, which costs money, teachers are expected to complete these tasks outside of teaching hours. With all the other demands on them, these tasks produce unnecessary, additional pressure on teachers (The Secret Teacher, 2013).

5.2.2: Best Moments

Another commonality across the narratives related to the type of Best Moments each teacher shared. These related to how students are learning as whole beings rather than a focus on academic grades. Each participant presented themselves as holding the best interests of young people central to their beliefs as teachers through the narratives they shared. Young people are, and should be, at the heart of all decisions which are made on their behalf and which will impact them (Appendix Eleven, pg. 360, line 1118; DfE, 2015a). Una, Saoirse and Luke all spoke about their

pupils' achievements as important. However, they each also seemed to experience a deep satisfaction with the relationships and rapport they build with young people. The importance of relationships was highlighted in research by Jennings (2014) which studied psychosocial factors and impact on students. It is these relationships which may keep them in their jobs and keep them motivated.

5.2.3: Significant People

Significant people and relationships within school were areas which each teacher identified with as important to their wellbeing (Sayer, Beaven, Stringer and Hermena, 2013). These were largely positive influences. However, there were some cases in which negative experiences led to learning points about characteristics these teachers did not want to identify as, either as teachers or colleagues. Each teacher spoke about the significance of a mentor at the start of their career. Una and Luke also spoke about the impact of another staff member as they were developing their leadership skills outside of the classroom. These reflections indicate the importance of mentors and colleagues as influencing factors for developing the future workforce of teachers.

With teachers leaving the profession, the need to fill mentor roles exerts further pressure on remaining staff to fill positions when they may feel unable to dedicate the required and necessary time. Recruitment problems may also lead to less skilled people taking on these positions because of a need to fill them. In the narratives shared, the negative experiences have been formative, and the participants have been able to reflect on the attributes they want to incorporate into their role as

teachers. However, more newly qualified teachers may not necessarily have the time to reflect on what is being asked of them by middle and senior management. In certain circumstances, this may leave them vulnerable to burnout (Kyriacou, 1987) before they have developed the skills or experience to recognise how best to deal with these situations.

The lack of time and heavy work demands on a teacher may be compounded by their responsibilities at home. Consequently, this may lead professionals at the start of their career to leave the profession early. Each participant reflected on significant people outside of their work life. For Una, this was her daughter. Whilst she found it difficult to pinpoint the difference becoming a mother had had on her teaching, she reflected that it had subtly changed her as a practitioner. Saoirse spoke of the impact her parents had had on her belief in herself as a teacher when she was questioning her career choices. She also elaborated on how her husband helps and encourages her to recognise the need to put her health first, before her class and job. Saoirse's narrative demonstrated the continual internal dilemma she experiences when trying to put her health before the needs of her class. Luke's story revealed the impact his wife had on his career choices, with regards to safety concerns for him as they planned to have children. The birth of Luke's daughter and his family commitments indicate that he now has firmer boundaries regarding this than prior to being a parent. His narrative indicated an underlying, subtle dissatisfaction with being unable to give everything to work and the same amount of energy to his responsibilities at home.

Luke also spoke about the impact of significant people in his career. He particularly praised his mentor, who had educated Luke on the need to be able to say “No.”

Despite his awareness of being unable to do everything, there was still a sense that Luke experiences some discontent with this. Luke is clearly happy with his choice to put his family first. However, Luke’s caring attitude towards young people gives an impression that he wants to help them even further.

5.2.4: Acceptance

Finally, a sentiment that was present in all three narratives was the choice to focus on teaching, although in Luke’s this only came to the fore during the member check.

I wonder how much impact, if any, Luke’s involvement in this research had on him starting to think about leaving his senior leadership position to focus on teaching.

Although that might be giving too much credit to the narrative process, I think it is a point worth considering. This is because personal stories “are the means by which identities may be fashioned” (Rosenwald and Ochberg, 1992, pg. 1) and it was the first time Luke had shared his as a coherent narrative. Each participant had experienced either middle or senior leadership roles. Una, Saoirse and Luke were each in a position to decide to focus their efforts on classroom teaching. Each seemed to experience greater fulfilment as teachers at this time in their career due to some type of transformation.

Each narrative clearly held a voice of Transformation. For Una, it related directly to a Realisation that she has time to develop as a teacher and leader. In Saoirse’s account, it connected to a Recognition of needing to meet her own needs in order to be present and attuned to the needs of her class. Within Luke’s narrative, this

Transformation revealed itself as Balance. Having family responsibilities outside of work can create difficulties in terms of prioritising all that is important to him. In each narrative, children or partners led to a transformation for each participant, which appears to have had a positive impact on their wellbeing. Relationships outside of the workplace have created a shift in focus in each narrative. While working with young people remains a priority, parental and partner roles outside of work have changed the perspectives of each participant with regards to how they use their time. This choice needs to be made because the teaching experiences shared demonstrate that teachers could give endlessly and yet there would still be more to do.

I think that part of the voice of Transformation is connected to acceptance. Each participant seemed to be at a point in their career where they had reached acceptance. Perhaps this is connected to an internal recognition that they believe they are good at what they do, despite the tensions and uncertainties in their day to day experience of teaching. This connection between experience and competence is likely to make them skilled practitioners. I imagine that they are each skilled at taking on the required roles expected of them at any given time, due to their self-awareness. Their ability to reflect on how they manage young people, as well as knowing the impact that interactions around their pupils have on their long-term emotional outcomes (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010), are embedded skills which may have been refined over time.

As experienced practitioners, the participants seem to have reached a level of competence and awareness that they are currently in the right place for them. Una and Luke both spoke of feeling capable of taking on more senior roles again in the future. Saoirse indicated that her aspirations have always been to be the best teacher she could possibly be. For Una and Luke, perhaps the shift to focus solely on teaching again has occurred partly because of the commitment required to do a management role 'well'. This would, of course, relate to how they each interpret what it means to do a role 'well'. Perhaps more significantly, this shift has occurred because of how much they each enjoy teaching, a point which clearly came across in each of their narratives.

5.3: A Harmonious Duet

Beyond these overarching connections, Saoirse and Luke both had further similarities in the voices which echoed across both their narratives. Perhaps this relates to them both currently teaching in English state schools. Una has moved on to a school where her wellbeing is supported by the systems in place, in particular by her colleagues. Feeling a sense of belonging and autonomy in the workplace is significant to wellbeing (Sayer, Beaven, Stringer and Hermena, 2013; Roffey, 2013, 2012). There were very few tensions across her narrative and this may be because she is working in her ideal school, with a variety of resources on hand to support her in developing her teaching. By comparison, Saoirse and Luke were more united, in ways which will now be outlined.

5.3.1: Overcoming Turbulent Times

Overcoming adversity featured in the prevalent Negative voices within Saoirse's and Luke's narratives. They each indicated that these resulted from adults they work with and systems they work within. Despite these Negative voices, their narratives still promoted the positive attributes of being a teacher: the rewarding and privileged experience of working with children and young people (Appendix Eight, pg. 283, lines 984-985; Appendix Eleven, pg. 364, line 1221). This led them both to identify the title of their experiences as closely resonating with riding on a roller-coaster, due to the fast-paced momentum that each day, term and academic year can include for a teacher.

There was a real sense in Saoirse and Luke's narratives that they could each keep giving to school and their students endlessly. Even when they would have expended all their energy, skill and ability, they seem to believe that their pupils would still need more. This is perhaps a consequence of working in systems that involve people because Saoirse and Luke's own needs and those of their pupils change on a regular basis. This is not simply due to educational expectations, but also because of the micro, meso and exosystems in which students and practitioners exist (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Both Saoirse and Luke have found through experience that they can say 'no' and they are confident to question what is being asked of them and their students. Their difficulties in saying 'no' appear to relate to wanting the best for the young people in their care. Therefore, this is a continual, internal compromise they must make because they are aware that student needs are greater than their capacity to meet them all consistently.

The negative experiences described by Saoirse and Luke included: bullying tactics by colleagues, as well as physical and verbal threats and actions by pupils. During the interviews, neither participant was solely focused on the challenges within their work; they both had a Positive voice, as well as a Negative one. They were open about the challenging experiences, but they were also keen to highlight how delightful they found it at times to work with young people. This was apparent in their vocabulary, manner, tone and body language.

Something else which was similar between Saoirse and Luke's narratives was that they did not identify a worst moment in their teaching career. Instead, they each focused on a time span. This indicated that it was the constant pressure and build-up of events which finally wore down their resilience and ability to bounce back from a situation. It was at these times that Saoirse and Luke both needed to rely on their external resources to support them and give them perspective on the situation.

These external resources, combined with the participants' reflective nature, seem to be what ultimately has kept them in the teaching profession. Not all teachers would have access to similar external resources when they find themselves in these types of situations. Unlike Saoirse and Luke, they may not have access to external social support, resources and tools when they find themselves at the lowest point in their careers.

5.3.2: 'Spoon-feeding'

Another area which resonated between Saoirse's and Luke's narrative was 'spoon-feeding'. This directly related to guaranteeing that curriculum content was covered to

ensure students could successfully sit their formal exams. It is interesting to note that this occurred in both primary and secondary settings. Whilst this was missing from Una's narrative, this may be due to her taught subject being Drama and the fact that she no longer teaches within an English state school setting.

Saoirse spoke of the untenable pressure on Year Two pupils to prepare them to take SATS, and the resultant restricted curriculum. This lack of creativity develops as children move from the Early Years, which encourages investigation, to more formal Key Stage One environments which prepare them to take their first set of exams at the age of seven (Robinson and Aronica, 2015). However, new statutory baseline assessments are due to be introduced in Reception classes from September 2019 (OFSTED, 2017). The Analysis chapter included extracts from both Saoirse's and Luke's narratives about the unrealistic expectations of curriculum content to be covered in exam year groups. Their full transcriptions further detailed the expectations and impact these have on students and staff, which negatively influenced wellbeing.

Linked to narrow curriculums was an element of 'fakeness' which Saoirse and Luke both articulated when they spoke of preparing pupils to take and achieve results in exams. This was centred on the falseness of what was being achieved. It did not stem from wanting to hold pupils back, but rather it focused on what pupils were not being taught, due to ensuring they had what was required to pass the given assessments. Both teachers alluded to a feeling of inadequacy, which related to the absence of a broad and balanced curriculum, when preparing students for statutory

exams. In preparing pupils to pass a test, Saoirse and Luke, recognised what their pupils were missing out on. There was also a recognition that because a test had been passed did not necessarily mean the pupil had fully understood what they had been taught; the skill they were excelling at was passing the test. The negative impact of high-stakes testing has been found in previous research. Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas (2000) interviewed teachers who spoke about the negative effects of these types of exam on pupil learning. One teacher used the term “educational malpractice” (Barksdale-Ladd and Thomas, 2000, pg. 392) to describe the impact of high-stakes testing on knowledge and learning.

The concerns which Saoirse and Luke have with the current examination system relates to the skills they are teaching. Pupils are achieving if they can memorise and apply what they have learnt, rather than developing independent problem-solving skills. There is pressure within the education system to learn the set content and pass an exam on it within a given timeframe. Acquiring independent exploration and problem-solving skills takes a considerable amount of time to master. Carroll (1963) wrote about a model of learning based on a mastery learning approach. He argued that all students can learn if they are given a sufficient amount of time. An additional benefit of a mastery learning approach is the development of perseverance (Zimmerman and Dibenedetto, 2008). Current assessments do not allow teachers or students the luxury of developing these skills in line with their developmental stage, adding and removing supporting scaffolds as required. Consequently, this results in a rush to cover content and spoon-feed information to pass tests within the required time-frame. For Saoirse and Luke, the narrative interviews highlighted how they

grapple with understanding the purpose of what they are teaching students and how they are preparing them for the next phase of school or life after education.

5.3.3: Cutbacks

The final area where Saoirse and Luke overlapped was in mentioning funding. Una spoke about her current school being well-resourced. Saoirse and Luke spoke about the tensions which exist regarding funding.

Saoirse shared that a lack of teaching assistants means that she has to take on additional tasks outside of school hours. While these tasks are not direct teaching activities, they influence the environment created for children to learn in. Examples of these activities include cutting and sticking, as well as creating displays or learning walls, which children can independently refer to in relation to their current learning. Saoirse has found a reduction in teaching assistants means that classes have to share these valuable human resources. As teaching assistants are paid to work school hours, whatever does not get completed in this time is left to be finished by the teacher, on top of planning, marking, setting and reviewing targets.

Luke also referred to funding with regards to the money generated by sixth forms and how these finances are spread across whole secondary schools. Additionally, he spoke about the struggle to maintain smaller class sizes with a focus on the benefit for pupils rather than the teachers. This point also included the practical elements of what happens when additional pupils are added to a classroom which is already at

capacity. Again, in current widespread media narratives, the details behind the headlines about 'funding cuts' are not always explored.

5.4: Composing an Arrangement

The narratives shared in this research highlighted different voices existing in relation to the current demand of the job. The current context informs each teacher of what is needed of them in a particular moment; this connects to Goffman's theory on identity (1963, 1959). This changing landscape is something which these teachers indicate that they are able to adjust to through the narratives they have shared. This is likely to be a skill which has developed over time whilst being a teacher. Constantly changing landscapes presented in the narratives give a sense of teachers having to juggle different 'masks' or identities depending on how they need to present at any given moment (Goffman, 1959). Within the space of a day, a teacher may need to shift from a playful, engaging performer in front of their class, to a listening, attentive support for a colleague, to admonishing a pupil in a constructive and nurturing way, to formally giving feedback to parents. How quickly the changes between different aspects of being a teacher are required cannot be predicted. This is because the teacher is responding to the current context and information, then adapting accordingly.

While each narrative engaged with different voices, Una's and Saoirse's narratives seemed to be more at ease, even during the challenging parts, when compared to Luke's story. I found points of comparison between Saoirse's and Luke's stories which I did not recognise in Una's. I wondered if the difference originated from Una's

and Saoirse's narratives already having been 'thicker', or more familiar stories, because they had previously shared them (Geertz, 1973). If this is the case, perhaps Luke's narrative was less familiar to him because he may not have previously spoken it aloud as a whole, coherent story.

While the experience of sharing each narrative seemed to be held in positive regard by each participant, it seemed the most valuable to Luke, and he acknowledged that he rarely reflects in this depth about teaching. The final thing I felt may have made a difference to the narratives was the time of year I spoke to each teacher. Una and Saoirse were interviewed at the start of the academic year. Due to work commitments, Luke was unable to meet with me until the end of the autumn term. This is a term which teachers may identify as being the hardest, due to the number of weeks, the baseline data and assessments which need to be completed and the change in the season, which results in fewer hours of daylight.

The member checks were completed following the spring half term break. When I spoke to Luke at this later date, he sounded different. In the narrative interview, he was articulate in his speech, but the tensions within his narrative gave the impression that he might be inclined to leave if he had enough of classroom teaching. At the member check, this no longer seemed to be the case, he sounded positive about his planned move to classroom teaching without additional responsibilities.

5.5: What About Wellbeing?

At the outset, reference was made to socio-psychological wellbeing (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010; Griffith, Steptoe and Cropley, 1999). The teachers in this research identified the young people they are working with as the main element, within work, which allows their socio-psychological wellbeing to be met. Other sources which help socio-psychological wellbeing in school are connected to the professional relationships and sense of belonging which these teachers experience in their daily working life (Soini, Pyhalto and Pietarinen, 2010).

In Una's narrative, she described times when her relationships with students' parents can be difficult, although she acknowledged that these were exceptional cases. Saoirse detailed the impact that negative working relations can have on wellbeing and a teacher's autonomy. In comparison, in Saoirse's current school, she has developed bonds with the people she is working with, which are supportive of her socio-psychological wellbeing, despite the consequences of their most recent Ofsted visit. The support networks these three teachers have within and outside of work contribute to their current socio-psychological wellbeing in a positive way.

The narratives explored in this research indicated that the systems the teachers in England must work within do not support positive socio-psychological wellbeing as well as they could. This is predominantly the case when the teacher is based in exam year groups, due to the lack of autonomy teachers have over what they teach in these year groups. This lack of autonomy and the negative impact on wellbeing, as well as job satisfaction, was evident in Saoirse's account when she spoke about

preparing her class for Year Two SATS. This was also apparent in Luke's narrative, when he spoke about preparing students to take GCSEs and A-Levels. From the narratives shared, it would seem that systems outside of England are more successful in supporting the socio-psychological wellbeing of teachers. However, clearly this is based upon a very small sample of international schools, further research with more participants would be required before this could be ascertained for certain. Each of the narrators experience positive socio-psychological wellbeing to some degree. However, the narratives Saoirse and Luke shared give the impression that their wellbeing is more likely to fluctuate.

Saoirse expressed a more appreciative view of how schools are managed and the professional development which teachers receive in Canada; however, it is difficult to secure a full-time teaching role. Una indicated that she has the resources needed to focus on improving her teaching. She is able to access support, which allows her to focus on improving her teaching skills, and can experience growth as a learner herself in her current setting. Luke is appreciative of the individual nature of his school, as opposed to the conglomerate nature of an academy, which he has previously experienced. Even so, his socio-psychological wellbeing needs are not fully met because of the continual threat of being taken over by an academy if results drop. With shifting boundary grades only being confirmed during the summer holidays, this exerts continual pressure because of the precariousness of the situation.

The stories shared within this research indicate that teaching can be challenging and rewarding. There appears to be a continual battle between experiences which challenge and reward teachers. The stressors identified within the narratives seemed to be linked to aspects of the education system. The consistent change between stress and reward which participants experience in their work influence how they judge their wellbeing to be at any one time.

5.6: Interventions

The literature review focused on mindfulness and 'human givens' as new interventions which help teachers to manage their wellbeing in a positive manner. Mindfulness aims to bring attention to the present moment and to 'empty' the mind with an emphasis on relaxation and an acceptance of thoughts and feelings. 'Human givens', developed from humanistic psychology, focuses on the need to have a healthy mind as well as a healthy body, so that the whole person functions holistically. The teachers in the narrative interviews spoke a great deal about attempting to create a balance between their work and home life commitments. Therefore, approaches such as mindfulness and 'human givens' may be beneficial to help manage and create better, more positive wellbeing. However, none of the participants spoke about the use of formal interventions to help with their wellbeing. Instead, their focus was on other resources, such as relationships, which seemed to help improve their wellbeing.

I am unconvinced that additional interventions are what teachers need to improve their wellbeing. Approaches such as mindfulness may be useful in education, but

they are unlikely to 'solve' all the issues which have been raised in the narratives. However, if the systems were supportive and based on appreciative procedures rather than critical ones, it is likely that teachers would have less need for interventions.

Whilst interventions may be unable to 'solve' the highlighted issues within the current education system, I do think it would be beneficial for trainee teachers to be introduced to approaches such as mindfulness and 'human givens' during their training period. The skills advocated by these, including attention, awareness and empathy, could then be used for personal or work purposes and to disseminate to pupils, providing that the practitioner has had enough training and practice.

With regards to implications for practice where the wellbeing of teachers is concerned, there may be a place for interventions to maintain positive wellbeing. However, narratives in this research clarifies that, rather than introducing additional work in the form of interventions, less precarious working environments, which is linked to the roller-coaster metaphor used by two of the participants, would significantly support these teachers in having a better sense of wellbeing. For me, having interventions to improve teachers' wellbeing puts the onus on practitioners to adjust to stressful environments, rather than reducing the factors which cause stress.

As an educational psychologist, when working directly with a young person or collaboratively with their network, from a systemic perspective, the problem-solving in my practice results from attempting to offer a different perspective and seeking ways in which the systems around the young person can be adapted. Therefore, it is

logical to make the assertion that if the systems around teachers were more efficient, providing them with autonomy and allowing them to be more creative in their practice, that the impact on their wellbeing would be increasingly positive. The teacher who is currently working abroad spoke about the systems in place which support her wellbeing effectively. This included: having access to resources, a sense of feeling valued and having autonomy over her teaching.

5.7: The Headline News

Having read the literature and completed my own research, I will summarise my main findings and then make recommendations which would benefit teachers' wellbeing.

There were four main findings from this research. Firstly, teachers take pride in their role as educators of children and young people. Secondly, teaching as a career is both positive and challenging. Thirdly, the various pressures in the system regarding performance, target-setting and curriculum restriction have a negative impact on wellbeing. Fourthly, teachers want to experience professional discretion and continuing professional development. Feeling proud to be a teacher and enjoying aspects of the role are areas which are working well and which help practitioners to maintain positive wellbeing. However, this is precarious as evidenced in the 'roller-coaster' metaphor. The challenging parts of the role are areas which could be improved, which would have a positive impact on teacher wellbeing. Strategies for improving this in practice will be addressed in the next section.

5.8: Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

5.8.1: The Role of the Teacher

Teacher's positive sense of identity seems to be linked to their capacity to meet the holistic needs of children and young people in their care. They are happy with multiple roles in this respect. However, to do this they need time, energy and emotional capacity. They feel bad when they feel they are neglecting this aspect of their role. Therefore, relationships and pastoral care need to be more valued by the educational system.

5.8.2: Support at Challenging Times

Teachers would benefit from supportive networks in school through access to supervision, which would support them during challenging experiences. There are a variety of supervision models which may be useful to teachers (Stringer, Stow, Hibbert, Powell and Louw, 1992). Peer supervision would be helpful because it connects to the importance that supportive professional relationships had within the narratives shared in this research. This would require an open, trusting, communicative culture without judgement. It would also require practitioners to receive training so that they could alternate between taking the role of 'problem-holder' and 'facilitator'. A drawback to peer supervision may be arranging a time suitable for all parties. An alternative to peer supervision, which may have other positive benefits, would be supervision facilitated by an educational psychologist. Having an educational psychologist as a facilitator for supervision may allow an alternative perspective on the presenting situation which may not be possible when all parties are from within the school system.

5.8.3: Trust and Professional Discretion

The value of the role of a teacher could be increased by replacing statutory testing with teacher assessments. This would demonstrate trust in teachers knowing their students' strengths and needs. By giving teachers professional discretion in how they implement the curriculum, they would be able to personalise learning to the cohort they are teaching. Using teacher assessment instead of current statutory testing would help shift the focus of teachers and students away from a testing culture, where the emphasis is on passing exams, to a knowledge culture. A knowledge culture would be one where students focus on developing understanding and independence. This is something which narrow curriculums in a testing culture do not have the time to encourage. Arguably, the trusting use of teacher assessments would help to reduce pressure on students and teachers, particularly within exam year groups. Consequently, this would result in improved wellbeing for both practitioners and students.

5.8.4: Continuing Professional Development

Continuing professional development should begin with initial teacher training and be maintained for the duration of teachers' careers. Initially, teachers need thorough training for the role which they are undertaking. Once qualified, teachers should be offered ongoing opportunities, so they can continue to learn and grow as educators. Having continuing professional development is helpful for their professional identities and competence, both of which impact on their wellbeing. Investing in teachers has benefits for the practitioner personally and the education system in which they

practice. Teachers should experience ongoing learning and development opportunities, so they can feel valued as practitioners. Providing continuing professional development would heed the recommendations to provide support at challenging times and to trust in the professional discretion of teachers.

5.9: Aims

The aims of this research were to highlight how teachers view their role, what empowers and stresses them, and what systems help and hinder their wellbeing. This thesis is important because evidence within the literature indicates that if teachers have healthy wellbeing, this will have positive consequences on their students. Central to each teacher in this research was the pupil-centricness of their role. They see pupils as key to their teaching and role. When students were mentioned as a stressor, this was in an empathic manner as the teachers expected to find pupils challenging at times. When the teachers spoke of other adults and systems in place regarding assessment, predicted grades and administrative tasks, which they did not see as connected to their role, these were the issues which were at the pinnacle of stressful or worst moments during their career.

5.10: Reflections on How I Conducted the Narrative Interviews

Simply following the steps to the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 1982) did not ensure the interviews I conducted would yield rich data or good research. By applying a person-centred approach (Rogers, 1980) my focus in each interview was on establishing a rapport based on compassion, empathy and active listening. I offered a non-judgmental stance by using curiosity as an approach to clarify, where necessary,

points to help with my interpretations of their story. It was in that attentive space that each participant was encouraged to allow their story to emerge. It is also the approach which I utilise within my daily practice as a trainee educational psychologist when speaking with young people, care-givers and staff in a bid to triangulate viewpoints.

Created within each interview was relationship characterised by a climate in which the participant recognised the importance of the story which they had to share with me. On reflection, these elements were conveyed to each participant mainly through non-verbal communication. My bodily position, and facial expressions, communicated a genuine willingness to relate to the participant and conveyed a range of emotions. Experience has taught me that there is a candidness in these types of interactions which is recognised by the person I am interacting with in that moment. My way of being present with each participant communicated to them an attitude of wanting to be authentically engaged with them in a relational manner. Congruence, acceptance and empathetic understanding (Rogers, 1980) provided an environment which allowed each participant to share stories which consequently were powerful and rich in detail.

Within the research, I adhered to the ethical principles of protecting the dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of each participant within the British Psychological Society Code of Ethics and Conduct (BPS, 2018). In addition, because I was conducting Narrative Research I also focused on several key issues related to ethical considerations. Namely: ownership, intellectual property rights and

interpretation, confidentiality, informed consent, honesty, as well as how to avoid deception, harm and exploitation of participants (Plummer 2001). In my preparation for the research I was focussed on following ethical guidelines, and this included ensuring that I gained and retained informed consent from each participant.

Within the narrative interviews, I used a semi-structured approach with open-ended questions. This meant each participant had freedom to tell their story in the way they preferred. I listened as each participant told their story and asked other open-ended questions, based on what they said, when there was a natural pause after they had answered my primary question. I believe this allowed each participant to tell their story and to direct it in the way they wanted because they had time, as well as space, to talk. By applying the British Psychological Society's ethical principles (BPS, 2018 and 2014), and addressing Plummer's (2001) guidance with specific regard to Narrative Research, I took reasonable steps to prevent harm and minimise distress through, securing informed consent, provision of a sensitive interview context, delegating decisions to participants; for instance, the venue of the interview was chosen by participants. Following analysis of the interviews, I offered each participant a member check. This gave them the opportunity to ensure I had understood the meanings which they had intended to communicate.

5.11: Limitations

Having used a narrative approach and analysis, a limitation of this type of study is the number of participants it is possible to work with. Due to the large amount of data generated, only three participants were interviewed. Their narratives are specific to

the social discourses prevalent with teaching. Their narratives are open to interpretation and in order to demonstrate how I developed my interpretations, I maintained a research diary and added detailed comments in the right-hand column of each transcript. The comments included in the transcriptions were included to create a thought trail and explanation for the conclusions which I reached, in order to assist readers in understanding my judgements. Finally, to make the research more robust, I completed a member check with each participant to share my findings. Reassuringly, each participant felt that I had summarised the essence of how they experienced teaching.

The small number of participants could be viewed as a limitation, because the shared narratives are specific to each teacher and therefore are not generalisable. However, as stated at the outset, a wider meaning may be taken from each teacher's story. Whilst the focus is on the individual, the narrative shared may "contribute to knowledge in more general ways" (Marecek, 2007, pg. 63). This would be particularly true, if the narratives shared resonate with other teaching professionals.

A potential limitation is the potential bias of knowing the participants in this study. As I was transparent about my knowledge of the participants, I feel that knowing them, but not working with them in a professional capacity, helped each participant to feel safe and comfortable to give a frank account of their experiences as a teacher.

A final limitation which may be identified relates to the assumptions I outlined at the start of the research. I listed my personal assumptions, including a belief that

teachers' careers and their ability to teach are influenced by their wellbeing. I also acknowledged that I felt that, in some education systems, teachers' wellbeing is protected. Finally, I was conscious of my belief that at a national level in England, there are government documents which lead to conflicted ideas about teacher wellbeing. The findings from my research would, to a degree, appear to validate these beliefs. Thus, a limitation could be identified that I found evidence to support my assumptions because I was looking for evidence to reinforce my viewpoint, and this may have clouded my judgements and interpretations. To this assertion, I would respond that I aimed to be fully authentic in the recordings kept in my research diary, so that I would be aware of how my thoughts were developing, as well as to allow readers to analyse my thought processes. Thus, I believe that the conclusions I have drawn are trustworthy (Guba, 1981) and reliable. In addition, I would add that each participant spoke about both positive and negative experiences during their teaching careers. The narratives and analysis highlight both the positive and negative experiences.

5.12: Concluding Thoughts

In this study, I explored the experiences which teachers encounter on a daily basis during their career. In addition, I also explored what supports and undermines the wellbeing of teachers. The findings revealed that teachers are proud of being educators because they find their role both valuable and challenging. I made recommendations which were based on the findings from within the research.

I identified limitations within the study. However, choosing a narrative methodology, the use of an 'episodic' approach (adapted from McAdams, 1993) and the Listening Guide (Gilligan, 1982), appears to have been a sound decision because each element has highlighted the individual story, as well as hearing the collective narratives. Further research, which I would be interested in carrying out, would be to repeat this study with teachers from one school and to use it as an appreciative inquiry, to see what is working well within their particular setting and what could be further improved.

I hope that, by exploring the daily experiences of teachers, as well as what supports and undermines their wellbeing, this research will help to inform educational policy and practice at a systemic level. My intention, following my submission and viva, is to send this research to the Department for Education in the hope that they might consider adopting the recommendations identified in this research for the benefit of teacher wellbeing.

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Appendix One

Information Sheet

My name is Ann-Marie Faughey and I am on a three-year Doctorate in Educational and Child Psychology (DEdCPsy) at the University of Sheffield. Part of my course and resulting qualification requires me to complete a thesis which will be supervised by Penny Fogg. If you require further information about my thesis after reading this information sheet, please contact me via email: Afaughey1@sheffield.ac.uk or phone: 07958480638, or you can contact my supervisor, Penny on her email address: P.Fogg@sheffield.ac.uk.

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

If you decide you would like to be involved in the research you will receive a consent form prior to becoming a participant with further details about the project. This is so you can make a fully informed decision about whether you would like to take part in the research or not. If after signing the consent form, or at any point during the research up until the date on which I submit my draft thesis (estimated to be March 2019), you change your mind about being a participant you can withdraw without needing to give a reason and without there being any negative consequences. If you wish to withdraw from the research, please contact myself, or my supervisor Penny on the phone number or email addresses listed in the above paragraph.

I'm planning to conduct a study which will aim to explore class teachers' experience of teaching and how they manage their wellbeing and/or struggle with the daily demands of their role. This is an area of personal interest to me due to my previous experience of being a primary school teacher. There are three criteria which participants must meet if they are to be involved in the study. Participants must be:

- ✓ A full-time class teacher
- ✓ Have at least five years teaching experience
- ✓ Have taught in at least two different schools, at least one of these must have been a UK state school

My main interest in class teachers' wellbeing stems from my understanding that positive wellbeing needs to be modelled. Therefore, the systems around class teachers need to support them in managing their own wellbeing prior to them being capable of nurturing the wellbeing of others.

I want to highlight the daily ups and downs that is life as a teacher; how teachers story their careers, as well as what supports and undermines their wellbeing. I'm aiming to do this through narrative interviews so as to highlight the current culture in which teachers see themselves and to give a voice to each individual's story. Narrative interviews aim to give a voice to participants because it allows them to be storyteller rather than a respondent as within the framework of a traditional question and answer interview.

Generally, teachers tend to get negative press because of the 'thin' narratives which are portrayed about them when they tend to make it into the media. These 'thin' narratives do not adequately reflect the long hours, dedication and resourcefulness which so many teachers I know willingly commit to because they are in teaching for the children and young people they work with. I want to give a space for teachers to be able to share the things which give them delight in their work as well as highlight the trickier aspects of the job which are the 'unseen' parts of the role. The objective is to provide richer, more informative narratives about teachers. I hope that by exploring teachers' experiences of what assists them in maintaining their wellbeing that this research will build on previous studies to highlight what helps teachers remain committed to this stressful career. In addition, I hope that it will remind participants, and those that read it, about the key roles teachers are playing in difficult circumstances.

In order to do this, the types of questions I will be asking are:

- What made you want to become a teacher?
- What is your best moment since being a teacher?
- What is your worse moment since being a teacher?
- Have there been any turning points in your career?
- Have there been any significant people influencing your career?
- Have there been any curriculum changes which have been implemented during your teaching career? How did these affect you?
- How did changing schools impact you?
- How does being a teacher make you feel?
- What would the title of this/your story be?

If you would be interested in being a participant, please contact me using my details at the bottom of the page by 21st July 2018:

Possible Benefits of Taking Part in this Research:

The narrative interviews will allow participants a platform to share their story about being a teacher, what supports and undermines their wellbeing. I hope that this research will offer an alternative and more rounded vision of teachers to counter the negative views portrayed in the media.

Possible benefits of being involved in this research may be therapeutic in nature. I use this term tentatively as the aim of the research is not to be therapeutic. However, by being given a space to vocalise thoughts, feelings and opinions, participants may find that after the interviews they continue to reflect on our discussion. Participating in the research may make the teachers re-consider their current thoughts and feelings and may impact on their beliefs as they lift the lid on views which they are unlikely to have much time to consider in everyday life. Therefore, the research may have the additional benefit of some therapeutic type consequences as teachers recognise the key roles they are playing in difficult circumstances and recognise more clearly the reasons that are currently keeping them in their teaching career.

Possible Risks of Taking Part in this Research:

The topic of wellbeing and how class teachers story their career is a potentially sensitive topic. Reflecting on this potentially emotive topic may have various consequences and outcomes for participants.

Confidentiality:

All the information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential and will only be accessible to members of the research team. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications unless you have given your explicit consent for this.

Legal Basis for Processing my Personal Data:

According to data protection legislation, we are required to inform you that the legal basis we are applying in order to process your personal data is that 'processing is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest' (Article 6(1)(e)). Further information can be found in the University's Privacy Notice <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>

What Will Happen to the Data Collected and the Results of the Research Project?

Due to the nature of this research it is very likely that other researchers may find the data collected to be useful in answering future research questions. We will ask for your explicit consent for your data to be shared in this way.

The Data Controller:

The University of Sheffield will act as the Data Controller for this study. This means that the University is responsible for looking after your information and using it properly.

Who has Ethically Reviewed the Project?

this project has been ethically approved via the University of Sheffield's Ethics Review Procedure, as administered by the education department

Complaints

If you wish to raise a complaint about the research project, please contact Penny Fogg on P.Fogg@sheffield.ac.uk

If you feel your complaint has not been handled to your satisfaction, please contact Dr Martin Hughes, co-director of the DEdCPsy course on m.j.hughes@sheffield.ac.uk who will then escalate the complaint through the appropriate channels. If the complaint relates to how your personal data has been handled, information about how to raise a complaint can be found in the University's Privacy Notice: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/govern/data-protection/privacy/general>.

Will I be Recorded and How Will the Recorded Media be Used?

The audio and/or visual recordings of your activities made during this research will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings.

Please ask myself or Penny if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information about anything related to the project.

Thank you for taking the time to consider being involved in this research project.

Appendix Two Consent Form

Title of Research Project: The Roller Coaster Career that is Teaching

Name of Researcher: Ann-Marie Faughey Afaughey1@sheffield.ac.uk

Name of Supervisor: Penny Fogg P.Fogg@sheffield.ac.uk

Participant Identification Number for this project: **Please initial box**

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 4th July 2018 explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. (Please contact Ann-Marie on 07958480683 or email above)
3. I give permission to audio record all interviews
4. I give permission for photographs to be taken of any visual work created during all interviews
5. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to the audio recordings of all interviews
6. I give permission for *my name/a pseudonym* [delete as appropriate] to be used in all printed reports connected with the research
7. I understand that audio recordings and any photographs taken will be stored on the researcher's personal laptop and a USB (both of which will be locked inside her home when not in use), as a back-up in case one copy is damaged before the end of the research. In addition, I understand that the researcher will permanently delete all data (audio and visual) from the laptop and USB once her thesis has been completed
8. I agree to take part in the above research project

Name of Participant
(or legal representative)

Date

Signature

Lead Researcher

Date

Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Copies: Participant and research file

Appendix Three

Una's 'I Poem'

Background

I qualified to teach

I was 21

I did my PGCE year

I did three years of teaching in a comprehensive

I moved to Turkey

I taught there for two years

I taught 11 to 18-year-olds

I moved to Cairo

I did 11 to 18-year-olds

I teach 11 to 16-year-olds again

I teach drama

I also have other responsibilities

Why Teaching?

I always always thought

I'd be a teacher

I was in any role-play

I got to thinking

I was going to train (to be a primary teacher)

I thought

I would want to do

I was really enjoying (doing my drama)

I didn't want to give that up

I had some advice

I got a degree

If I decided

I went (and did my three-year BA honours)

I did (my teaching qualification)

I, I was pretty young

I'm pleased

I did it

I did

I think

I know

I think that at 18

I would have been a bit too young

I think

Had I gone into it at that point

I would be

Best Moments

I think

I think

I think

I count

I teach

I get some satisfaction

I care for them individually

I have helped

impact I have had on their life

I think it's those kinds of things

I had a child

I have taught him

I am teaching him

I have always

I would not

I have ever had in my life

I had told

I did

I inspired

I will be

I hope he does

Worst Moments

I notice

I have experienced

I left

I was working

since I have

I think

I would say

I worked

I guess

I don't think

I would say

I think

I think that this makes a difference

Turning Points...

I would say

I was working in

I was going

I just found

I was getting through

I was getting through

I was delivering the curriculum

I was engaging with the children

I felt

I think

when I first moved

I... Was a little bit stunned

when I left

when I was leaving

when I left

I really felt

I had made a difference

I went

I thought

I don't think

I knew

but I didn't know

I think

when I was in the UK

I was perhaps teacher/social worker

Whereas, when I went

I was just teacher

I think

I would say that that was a big turning point for me

I would say...

I had a dream

I went

I went

I went

I went

I did

I would

I went

I was so

maybe I should go

I had a friend

I thought

I will go

I'll apply for that

I can go

I saw

I thought

I would

I went along

I thought why not have an adventure

I was head of drama

as I said

I was

I was

Felt I was

I think

I have always been very pastorally minded

I applied

I had some experience

I really felt

I was

I felt

I did not make a difference

When I first

But I felt

I was

I was

I felt like

I was making a difference again

when I left there

I absolutely love it

I think

I came

I could just focus in on my teaching

I think

I became a parent year and a half ago

Before I became a parent

I never really thought

I think that it really has

I couldn't tell you

what I'm doing differently

but I know it's changed a lot of things

I think

I think

I worry a lot more now

I've always dealt with that

I've always sort of compartmentalised

Now I look

When I was

On the flipside I see all the things

I talk to them

I think that may be

Significant People

I had

I became

I was

I think

I got

I have remained true to

I am not going to

I am somebody

I'm not when I'm teaching

When I got

I started

I was

I work

when I started

I think that is a really important message for children to see

I think that is important

I think

I actually think that that has a really negative impact

Curriculum Changes

I've had

I have never

I have chosen

I have changed

I have taught

I have taught

I have taught

I have had changes

I say

I think

I was

I am

I went

Changing Schools

I think

I went

I went there by myself

I lived

I lived

I got

I socialised

I would say

I did

I would say

I think

since I have

I have moved

I have moved

if you know I mean

I choose how

I choose to

I say

I guess

I would not

I don't necessarily

I don't necessarily

But I think

I was

I had

I say

When I moved

As a teacher I feel...

I am always proud to be a teacher

I love my job

I love

I get to work with individuals

I think that

I think that it is hard being a teacher as well

I think

I think proud

I do feel

I like the impact

I have on a day-to-day basis

I enjoy the work

I do

Have I been

I would say

I would say

I love my job

I don't know many other people who do

I always

I really really love my job

I think that

I think that

I actually do

I think

A Title...

I think

I think it would be growth mindset actually

I have been

I should have probably said this earlier

As I said

I went into teaching

I have always been very ambitious

then I have got

I am still

I have been like teach me teach me teach me

I want to learn

I realise that actually

I am okay

I am learning lots of different stuff

Now I have

I was thinking

I need to

I thought

Then I thought

I am not that interested in

I am just happy to do what I am doing

what I am learning

35 years before I retire

Before I retire!

I think

I genuinely don't think there is another career for me

I think

I want

I can slow down

I can

I don't

I can wait

I am feeling fulfilled

When I say that growth mindset

I am happy

Appendix Four

This is a sample of quotations that demonstrates each of the identified voices in Una's narrative. Further examples are available in Una's full transcript (Appendix Five, pg.184-213) and each voice is colour coded. Accomplishment is pink, Challenge is green, Pastoral is teal, Protection is blue, Realisation is grey.

Voice of...	Examples
Accomplishment	<p><i>"I think (.) very little of what I think, what I count as success, is actually what I teach. Which is kind of a little bit weird. So kids achievement in drama is actually (.) like, obviously I get some satisfaction out of that. But actually it is more the bigger lessons in life that they walk away with, that mean a lot more to me. Yeah and just when they talk about, reflected on how much I care for them individually and how I have helped them become more confident and the actual impact I have had on their life. That actually has more of an impact on me than going from a B to an A in drama"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 186, lines 41-50).</p> <p><i>"He told my parents that I did and that I inspired from him and it was just so cute. It was a really, lovely moment for me"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 187, lines 62-64).</p> <p><i>"A lot of the admin stuff was taken off of me and I could just focus in on my teaching"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 196, lines 204-205).</p>

	<p><i>“There’s a big push on mindfulness in our school, coping with stress and talking about relationships and all those sorts of things” (Appendix Five, pg. 197, lines 221-223).</i></p> <p><i>“I’m always proud to be a teacher. And I love my job.”</i></p> <p>(Appendix Five, pg. 208, line 418).</p>
<p>Challenge</p>	<p><i>“The worst moments are always to do with parents”</i></p> <p>(Appendix Five, pg. 188, line 79).</p> <p><i>“But there is always a small minority of those parents who are quite nasty and they stick with you” (Appendix Five, pg. 188, lines 84-86).</i></p> <p><i>“So if ever you tried to sort of help that child out, you would be accused of, like, interfering and “stupid school, does not need anyway, does not need this that or the other” (Appendix Five, pg. 189, lines 92-95).</i></p> <p><i>“On the flipside since I have come international you get parents who think they are personally paying your wages and so therefore you are their slave and that you are indebted to them lines” (Appendix Five, pg. 189, lines 95-98).</i></p> <p><i>“Obviously not all of them but that they do need that, sort of social worker type aspect as well lines” (Appendix Five, pg. 193, lines 161-163).</i></p> <p><i>“And I actually think that that has a really negative impact on children and on children’s learning and that actually (2) children do learn at different points lines” (Appendix Five, pg. 200, lines 278-280).</i></p>

<p>Pastoral</p>	<p><i>“And I think, that, when I was in the UK, that I was perhaps teacher slash social worker. Whereas, when I went to Turkey I was just teacher. And that made me need to improve my teaching practice and adapt it and change it.” (Appendix Five, pg. 193, lines 154-157).</i></p> <p><i>“I was a bit like a social worker (.) and I think I have always been very pastorally minded” (Appendix Five, pg. 195, lines 188-190).</i></p> <p><i>“It’s about showing the kids, that it’s okay being in that place of not knowing and it’s okay to try something out and it’s okay to fail. And I think that is a really important message for children to see. Often (2) we tell children all the time that is okay to fail and I think that’s a really important message for children to see and that often we tell children “It’s okay to fail” but we don’t actually often show that to children, that we fail too.” (Appendix Five, pg. 199, lines 262-269).</i></p>
<p>Protection</p>	<p><i>“Ethos of the school that has that impact because the school is, it is oversubscribed and parents have a strict code, that they have to adhere to as well. And if they, like obviously if they are unhappy with things, of course they’re listened to and there’s compromise and stuff like that, but just a very different type” (Appendix Five, pg. 190, lines 113-118).</i></p> <p><i>“These are the reasons why this is happening and perhaps if you don’t agree with the policies of the school, perhaps this</i></p>

	<p><i>isn't the right place for you"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 191, lines 122-124).</p> <p><i>"I think that this makes a difference"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 191, lines 124-125).</p>
<p>Realisation</p>	<p><i>"Before I became a parent I never really thought that that would change my teaching practice but I think that it really has"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 196, lines 208-210).</p> <p><i>"Like maybe (.) the subtle things about me and I think that, I think that I worry a lot more now"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 196, lines 212-213).</p> <p><i>"Then very recently I realised that actually I'm okay with not progressing in my career at the moment because I'm learning lots of different stuff, and then a slight different focus on now that I've got family of my own to think about, and that's okay"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 211, lines 466-470).</p> <p><i>"And if I've got another 35 years to work in this career, then I can slow down my progression"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 212, lines 485-487).</p> <p><i>"I am happy way at the moment and the knowledge that that growth might come a later stage for me"</i> (Appendix Five, pg. 213, lines 492-494).</p>

Appendix Five

Comments on
transcription

1 Researcher (R): Can you tell me a little bit about your teaching
2 career so far? Like where you've taught, what age group you
3 teach, a little bit of background

4 Una (U): Okay, so I qualified to teach when I was 21 and I did
5 my PGCE year in the UK and I did three years of teaching in a
6 comprehensive in the UK and that was for 11 to 16-year-olds.

7 Then, I moved (.) to Turkey, and I taught there for two years
8 and I taught 11 to 18-year-olds. Then I moved to Cairo and
9 taught there for four years and I did 11 to 18-year-olds and now
10 this is the start of my fifth year in Singapore and I teach 11 to
11 16-year-olds again, I teach drama and I also have other
12 responsibilities, like mentor and PSE programme

13 R: So a real variety of experience. What actually made you
14 want to become a teacher in the beginning?

15 U: So, I'd always always thought that I'd be a teacher right from
16 a young age whenever I was doing any role-play or anything
17 like that it was always about teaching. And then when I got to

Taught in various places and different systems. Personally, I only taught in one school but took on different roles and was enmeshed in the different systems used from Nursery to Year Six

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18 thinking about University I was going to train to be a primary
19 teacher, that is what I thought I would want to do, and then I
20 was really enjoying doing my drama outside of school and I
21 really didn't want to give that up and I had some advice from
22 the careers adviser that rather than going straight into getting a
23 qualification that would just enable me to only do teaching, that
24 if I got a degree and then did a PGCE afterwards it would give
25 me (2) other options if I decided at any point that teaching was
26 not right for me. And so I went and did my three year BA
27 honours and then I did my teaching qualification straight after
28 that and I was pretty young to go into teaching but (.) it was
29 definitely the right decision for me. But I am pleased that I did it
30 the way that I did, I think (2) obviously I know a lot of people
31 who did go straight into doing their teaching qualification but
32 actually in retrospect I think that at 18 I probably would have
33 been a little bit too young. And I think that had I gone into it at
34 that point in time then I would be a primary teacher rather than

Similar reasoning to me. However, my initial reasons for going into teaching differed. I was unsure about what I wanted to do. When the opportunity to train and receive a bursary came along, I took it. With the result that I fell in love with teaching

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35 a secondary drama teacher and secondary drama definitely
36 suits me better

37 R: That's fabulous. What has been your best moment since
38 you've become a teacher?

39 U: So, I think it is just sort of focusing in on the kids
40 achievements and some of the really nice things the kids have
41 said to me or done for me. I think (.) very little of what I think,
42 what I count as success, is actually what I teach. Which is kind
43 of a little bit weird. So kids achievement in drama is actually (.)
44 like, obviously I get some satisfaction out of that. But actually it
45 is more the bigger lessons in life that they walk away with, that
46 mean a lot more to me. Yeah and just when they talk about,
47 reflected on how much I care for them individually and how I
48 have helped them become more confident and the actual
49 impact I have had on their life. That actually has more of an
50 impact on me than going from a B to an A in drama I think it is
51 those kinds of things. Recently, I had a child (.) who has been

Lines 41-50: I have a real affinity to what she's saying with regards to how I felt about teaching and my role. For me, it also related to the importance of thinking about young people holistically and not just as data and numbers

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52 an absolute superstar, he is really lovely, and I have taught
53 him, I am teaching him now for the fourth year and (2) I have
54 always sent home letters to his parents and staff, like emails to
55 his parents and stuff, when he has done very well. And at the
56 end of last year, he thought I would not be teaching him this
57 year and he wrote me this, the most gorgeous email that I have
58 ever had in my life. And in it he had written, he said to me "Oh,
59 you always write my parents so I have written to your parents,
60 can you forward it on please?" And he had written this email to
61 my mum and my dad, and like some of the things that I had
62 told his parents that he did, he told my parents that I did and
63 that I inspired from him and it was just so cute. It was a really,
64 lovely moment for me. So,...

So thoughtful of him!

65 R: That sounds really really thoughtful of him

66 U: Yeah, he is a smashing kid. He is the kind of, like if Niamh
67 ends up being like him I will be a happy mummy. He is
68 gorgeous. And he's going to rule the world.

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- 69 R: What was that? Rule...?
- 70 U: Rule the world. And I hope he does. Because it would be a
- 71 lovely place if he did ((laughing))
- 72 R: Ah, I think that is really indicative of the kind of impact
- 73 you've had on him, and how great the world would be, if he
- 74 does rule it, with all the backing of you behind him ((both
- 75 nodding))
- 76 U: ((laughing)) Thank you
- 77 R: What about, at the other end of the scale, what is the worst
- 78 moments since been a teacher?
- 79 U: (.) so the worst moments are always to do with parents
- 80 actually. (.) and it's funny (.) Because I notice a difference
- 81 between the parents in the UK to the parents that I have
- 82 experienced since I left the UK (4) and it is always, like,
- 83 obviously you get a wonderful set of parents and the vast
- 84 majority of parents are wonderful but there is always a small
- 85 minority of those parents who are quite nasty and they stick

Personal impact
of negative
relationships

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86 with you. Like, in the UK, I was working in quite a, like a school
87 that had a lot of (.) deprived children like socio economically it
88 was very (.) like it was a struggling area, and a lot of the
89 parents of the children that we had were from the Traveller
90 community and had not attended secondary school
91 themselves, and their (.) understanding of what education was,
92 and the importance of it was quite different, and so if ever you
93 tried to sort of help that child out, you would be accused of,
94 like, interfering and "stupid school, does not need anyway,
95 does not need this that or the other" and then on the flipside
96 since I have come international you get parents who think they
97 are personally paying your wages and so therefore you are
98 their slave and that you are indebted to them and that whatever
99 they want for their child, you need to provide. So, I think that,
100 without a shadow of a doubt, it is parents. And it is a small
101 minority but it's a significant minority, I would say.

Line 101 regarding parents: "It's a significant majority." Sadly, this resonates with me because I had a few incidents with parents which left a lasting, negative impression on me despite the support of my Deputy and Head teacher. For me, I think these left a mark emotionally because they related to how I viewed my role as a teacher. And without a supportive senior leadership team it may have left me questioning my ability to do my job

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102 R: And is it worth saying that the school that you are currently
103 in (.) while it is a fee paying school, it is a not-for-profit
104 organisation?

105 U: Yes. Yes. Yeah so actually (.) officially only one of the
106 schools I worked in, the Turkish school, was a, like, for profit.
107 But actually when it comes to (.) parents they don't necessarily
108 know whether it is a, I guess they do know whether it's a fee
109 paying, or rather whether it's a profit-making school or not. But
110 I don't think that that necessarily impacts on it, like the parents
111 attitudes towards you. I would say (.) at my current school, the
112 parents are very positive and there is very, very little
113 interference from the parents but I think that's the **ethos of the**
114 **school that has that impact because the school is, it is**
115 **oversubscribed and parents have a strict code, that they have**
116 **to adhere to as well. And if they, like obviously if they are**
117 **unhappy with things, of course they're listened to and there's**
118 **compromise and stuff like that, but just a very different type** of

Lines 105-108: It's my understanding that this is similar to some academies – corporate/business approach to running a school

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119 (.) like in Cairo you had to change something just to make them
120 happy even if that was not necessarily the right thing for the
121 child or the school or for anything. Whereas here, the parents
122 are told okay, these are the reasons why this is happening and
123 perhaps if you don't agree with the policies of the school,
124 perhaps this isn't the right place for you. And I think that this
125 makes a difference. Mmm.

Impact systems can have when trying to please a stakeholder (i.e. parents or OFSTED) – not always necessarily the best for the child/young person who should be the one at the heart of all decision-making

Firm approach as a school

126 R: Okay. Have there been any turning points in your career?

127 U: Yes.

128 R: I'm imagining that there might be lots because you've had,
129 you have changed from lots of different places

130 U: Yeah. So, I would say my first sort of turning point was

131 leaving the UK (.) and going to my first international school (.)

132 you know, having been educated in a state school, in the UK,

133 not too dissimilar to the school I was working in (.) going to, the

134 school in Turkey was a massive culture shock. I was going

135 from having 30 children in my class to having eight children in

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136 my class and the children were there and they wanted to learn
137 and they were thirsty for knowledge and I just found that I was
138 getting through something that would have taken six weeks to
139 teach, I was getting through and one lesson ((laugh)). So, that
140 was a real change in sort of (3) the way I was delivering the
141 curriculum, and the way in which I was engaging with the
142 children and I felt (.) I think when I first moved to Turkey I (.)
143 was a little bit stunned (.) having been (.) a popular teacher like
144 in the UK, like caring about children and being nice to them
145 and supportive and stuff like that. When I left the UK, like,
146 children were very, very upset to see me going and they were
147 worried and they were saying, "They're going to get somebody
148 that does not do this, they're going to get somebody that
149 doesn't do that." Like, children were crying when I was leaving,
150 when I left, and stuff like that, and I really felt I had made a
151 difference there. Then when I went to my Turkish school, I
152 thought, I do not think these children need me. They like me.

Speed of teaching related
to class sizes

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153 And I knew that they liked me but I did not know that they
154 necessarily needed me. And I think, that, when I was in the UK,
155 that I was perhaps teacher slash social worker. Whereas, when
156 I went to Turkey I was just teacher. And that made me need to
157 improve my teaching practice and adapt it and change it. But
158 also I think it took me a little while to (.) understand that it was
159 just different (.) and it was great that those children didn't need
160 me in that same way (.) but it also does still make me sad that
161 those children, like in England, you know, obviously not all of
162 them but that they do need that, sort of social worker type
163 aspect as well. So, I would say that that was a big turning point
164 for me, a big takeaway for me. Then I would say...
165 R: Sorry, I just wondered, before you moved on, whether that,
166 was that (.) What was the reason that made you go for
167 teaching abroad? Like on that very first...
168 U: So. This sounds really, really stupid but I had a dream that I
169 went to go to the leaning tower of Pisa. And I went to, and I

Line 156-157: To me this clearly indicates the impact which adults have on young people if they had one role to focus on: teaching.

Line 157: She had no other distractions and therefore could improve her practice

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170 went to go and spend the summer travelling and I went to see
171 the leaning tower of Pisa is one of the things I did (.) and from
172 there, so had this dream that I would go do this travelling. So I
173 went, did the travelling and I was so my God, there is so much
174 in this world that is not in England and there's so much culture
175 to explore, maybe I should go and live somewhere for a little
176 while. And I had a friend who was American who was living in
177 the UK and I thought I will go with the same system that she is
178 working on, and I'll apply for that and see if I can go away. And
179 while applying for that, I saw the job interview for Turkey and I
180 thought I would apply just get some interview practice before
181 the real thing and I went along to the interview and absolutely
182 fell in love with the people that were there interviewing. And I
183 thought why not have an adventure? So, that is the reason why
184 I went abroad.

185 R: Sorry, I sidetracked and kind of cut into what you say

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186 U: So, then the next turning point in my career was in Egypt.
187 And I was ahead of drama. And the head of Key Stage 3 came
188 up. (.) As I said, when I was the UK I was, felt **I was a bit like a**
189 **social worker (.) and I think I have always been very pastorally**
190 **minded (.) and always interested in that.** So when, the post in
191 Key Stage 3 came up, I applied for that and I had some
192 experience doing that. And it was quite a big turning point in
193 my career, like there was (2) I really felt, like going full circle to
194 what I was saying where I felt I didn't make a difference when I
195 first went to Turkey and it was just different but I felt when I
196 was in Egypt and I was being head of Key Stage 3, **I felt like I**
197 **was making a difference again with children not just teaching**
198 **them but actually making a difference to their lives.** So that was
199 a significant moment. Another significant moment was when I
200 left there and started at my current school. **And my current**
201 **school is... Incredible. And I absolutely love it.** And (.) I think
202 that when I came, **it is a very wealthy school and they have a**

Maybe this is what's key. Having multiple roles as a teacher i.e. being a social worker and the more pastoral side of the role as opposed to the administrative part of the job

For me, this feels both a positive and intrinsically related to how she sees her role – sounds really important to her and how she views her role as a teacher

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203 lot of resources, not just physical resources, people resources
204 as well, and so a lot of the admin stuff was taken off of me and
205 I could just focus in on my teaching. And, so that has been a
206 really significant moment. And I think that the final significant
207 moment in my teaching is that I became a parent year and a
208 half ago and (.) before I became a parent I never really thought
209 that that would change my teaching practice but I think that it
210 really has ((laughing)) and (.) I couldn't tell you what I'm doing
211 differently but I know that it has changed a lot of things. Like
212 maybe (.) the subtle things about me and I think that, I think
213 that I worry a lot more now, being a parent, like hearing all
214 these things teenagers are going through and I've always dealt
215 with that and I've always sort of compartmentalised that,
216 whereas now I look at all these teenagers going through this
217 and this didn't exist when I was a teenager and what's going to
218 happen when my child becomes a teenager, and you know, but
219 then on the flipside I see all the things that they are doing. Like

"Flipside"
demonstrates the ups
and downs of teaching

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220 all of the positive things. Like there's a big push on mindfulness
221 in our school, coping with stress and talking about relationships
222 and all those sorts of things. Like PSE is a massive part of our
223 curriculum and (.) I talk to them about and I think that may be
224 (.) it is not such a terrible thing, like by the time Niamh gets to
225 that age, maybe she will have all of those resources available
226 to her and maybe it's not such a scary thing. So (.) mmm
227 R: Thank you for sharing that. Have there been any significant
228 people who influenced your career over the time that you have
229 been a teacher?
230 U: Mmmhum. Yep, so in my first school I had like the head of
231 drama and head of music, they were both like, like really key
232 people in shaping my teaching practice and who I was as a
233 teacher when I was in the UK. Obviously you know when you
234 do your PGCE, you do your PGCE and then I think you spend
235 14 weeks in school and so you don't really (.) So, my school-
236 based tutor, particularly at my first placement, was very intent

The importance of relationships and the type of mentor you are given at those key times when you're doing a new role. This point also relates to Lines 237-240

How prepared are we as teachers on training course for all the role involves?

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237 on you becoming a mini version of her. Whereas, when I got
238 my school in England, the head of music and head of drama
239 were very intent on you being yourself in front of the children
240 and letting them see that you are a person too and finding your
241 own style. And **that's something that I have remained true to**
242 **this day**. The irony of being a drama teacher but I'm not going
243 to act it and be somebody that I'm not when I'm teaching. **Like**
244 **that was very, very important to me.**

245 When I got to my school in Egypt and I started as the head of
246 drama, and eventually became the head of Key Stage 3, but
247 the person who I was working with at the time who was the
248 head of Key Stage 3 and also worked in the drama department
249 and **she just really gave me a lot (2) of understanding of a lot of**
250 **different leadership styles (.) And how to work with children and**
251 **how to look after them pastorally and to work with parents and**
252 **to encourage them to be little bit open-minded.** So that was a
253 significant thing. **At my current school I work with another**

It's interesting the take-away points we hold onto as a result of significant people at key points in life/career

The pastoral aspect resonates with how I view the role/vocation of the teacher

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254 drama teacher and he's really inspirational in terms of, my
255 actual drama teaching, like all of the strategies that he uses,
256 he's given me more innovative approaches. But when I started
257 at my current school principal is so inspiring and he is really
258 into growth mindset. And every year he sets a challenge in
259 front of the children, he is going to learn something that he's
260 not done before (.) so he's learnt tango dancing, juggling and
261 all these different sorts of things (2) and it's about showing the
262 kids, that it's okay being in that place of not knowing and it's
263 okay to try something out and it's okay to fail. And I think that is
264 a really important message for children to see. Often (2) we tell
265 children all the time that is okay to fail and I think that's a really
266 important message for children to see and that often we tell
267 children "It's okay to fail" but we don't actually often show that
268 to children, that we fail too. They just think that we're
269 successful because we are, where they perceive where we
270 want to be, in our career and I think that's important. But also

Sounds like she's surrounded by very positive people who influence her daily practice

He sounds very open – demonstrating to the students that he isn't afraid to fail. Or rather unafraid to try something which he may, or may not, be successful in

Really meaningful message

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271 going back to what the saying about the growth mindset (.)
272 that's such an important thing, you know giving (.) not, I think
273 that a lot of schools that follow the British system, have (.) this
274 whole idea that you've got these grades (.) that you'll get and
275 that impacts what you're going to achieve in the future (.) and
276 your value-added and things like that and you've got to push
277 kids to get to there and I actually think that that has a really
278 negative impact on children and on children's learning and that
279 actually (2) children do learn at different points you know. At
280 one grade level they might make three points progress, in the
281 next grade level they might only make one point of progress.
282 But if actually we understand that over the period of time that
283 they're there they're going to make the progress (2) and they're
284 going to become better, that's what's more important, than the
285 actual current data here and now. It is about the end and
286 where you could possibly get to. So, yeah

I agree with the comment in lines 286-287. It indicates plasticity and that potential exists – young people aren't the full product now. At the same time, I question how that sits with accountability and if a child is not receiving quality education, what can be done to change that if there isn't aren't any ways of measuring progress. Targets and progress is one system for measuring but what other factors could be assessed instead?

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- 287 R: Thank you for sharing that. What about then, I am aware
288 that you have taught different types of curriculum, so you have
289 mentioned the English curriculum
- 290 U: Mmmm
- 291 R: (.) And in thinking about next question you might sort of say
292 which curriculum you're referring to or you might want to just
293 focus on the one that you are currently in now. But have there
294 been any curriculum changes which have been implemented
295 during your teaching career and how did these affect you? So I
296 am aware that you've made changes, were you ever in
297 teaching a curriculum that then changed, like they change what
298 was getting taught
- 299 U: Yeah, so, with my subject (.) it is not a required curriculum
300 anywhere in the world so it is an optional choice. So, schools
301 can choose to teach drama or choose not to. And so therefore
302 when schools choose to accept it they create the curriculum
303 and so the curriculum that I've had has always been something

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304 that has been created by me. I have never had a you know
305 change of circumstances where they like, the government has
306 said, out with that and in with this (.) because it has always
307 been about what we have been teaching, what I've chosen to
308 taught. So, with my middle school program that has obviously
309 changed and adapted as I've changed and adapted and as I've
310 developed my stuff but (.) with like GCSE and with (.) A-levels
311 or IB, I've taught (.) One (.) Two (.) I've taught three different
312 GCSE boards and within that time one of the boards had a
313 curriculum change. And then I've taught IB and A-levels as well
314 and so I've had changes to the curriculum but in all honesty
315 they've not been major it's just a slightly different way of doing
316 things or a slightly different terminology there's not really that
317 much (2) different about it to be honest with you. Yeah, (2)
318 actually I say I've never been that unhappy with the curriculum
319 change but two years ago we were doing one exam board and
320 they were changing their curriculum, and we didn't like what

Line 319: She suddenly realises and reflects on that

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321 they were going to change it to, so then we changed board so

322 that we do like what we're teaching. Yeah ((nodding))

323 R: Okay. It is great to be able to have the flexibility to...

324 U: Absolutely

325 R: And if maybe you'd been in a different school that wouldn't

326 have been the outcome. I don't know, if maybe the

327 management team hadn't been supportive...

328 U: Yeah, it's absolutely true. (.) I think that when you're in the

329 international system (.) like so my first school that I was in, the

330 GCSE board that you picked from, you had to do Cambridge

331 like international GCSEs and you didn't have any other

332 choices, like you couldn't just go, I am going to Edexcel or AQA

333 because we weren't approved by those boards. And then when

334 I went to Egypt we were only approved on the Edexcel board

335 so we were only able to do that. My current school, we're

336 approved by Edexcel and Cambridge so we can pick between

337 those two choices.

Impact of systems

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338 R: Ah, okay (.) How did changing schools affect you? Or how
339 did it impact you? Like, what kind of impact did it have?

340 U: (.) I think again, this is probably one of the things that is
341 quite different about changing schools internationally, then it is
342 changing schools within England, in that when (2) when you
343 move school in England like you might get a day or so to learn
344 what this system is like and then you are sort of thrown in at
345 the deep end, sort of sink or swim, hopefully your colleagues
346 will help sort you out and that you'll have an interesting time,
347 and you know, you'll get there eventually. Whereas, when you
348 move internationally you lose a little bit of control over your life
349 and everything becomes different. So when I went to Turkey I
350 went there by myself, my school was responsible for finding my
351 accommodation and deciding which area I lived in, which flat I
352 lived in. They were responsible for how I got to school because
353 we had a school bus. They were responsible for who I
354 socialised with and they were responsible for organising my

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355 health insurance, my flights home and you kind of lost that little
356 bit of control over your life a little bit. And so school becomes, I
357 would say school became a real focus (.) the focus of
358 everything I did. And I would say that was the same in Egypt
359 and in Turkey it was all very encompassing and I think that
360 because they were, are, hardship posts in that the language is
361 different, when you are out within the community you've not got
362 the access to language so then therefore like if you had (2) like
363 an electrician problem or something like that which if you had
364 that back at home, you'd sort it out and your work wouldn't
365 even know there was a problem. But when you're in an
366 international environment you're dealing with somebody at
367 school to go and sort that out for you at home and so it all
368 becomes very all-encompassing. But since I've moved back to
369 (2) since I moved to Singapore, it is not hardship posting, the
370 common language is English. The school is so big that not
371 everything is anchored around the school and so therefore

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372 we've got that little bit of privacy and (.) It feels a bit more like
373 (.) like normal living, if you know I mean. School is my job and I
374 go there but I've got control over where I live, I choose how I
375 get to school. I choose to socialise with some people from
376 school but now my network of friends is not my colleagues
377 anymore. So that's quite interesting that full-circle transition
378 going from school being my work to school being my life and
379 then going back to school being my work again. But I say
380 school going back to my work again but they are actually
381 responsible for a lot of other things. So (.) you know, like even
382 our doctor's at school and so even if you are sick you're going
383 to school and things like that and I guess as my daughter
384 grows up and as she comes to school that is going to feel a bit
385 more intense as well because I would probably never be in that
386 situation in the UK because most teachers tend to send their
387 children to a school that isn't theirs. Whereas my daughter will

Identifies having more
ownership

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388 come to the same school as me from the age of 4 to 18 so that

389 will be different.

390 R: I just wanted to clarify what exactly hardship school

391 placement is? Is it a place where the mother tongue is

392 different?

393 U: Yeah, pretty much. Yeah it's like a less desirable location

394 R: Okay

395 U: Where things are [

396 R: There is] a particular rating system or something?

397 U: (.) I don't necessarily know that there's a particular rating

398 system but if you're looking (2) you're looking at like (.)

399 basically hardship postings are, tend to be related to the

400 language spoken (.) and the complexity of communicating

401 within that so (.) yeah. Yeah, it's funny because now you ask

402 that question I don't necessarily know what factors there are

403 that define it like that but I think that's mostly related to the

404 language

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405 R: And those two countries using Arabic and totally different
406 letters

407 U: Yep, when I was in Turkey like I had quite good
408 conversational Turkish and when I (.) I say that the reason for
409 that is that they use the alphabet, like the English alphabet, so
410 you can read stuff as well. Whereas, when I moved to Egypt
411 you've got the Arabic script and you can't read anything and
412 therefore you can't learn anything or you know it's more
413 challenging to learn so (.) Yeah...

414 R: Okay. So, super. So how does (.) being a teacher make you
415 feel? And I guess in your role that feeling might have changed
416 at different times and in different places but...

417 U: I'm always proud to be a teacher. And I love my job. And I
418 love (.) that I get to work with individuals who are very (.)
419 they're going through a transition. Like when they're at
420 secondary school they're going from being miniature versions
421 of their parents, essentially, to being who they want to be as an

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422 **adult**. And they go through, you know, they will try out all sorts

423 of different hats and you know some of those transitions are

424 not particularly nice and others are a bit more pleasant and

425 stuff like that. But you know **it's really interesting watching that**

426 **stage of development for them** and (.) so, I think that is as well

427 (.) **I think that it is hard being a teacher as well** and (2) remind

428 the question again

429 R: How does being a teacher make you feel?

430 U: Yeah, I think that yeah I think **proud** is something that I do

431 feel. I like the impact that I have on a day-to-day basis and I

432 enjoy the work I do so that's important to me as well (.) yep. Is

433 anything else you want to ask about that? Have I been a bit too

434 vague? ((Laughing))

435 R: no, that is totally fine, that's very succinct. That is great. And

436 that is a lovely word to sum up with really so (.) no, that's

437 perfect.

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438 U: Oh, so the other thing I would say. Sorry Ann-Marie. The
439 other thing I would say is that [
440 R: Yeah?]
441 U: I love my job. And I don't know many other people who do.
442 Like I always talk to anybody who, any my friends, anybody like
443 that and I really really love my job and I think that (.) I think that
444 a lot of that is what I actually do and a lot of that is where I
445 actually am. But I think a lot of it is that every day is different
446 and you never have the same day there is never a dull day
447 when you are working so many individuals so that is
448 something. Sorry you were going to say... ?
449 R: I was just can say what would the title of your story be? So
450 the things that we have spoken about, thinking about your
451 career overall, like, if you were to give this, what we've been
452 discussing, like your story about teaching what would you call
453 it, to give it a title?

Lines 446-449: This really resonates with me because I loved knowing essentially what I would be doing for the week, or day. But I loved that there could be spontaneity within my day that could be used as teaching points. For instance, if there was snow to use that opportunity or if we were looking at shadows and the sun was out, we'd take the lesson outside. I loved having the structure of the day but at the same time I also loved the unknown of what the day would bring because more often than not the day had happy surprises rather than negative ones

Appendix Five

454 U: Mmmm, I think (2) funny enough (.) I think it would be
455 growth mindset actually because I've been going through like
456 (.) quite a (.) I should probably have said this earlier but it didn't
457 occur to me till just now (.) but as I said I went into teaching
458 from a very young age and was something that I always knew I
459 wanted to do. And throughout my career I've always been very
460 ambitious and then I've got to my current school (.) and was
461 still overawed and overwhelmed (.) by the experience in the
462 school, despite having 14 years of experience I am still one of
463 the most inexperienced members of staff at our school. And I
464 have been "Like teach me, teach me, teach me, I want to learn"
465 (.) And then very recently I realised that actually I'm okay with
466 not progressing in my career at the moment because I'm
467 learning lots of different stuff, and then a slight different focus
468 on now that I've got family of my own to think about, and that's
469 okay. I was thinking that maybe I need to, I thought about
470 doing a Masters because maybe that would help to prepare me

Enthusiasm

Appendix Five

471 for the next promotion and then I thought actually I'm doing the
472 Masters because it's something I am not that interested in it but
473 it might possibly help in the future, but it might not. Maybe I'm
474 just happy to do what I am doing and just learn what I am
475 learning and enjoy this time rather than pushing forwards and
476 learning and growing. I opened up my tax thing the other day
477 and saw (.) this was before my birthday and I thought, "You
478 know you're nearly 35. There's only another 35 years before I
479 retire." I thought, "Oh my God, there's 35 more years before I
480 retire!!!" It is just crazy and I think about the statistics that is
481 currently going round that by the time the average person
482 retires now, they will have gone through three different careers.
483 And I genuinely do not think there is another career for me, like
484 this is the career that I want to be in. And if I've got another 35
485 years to work in this career, then I can slow down my
486 progression, I don't have to become an assistant head in the
487 next five years, I can wait for another (.) 25 years until I do that

Seems reassured that this is the only career for her. Also a real feeling of being okay with where she is now- being present to the present

Appendix Five

- 488 provided that I am feeling fulfilled within my job. So when I say
- 489 that growth mindset is kind of bringing that in, it's that perhaps,
- 490 perhaps in 35 years I'll be ready for it, maybe I'll want it, maybe
- 491 I won't but maybe I'll still be working towards something and I
- 492 am happy way at the moment and the knowledge that that
- 493 growth might come a later stage for me. Does that make
- 494 sense?
- 495 R: Yes, that does make sense. Definitely. Brilliant, thank you.
- 496 Is there anything else that you wanted to add at the minute?
- 497 U: No, I do not think so
- 498 R: Okay. Thank you so much Una

Appendix Six

Saoirse's 'I Poem'

Background

I have to tell you

I was four

I remember

I never

I used to play

I had lots of cousins

I had my sister

I didn't have my sister yet

I had my cousins

I used to

I used to ask

I could be teacher

I was so much enjoying

I could use

I was playing teacher

I had

I got a little bit older

I couldn't write when

I was four!

I played teacher

I could

I loved

I was seven

I must

I was

I knew

I still wanted

I knew that

I am from

I had thought

I went

I said

I wanted

I went

I absolutely loved it!

I started

I did

I could

I did lots

I was younger

I started volunteering

I also

I ended up working

I ended up being

I really loved

I also worked

I had experience

I still loved

So I knew

Whatever I did

I knew

I wanted

I did everything

I could

I said

I did

I applied

I was really excited

I got into all of them

I was really proud

I got into all five

I decided to stay

I absolutely loved it

I went

I thought it was fantastic

I just felt like

I was in the right place

What I was meant

I graduated

I decided

I would

I started

I worked

I really loved

I definitely

I ended up applying

I'd done that

I applied

I got the job part-time

I started working

I was volunteering

I absolutely loved

I just felt

I loved it

I felt

I had control

I was working with

I really enjoyed

I thought

I really wanted to be full-time

I wasn't getting anywhere

I decided

I also thought

I applied

I came

I did

I'd not experienced

I was teaching

I hadn't had

I don't think

I had

I applied

I managed

I worked

I worked two years

I really enjoyed

I left

I was there

After I left

I did a year

I needed a break

I was supply

I thought

I wanted

I wanted

I've been working there

I am still

Why Teaching?

I always knew

I wanted to work with children

As I said

I think

I had some absolutely amazing teachers

Who I remember

I still

I remember my grade two

I remember my grade three

I hadn't been

I had never

I just remember

I think

Teachers I had were more than just teachers

I had

I was

I was always

I needed

I had

I really didn't understand

I was really struggling

I kept going

I couldn't

I knew

I wasn't

I was doing really well

I just couldn't

I went for extra help

I felt

I ended up

I was allowed

I needed to

It wasn't that I was

I just needed

I had quite

I had

I want to be that teacher

Best Moments

I think

I can't

I think

I think

I think

I was

I said

I think

I look forward

When I get to see that

I don't

I really

Worst Moments

I think

I'd say

I was

I think

I think

I also think

I think

I was asked

I felt under a lot of pressure

I'm not sure

I think

I felt

I wanted

I didn't want

I also felt

I wasn't doing right by the children

I feel

I don't know

I felt

I was a really bad teacher

I know

I'm not

I felt

I wasn't doing my job

I originally wanted

I felt horrible

I felt

I didn't know what to do

Whether I should

When I was doing the next

If I should do what was in my heart

I'm not sure

If I was experienced

I was

I couldn't

I feel

I do now

I feel

I constantly felt

I felt

I wasn't happy with myself

I didn't feel good about myself

I didn't know

How I would carry on

As I've already said

I wanted to be a teacher since I was four years

Turning Points...

I think

I've sort of

I felt

I needed

When I was

Who I felt

I didn't have professional discretion

I felt very helpless

I thought

I had

I think

I felt

I, as a class teacher

I knew my class

I remember thinking

I thought

I think

I love

I didn't

I wanted

When I went

I felt

So I had

What I felt

I had

I had

I knew

I just felt really helpless again

How I have felt

I didn't feel

I could do

What I felt was best as a teacher

I didn't feel

I could think for myself

I thought

I think

I was expected

But I went

Explained how I was feeling

I thought

I needed

I really enjoyed

I couldn't believe

I felt

I felt

I'm not sure

I was

Like I said

I wanted them to do well

Because I knew

I wanted them to do well

I knew

I decided

I needed a break

I never thought

I'd want to leave classroom teaching

I knew

I needed a break

I thought

I would have to do supply

While I decided

I was going to be able

Significant People

I have

I have

I have

If we can

I think

As far as I'm concerned

I had

I was

I said

I felt

I was stripped of my ability

I don't know

If I'm allowed to say this

I don't think

I think that

I didn't feel

I did try speaking

I constantly felt on edge

When I was at work

When I was at home

I could

I lost a lot of sleep

I was worrying

I felt

I couldn't

I think

I again

I didn't feel

I was doing my best job

While I was working essentially under her

I'm a human being

So if I'm overtired

I'm stressed

I am constantly worried and anxious

Not what I would want

I felt

I felt

I went

I went

I wanted

I wanted

Where I wanted

I have not

They knew I was a good teacher

I was always meant

I guess

I came

I'm where I'm meant to be

I'm meant to be teaching

I was

I remember

I never felt

I could

I always felt

I would be missing

I'd be creating more work

If I took a day off

Even if I felt

I needed

I can

Sometimes I forget

I have been better

I do know

Curriculum Changes

I wasn't

I started

I think

I was

So I don't know

I'm really

When I first came

I was used to

I felt

I felt

I felt

I felt

I felt

I've just felt

I feel

I was

I felt

I had the professional discretion

I went

I trained to be a teacher

I was observed

I trained to be a teacher

I was observed

I felt

I was given

I was teaching

I didn't

I have done all this training

I feel

I feel like there is no professional discretion

I feel

I never look

I think

I am

I like

I give

I can

I've got

I think

I am

I feel

I feel

I think

I start

I feel

I could

If I could

I was actually trained

I was

I feel

Like I had

I feel

I'm also

So I have additional teaching and learning responsibilities

I don't have

I do that after school

Changing Schools

I've had a few changes

I think

I learnt

I was teaching

I learned

I was thrown in the deep

I feel like

I learned a lot from that experience

I think

I questioned

I'd made the right choice

I didn't realise

I thought

I'm meant

I didn't know

Whether I was good at this job

I questioned my ability

Wheat I'd been trained

I felt

I thought

I had

I thought

I didn't know the system

I didn't know

I was obviously

I changed schools hoping

I would

I wanted

I did question

I was I think

I left

I left

I don't

I also

I should

I felt

I started

I'm at

I originally felt amazing

I felt

I had more control

I say

I think

I was

I originally

I feel

I feel

I am

I enjoy

I've made it

I've learned

I can say no

I make sure

I am setting

I believe

I do have professional discretion

What I think is best

As long as I'm doing that

I am teaching

The best that I can

I'm ready

Until I have the time

I feel

I started

As a teacher I feel...

I'm definitely passionate

I think

I also think

I've got

I know

I think

I think it's so incredibly rewarding

Like I said

I do think

I can't leave

I feel

I can't leave

I got married this summer

I had children

I taught

I still remember them

I obviously

I think teaching is amazing

A Title...

I have thought about this

I've spoken a lot about highs and about lows

I think

I had

I think

I had

Appendix Seven

This is a sample of quotations that demonstrates each of the identified voices in Saoirse’s narrative. Further examples are available in Saoirse’s full transcription (Appendix Eight, pg. 244-289) and each voice is colour coded. Optimism is pink, Struggle is green, Nurture is teal, Relationship is blue, Recognition is grey.

Voice of ...	Examples
Optimism	<p><i>“It was a fantastic opportunity to just set the bar for them, and set standards for their education and make it so that they enjoyed school and enjoyed coming to school and what they could get out of schooling” (Appendix Eight, pg. 247, lines 95-99).</i></p> <p><i>“We had professional discretion to be able to take it in whatever direction it needed to go” (Appendix Eight, pg. 248, lines 101-102).</i></p> <p><i>“I think in teaching you have so many amazing moments. But I think (2) I think the amazing moments that you have, well for me, maybe they’re all related to maybe a child struggling a little bit, like I was. You know, not understanding something and finding it really difficult to grasp the concept or a skill at you’ve been trying to teach them.... And when the child finally gets there and it clicks for them, like I said, it makes sense and they even see the confidence spread across their face and then all they want to do is practice that skill because they know how to do it now and they’re excited to show it to everybody, I</i></p>

	<p><i>think those are the absolute best moments that I (2) it just keeps me going is a teacher.” (Appendix Eight, pg. 253, lines 229-243).</i></p> <p><i>“Which is what I love about Foundation Stage” (Appendix Eight, pg. 260, lines 415-416).</i></p> <p><i>“My (2) professional judgement was seen to be accurate because I have done all this training” (Appendix Eight, pg. 273, lines 729-730).</i></p>
<p>Struggle</p>	<p><i>“These targets are set and not based on, or flexible in a sense that they are human beings, they’re not just, you know, numbers or (.) points on a piece of paper they are have a life and it means that because they are human beings things happen” (Appendix Eight, pg. 254, lines 265-269).</i></p> <p><i>“As a teacher I felt between a rock and a hard place” (Appendix Eight, pg. 256, lines 300-301).</i></p> <p><i>“It was the worse time for me because I felt like I wasn’t doing my job which (.) was (2) the job that I originally wanted to which was to inspire them and help them grow and feel excited and happy to be at school.” (Appendix Eight, pg. 256, lines 321-324).</i></p> <p><i>“Early Years coordinator (.) who I felt was really unsupportive (.) and (.) made me feel like I didn’t have any professional discretion (2) over what happened in my own classroom ... she didn’t understand the needs of my class because she</i></p>

	<p><i>wasn't teaching them every day" (Appendix Eight, pg. 259, lines 395-426).</i></p> <p><i>"Teaching to the test is really what they do, teaching to the test. You teach children how to take tests, you teach children in this country how to how to answer questions in the right way" (Appendix Eight, pg. 261, lines 447-450).</i></p> <p><i>"But the same time I knew that their education was (.) suffering because they weren't getting (.) the (2) they weren't getting (.) the well-rounded education that they should have and the fun and engaging and practical and exciting education that they should have." (Appendix Eight, pg. 263, lines 478-482).</i></p>
<p>Nurturer</p>	<p><i>"They were there for more than to teach you, they wanted to be there for every aspect of your growth and development, they wanted to help nurture you and support your emotional wellbeing and social wellbeing and (2) they showed a genuine passion and care for the children in their class and that genuinely inspired me to want to become a teacher." (Appendix Eight, pg. 251, lines 175-181).</i></p> <p><i>I want to be that teacher that gives children the time and takes the time to explain things in different ways so that they do get it and it does click" (Appendix Eight, pg. 252, lines 214-216).</i></p> <p><i>"I didn't want to take that away from them, of course, but I wanted to prepare them for what was to come" (Appendix Eight, pg. 260, lines 418-421).</i></p>

	<p><i>“The opportunity to actually have a voice in what they were interested in and what they wanted to learn and then you tailor that to what actually needs to be covered within the curriculum ... it’s a way that ensures that children actually remember what they learn”</i> (Appendix Eight, pg. 264, lines 516-522).</p> <p><i>“I think that a teacher’s wellbeing is so incredibly important because you are you are teaching little people how to be healthy little people, which means that they have a healthy wellbeing and you can’t teach that if you can’t model that yourself”</i> (Appendix Eight, pg. 267, lines 577-581).</p>
<p>Relationships</p>	<p><i>“We were (.) both on the same page and she was a positive influence on me”</i> (Appendix Eight, pg. 264, lines 507-508).</p> <p><i>“She helps me to relax”</i> (Appendix Eight, pg.268, line 601).</p> <p><i>“The actual relationships with my colleagues was exactly where I wanted it to be”</i> (Appendix Eight, pg. 268, lines 606-607).</p> <p><i>“My family and my husband ((smiling)) who have been an absolute (.) amazing influence in my teaching career.”</i> (Appendix Eight, pg. 268, lines 612-614).</p> <p><i>“My family have really built up my confidence to want to carry on in my teaching career”</i> (Appendix Eight, pg. 269, lines 631-632).</p> <p><i>“When you make those connections with the children, they want to do their best for you and they want to learn and they</i></p>

	<p>want to be there and (.) I think the same goes for, you know, colleagues at work.” (Appendix Eight, pg. 271, lines 678-681).</p>
<p>Recognition</p>	<p>“I think I have got the (.) skill set now to know and because of that experience I feel like I got the confidence to say to senior leaders, “No actually I don’t think that’s relevant” or “I don’t think that’s going to benefit the children” or “How is that going to benefit the children?”” (Appendix Eight, pg. 258, lines 361-365).</p> <p>“I feel like I’ve got more knowledge and more skills set to be able to understand the system a little bit better” (Appendix Eight, pg. 259, lines 375-377).</p> <p>“I have obviously learned from that experience in London that wellbeing is important and I’ve made it a bigger priority for myself and I’ve learned that I can say no” (Appendix Eight, pg. 279, lines 875-878).</p> <p>“I am setting the standards when they’re going to receive certain things and how they are done because I believe as a teacher I do have professional discretion over what I think is best for the children and as long as I am doing that and I am teaching the children to the best that I can, paperwork and evidence and anything else that is asked of me can wait until I’m ready to give it, until I have the time to do it” (Appendix Eight, pg. 279, lines 880-886).</p> <p>“I have developed awareness of what I think is really important” (Appendix Eight, pg. 299, lines 888-889).</p>

Appendix Eight

Saoirse's Voice of...

Optimism

Struggle

Nurturer

Relationships

Comments

1 Researcher (R): Happy?
2 Saoirse (S): Ready
3 R: Super, so can you tell me about the background of your teaching
4 career so far
5 S: Yes, so to tell you about my background of my teaching career I
6 have to tell you how it started a little bit because it's what sort of
7 drew me into teaching. So when I was four I remember that's as far
8 back as it goes preparing to be teacher, I never wanted to do
9 anything different. I used to play, I had lots of cousins and most of
10 them were older than me and I had my sister, well not yet I didn't
11 have my sister yet but I had my cousins who were older than me
12 and I (.) used to spend a lot of time at my grandparents house and I
13 used to ask if I could be teacher and because I was so much
14 enjoying being the teacher and using the chalkboard and my
15 parents, my grandparents would get these books from the shop
16 that we'd print off, we would print off and copy different worksheets
17 and stuff I could use for when I was playing teacher with my
18 cousins and and yeah so my parents get me little plastic yellow
19 briefcase and I had one of those white sticky labels and put Miss
20 Fitzpatrick on it, when I got a little bit older, I couldn't write when I
21 was four! I played teacher as much as I could. I loved giving people
22 homework and once my sister came along, I was seven when she
23 by the way was born and so I must have been about 10, 11, 12 and (.) I
24 was still playing by what teacher at my grandparents house and

Totally dissimilar to my own personal experience as trained to be a teacher initially because I was paid to train and was unsure what career I was interested in at the end of my bachelor's degree in psychology and education

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25 giving my sister homework and (.) and that's where it all began and
 26 then from there I knew that I still wanted to be a teacher. So I knew
 27 that to be a teacher in Canada, which is where I am from, you need
 28 a lot of experience working with children. So I had thought from a
 29 very young age probably 12 or 13 years of age about what that
 30 would entail, and when I went into secondary, which is year nine in
 31 Canada, we have to think about whether not we want to do a bit of
 32 an apprentice type program so I said that I wanted to do and
 33 apprenticeship in a school. So I went into school and I absolutely
 34 loved it! I started a reading program and my was only in year 9 or
 35 10 at the time and I did lots of volunteering in schools when when I
 36 could and I did lots of extracurricular activities and I was younger
 37 and baseball was one of them. So, I started volunteering to coach a
 38 baseball team as well at the same time and to get more experience
 39 in different situations working with children and then in secondary I
 40 also during summers was a camp counsellor, and I ended up
 41 working with different types of children with special needs and
 42 behaviour type problems and then from there after several
 43 summers doing camp counselling I ended up being a resource
 44 camp counsellor which was somebody who specifically trained to
 45 work with children with autism and Down syndrome and
 46 developmental delay, which I really loved and enjoyed. And I also
 47 worked in a daycare nursery as well. So, I had experience of
 48 working with children of all different ages and I still loved working
 49 with children so I knew that whatever I did had to be working with

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50 children. My favourite thing was helping the children to learn a new
 51 skill so I knew that I wanted to go into teaching. So I did everything I
 52 could in secondary school as I said to apply to a school that had a
 53 specific childhood studies program, which is a limited programme at
 54 East University in Canada. And then I did that for four years and got
 55 my honours bachelor in that and that's a four year program and
 56 then I applied from there for lots of teacher colleges. And I was
 57 really excited when I got into all of them because it's quite difficult in
 58 Canada to get into teachers college because the government is
 59 trying to start to deter teachers from going into teaching because
 60 you get a lot of teachers and we didn't have as many jobs. So they
 61 were making the criteria really hard to get in. So, I was really proud
 62 of myself when I got into all five universities that I applied to for
 63 teaching. But I decided to stay at Eastern to do my teaching degree
 64 and I absolutely loved it when I went to do my placement, I thought
 65 it was fantastic and I just felt like I was in the right place and it was
 66 exactly what I was meant to do. And when I graduated and from
 67 teachers college it was quite difficult to get a job so what I decided
 68 to do is continue to do is much work with children as possible and
 69 to carry on that sort of experience to put on my CV and then
 70 hopefully I would get a job later on so I started working at a group
 71 home which is for children who are (.) they call them in Canada
 72 'wards of the state' which means that they're basically orphans and
 73 not necessarily because parents have them passed away or are no
 74 longer around but it's because potentially that they've been

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75 removed from their home and they put into the state's care because
 76 of social (.) service type concerns. And that was really difficult
 77 because there's children of all ages from three, four years old, up
 78 until 18, that lived in the three houses that I worked at. They all had
 79 varying issues and you know some of them were academic and
 80 others were social and emotional and I really loved being able to
 81 give them the time that they needed to grow and develop as little
 82 people and it just reaffirmed as well for me (a.) that I definitely
 83 wanted to go into teaching to be able to make a difference for
 84 children. And I ended up applying, after I'd done that, I applied to a
 85 few schools nearby and one of them was a private school and they
 86 do private kindergarten which is reception age in the UK. I got the
 87 job part-time so I started working part-time there and doing
 88 volunteer work in another school hoping, because in Canada the
 89 way that it worked at the time for hiring in the public system was
 90 that the more you are sort of a volunteering and making your
 91 presence known, the more likely you were to get a job if something
 92 came up. So, I was volunteering two days a week and then working
 93 two half-day's a week at private school and I absolutely loved
 94 kindergarten ((smiling)) so much because it was the first year of
 95 school for them and it was my first year teaching and I just felt like it
 96 was a fantastic opportunity to just set the bar for them, and set
 97 standards for their education and make it so that they enjoyed
 98 school and enjoyed coming to school and what they could get out of
 99 schooling. And I loved it and I felt like I had control of my classroom

My preferred teaching range
 was the Early Years

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100 and that, you know, we had a curriculum to follow that we had
 101 professional discretion to be able to take it in whatever direction it
 102 needed to go. I was working with my teaching partner who did the
 103 other half-days and we worked really well together and we had the
 104 same sort of ideas of what we wanted to do the classroom, various
 105 investigative type learning where the children were guiding their
 106 own learning and they weren't being 'taught at' but they were
 107 participants in their learning and I really enjoyed that. Then I
 108 thought that I really wanted to be full-time and I wasn't getting
 109 anywhere volunteering and working at the private school, they
 110 didn't have anything full-time (.). So that's when I decided to apply to
 111 come to the UK because I also thought that'd be a fantastic
 112 opportunity to travel and work at the same time. So, I applied to the
 113 UK and through a teaching agency in London and I came over in
 114 January 2012 and I did a little bit of supply in inner-city London
 115 which was a very big eye-opener for me and because I'd not
 116 experienced the type of situations that arose when I was teaching in
 117 London during supply months. So, behaviour and social and
 118 emotional concerns of children in such large groups rather than sort
 119 of one or two in a class and it was really difficult because I (.). I
 120 hadn't had the experience you have to have to be a supply
 121 teaching, as you have to be very flexible and very (2) very
 122 adaptable and you have to have very good behaviour management.
 123 Because of my lack of experience I don't think I had very good
 124 behaviour management at that stage in my career. But it was a

Feeling of frustration that she wanted a full-time role

Reflective nature that she recognised she didn't necessarily have a developed skill set at that time but learnt the skills by being put in the situation – a need to survive

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125 great learning experience for me and then I applied to some
 126 positions for part-time and long-term work covering maternity leave
 127 in London. And I managed to get a position at St Theresa's school
 128 in London and I worked there and that was in the nursery. I worked
 129 two years in the nursery and then two years in reception and a year
 130 doing Year Two. I really enjoyed my experience there (.) there were
 131 some ups and downs, highs and lows, but after I left, so I was there
 132 for five years, after I left St Teresa's I did a year of supply teaching
 133 in and around Suffolk because I needed a break from classroom
 134 teaching. And then I found a school while I was supply teaching in
 135 Suffolk that I thought sort of embraced the type of (.) the type (.) of
 136 teaching and learning that I wanted in my career and what I wanted
 137 to pursue and then I've been working there for the last year and that
 138 brings me to date and I am still working in reception. That is my
 139 teaching career.

140 R: Thank you that is very extensive experience that you've got
 141 behind you. So, I was gonna follow that by asking what made you
 142 want to become a teacher but I feel that perhaps that has been
 143 wrapped up in what you have already said. Is anything that you
 144 wanted to add to that, what made you want to become a teacher?

145 S: Well I always knew that I wanted to work with children as I said
 146 but there were situations in my own (3) experience of primary and
 147 secondary education that definitely made me want to become a
 148 teacher as well, inspired me to become a teacher even further than
 149 how I, you know (.) I think that I had some absolutely amazing

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Saoirse's Voice of...

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150 teachers in my primary education who I remember the names of. I
151 still remember my first grade teacher, Mrs Honey and she was an
152 older lady who was really warm and loving and nurturing which is
153 fantastic for year one, we call it grade one in Canada. I remember
154 my grade two teacher Mrs Costa, she was really crazy and
155 outgoing and always did these really fun and exciting things and
156 that just made me always want to go to school because you never
157 know what she was going to do next and it was just really exciting.
158 And I remember my grade three teacher, we had two teachers Mrs
159 Tomlin and Mrs Pence, who shared the role and it was really
160 interesting to have two teachers working together because they
161 both brought something different to the role and they were both
162 really lovely. And my grade four teacher Mrs Varley was amazing (.)
163 she really challenged me in a way that I hadn't been challenged
164 before and she taught me some really interesting (.) sort of things in
165 in maths and science and I had never really been interested in
166 those subjects before. So she really brought that interest and
167 curiosity out in me. And my fifth-grade teacher was probably my
168 absolute favourite, Mrs Edgar and she got married the year that she
169 was teaching us so her name changed but I just remember her
170 talking about her wedding and she was so fantastic and so warm
171 and nurturing and she was always a teacher that was there that at
172 break times if you wanted to go in and talk to her about something
173 that was upsetting you or were worried about. She was more than
174 a teacher. I think that was my experience of primary education, that

Recognition that I am unable to recall the name of each teacher I had from nursery upwards. I realise that I do recall the names of teachers from secondary school who I really enjoyed having as teachers

"She was more than a teacher"
This feels like a key element in how she views the role of a teacher and it left a lasting impression on her through her schooling and as she has gone through her career

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175 the teachers I had were more than just teachers. They were there
 176 for more than to teach you, they wanted to be there for every
 177 aspect of your growth and development, they wanted to help
 178 nurture you and support your emotional wellbeing and social
 179 wellbeing and (2) they showed a genuine passion and care for the
 180 children in their class and that genuinely inspired me to want to
 181 become a teacher. However, I had some quite negative
 182 experiences as well that inspired me to be teacher. When I was in
 183 secondary school I had never been good at maths, I was always
 184 sort of more English minded and I needed to take grade 12 maths
 185 to get into my bachelor programme in university and in 12 grade,
 186 which is the last grade of secondary school before you go to
 187 university, I had to take calculus and statistics and I really didn't
 188 understand the calculus aspect of the course and I was really
 189 struggling and I kept going to my teacher to ask for help during
 190 break times and after school and asking him to explain it in a
 191 different way because the way that he was explaining it to me didn't
 192 make sense to me and I couldn't wrap my head around it and he
 193 was really negative and he made me feel really (.) for lack of a
 194 better word, stupid. And I knew that I wasn't stupid, I was doing
 195 really well in all my other subjects but I just couldn't grasp the
 196 maths side of things and (2) when I went for extra help to him, he
 197 would explain things in the exact same way that he had explained it
 198 originally in class to everybody and obviously however he was
 199 explaining it to me wasn't making sense to me. And I felt like he

This seems to be a re-occurring point that teachers were "more than just teachers...they wanted to be there for every aspect of your growth"

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Sairse's Voice of...

Optimism

Struggle

Nurturer

Relationships

200 never really had the time to help me and that was a really horrible
201 experience for me and I ended up and taking that maths course on
202 the weekends at a private school, which I was allowed to do to
203 contribute to my (.) my University maths course (.) to apply to
204 university. The person at the private school was so amazing and
205 took the time to explain things in as many ways as possible. It
206 wasn't just one way that he explained it, he explained it in so many
207 ways possible for it to make sense to me and gave me the practice
208 and encouragement that I needed to make me feel like actually it
209 wasn't that I was bad at maths, it was that I just needed to
210 understand it and come at it from a different angle and he was able
211 to give me that. So although I had quite a horrible experience with
212 that one teacher, I had a really positive experience to, sort of,
213 correct that with another teacher. And that made me, as well, think
214 that actually I want to be that teacher that gives children the time
215 and takes the time to explain things in different ways so that they do
216 get it and it does click. Because when it clicks, it's amazing. So, that
217 has also contributed to me becoming a teacher.

218 R: Oh wow, it sounds like you've had some really inspiring role
219 models

220 S: I definitely have, yes, I've been lucky

221 R: I just wanted to check, is a private school in Canada the same as
222 in the UK, or is it different?

223 S: Where parents have to pay?

How would the story have been different if she'd not had access to the alternate teacher? How many young people are disillusioned with school because the adults around them don't have the time or resources to demonstrate something in a different way until they strike a way the young person does get it?

I think her perseverance (going to teacher, taking additional classes at the weekend) indicates an underlying resilience

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224 R: Yeah

225 S: Yes, where parents have to pay for their tuition rate

226 R: Thank you. What has been your best moment since becoming a

227 class teacher?

228 S: I think that's tricky because I can't actually say that there was

229 one best moment because I think in teaching you have so many

230 amazing moments. But I think (2) I think the amazing moments that

231 you have, well for me, maybe they're all related to maybe a child

232 struggling a little bit, like I was. You know, not understanding

233 something and finding it really difficult to grasp the concept or a skill

234 at you've been trying to teach them. Then, you know, however

235 you're able to get them there, whether you're explaining things in a

236 different way or just giving them the extra time they need to practice

237 and build on their background knowledge of things. And when the

238 child finally gets there and it clicks for them, like I said, it makes

239 sense and they even see the confidence spread across their face

240 and then all they want to do is practice that skill because they know

241 how to do it now and they're excited to show it to everybody, I think

242 those are the absolute best moments that I (2) it just keeps me

243 going is a teacher. I look forward to those moments when I get to

244 see that. So, I don't think I really can say there's been a best

245 moment in my career. Since the beginning those have been the

246 best moments for me and they do come often (.) and they're what

247 keeps me going as a teacher

"They're what keeps me going as a teacher"

This indicates both the struggle of what it is to be a teacher as well as the ultimate motivating factor for her to continue as a teacher

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248 R: (2) Thank you. What about, what's been your worst moment.

249 So, since you've been a teacher, what's your worst moment?

250 S: Hmm, I think my worst (3) I don't want to say moment but I'd

251 say time as a teacher was when I was in Year Two teaching in St

252 Teresa's and (2) because of the pressure of SATS, Year Two

253 SATS, and because of pressure from the school to (2) achieve

254 targets that were set at the beginning of the year when you know

255 (2) I think the problem with SATS in Year Two, or year six, is

256 targets are set for the children at the beginning of the year based

257 on obviously (.) what they have been doing academically up until

258 that point, which for Year Two there's not much to sort of go on.

259 There's just reception and their Year One year (2) and so many

260 things happen to children in the course of the year, so many things

261 happen to people in the course of the year, so you've got, things

262 can come up in their home life or things can come up with their

263 health or the health of somebody that they really care about or they

264 could have trouble with friendship groups or (.) you know, anything

265 can happen in their life in the course of a year. And these targets

266 are set and not based on, or flexible in a sense that they are human

267 beings, they're not just, you know, numbers or (.) points on a piece

268 of paper they have a life and it means that because they are human

269 beings things happen. And they're going to have highs in their life

270 and they're going to have lows in their life, and throughout their life.

271 And I think it's really unfair that they have these expectations that

272 they'll achieve a certain target and that the rest of their life and what

Real empathy coming
across in recognising that
life happens to people

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273 is affecting their day-to-day ability to be successful in education is
 274 not taken into account (.) and I also think it's really unfair that (2)
 275 children of such young age feel such (.) intense pressure in their
 276 education that they need to strive to do well, that they're being
 277 tested on (.) a lot of material that is really difficult for seven year
 278 olds. And (.) unfortunately I think some schools are a bit naïve in
 279 thinking that in Year Two they don't really know what SATS is and
 280 (.) they don't, they're not really affected by the tests and actually it's
 281 more the teachers that are affected by the test. However, from my
 282 experience, and it could be different at other schools, that was very
 283 much not the case. The children in Year Two knew they were doing
 284 (3) I was asked as a teacher to give them practice tests, practice
 285 SATS tests and reading tests and comprehension tests and maths
 286 tests all the way back from January of the Year Two year and SATS
 287 isn't until May. Which meant that for nearly 6 months of their Year
 288 Two education they were doing much more English and maths, and
 289 being tested much more frequently than other year groups, at a
 290 very young age. And they knew that the reason for this testing and
 291 this emphasis on English and maths was because they were
 292 preparing for something and they knew they were preparing for
 293 something, a test that was coming, and it was called SATS. And
 294 different schools might handle it in different ways but (.) I felt under
 295 a lot of pressure as a teacher because (2) I'm not sure when it
 296 actually came into place, but it was in place at the time, where
 297 teachers are now, their pay is reflected in their performance. So

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298 whether or not their children achieve the targets that they are
 299 supposed to achieve their set at the beginning of the year. And so I
 300 think as a teacher I felt between a rock and a hard place because I
 301 wanted my pay to continue to increase I didn't want my (.) career
 302 and my growth as a teacher to be affected by (2) the data that was
 303 going to be produced at the end of the year. But I also felt like I
 304 wasn't doing right by the children. And that actually it was really
 305 unfair everything that was being asked of them and being asked of
 306 me as a teacher in that year. And there was no understanding that
 307 they still need all those other components of their education
 308 because they are in primary school so things like art and even
 309 science in some regards (.) and history and geography and PE and
 310 fun trips and exciting outings and exciting activities really (.) did not
 311 happen for that whole six months. Because, you know, we had
 312 days we were just doing maths all day, or we were doing, sort of
 313 like a whole morning of English and then maths in the afternoon.
 314 And (.) it (.) those don't tend to be the subjects that children
 315 gravitate to, most children, a lot of children in their primary
 316 education gravitate to things that are more practical and hands-on
 317 and where they're able to show their creativity. And I feel like that
 318 was really, I don't know the word, but sort of, stifled out of them in
 319 that time (2) and I felt like it was really unfair and it made me feel
 320 like I was a really bad teacher, and I know that I'm not a bad
 321 teacher and that is probably the worst moment for me. It was the
 322 worst time for me because I felt like I wasn't doing my job which (.)

Recognition in her ability to teach

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323 was (2) the job that I originally wanted to which was to inspire them
 324 and help them grow and feel excited and happy to be at school.
 325 And I felt horrible coming into work every day because I felt like I
 326 didn't know what to do, how to handle that year whether I should (.)
 327 just try and ignore the pressure from above that felt like it was on a
 328 daily basis, coming to me, asking me results and when I was doing
 329 the next tests and practice for SATS. Or if I should do what was in
 330 my heart which was actually to teach them properly and give them
 331 a well-rounded education and (.) and not have so much pressure
 332 on a group of seven-year-olds. But I'm not sure if I was
 333 experienced enough at that time (.) or maybe I was actually just too
 334 sort of (.) engrossed in the situation I couldn't look at it objectively
 335 to do what I feel like I do now, which is just to ignore the system as
 336 much as possible. But (2) yeah I feel like that I constantly felt (.) in
 337 a bad place during that time and (.) I felt like I wasn't happy with
 338 myself and I didn't feel good about myself and it really made me
 339 hate teaching and made me not want to, I didn't know how I would
 340 carry on a teaching career if it was going to carry on like that.
 341 Which made really sad because, as I've already said I wanted to be
 342 a teacher since I was four years. There've been so many things
 343 that I've done leading up to now that have been priming me for
 344 teaching and to think about not teaching for the rest of my life I (2)
 345 didn't (.) it was difficult to (.) picture
 346 R: I was just wondering about something that you said there. You
 347 said that now you ignore the system

Self-reflective point: she considers that her inexperience or possibly the difficulty in having time to reflect and process may have impacted her actions at that time. She recognises that now she feels in a more experienced position which allows her to try and "ignore the system as much as possible" and be objective in her decision making

Lines 338-345. These words feel incredibly heavy. When she spoke it made me feel sad that she had experienced such sadness in relation to role which she been so enthusiastic about for so long. The presence of so many negative descriptors in regards to the posed question made me wonder about the impact on her wellbeing. Within schools, do members of senior leadership have any idea about the impact daily work is having on particular teachers and how can this trend be changed whilst maintaining accountability to ensure quality first teaching for all students?

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348 S: Mmmm

349 R: And I just wonder what's different or what's changed to make
350 you feel that you're in a position where you can ignore the system
351 now

352 S: I (.) think (.) that I (.) have recognised that you have to play the
353 game a little bit (.) meaning (.) that there are some things that you
354 are asked to do as a teacher and maybe there are certain things
355 that you can potentially get away with not doing (.) and although (.)
356 you (.) may not as a teacher (.) be liked in the school by senior
357 management and you potentially not might not even get promoted
358 or given higher positions in the school because of that attitude (.)
359 it's okay with me because all I've ever wanted to do is be a
360 classroom teacher. I don't want to go any further, I just want to be a
361 really good classroom teacher. I think I have got the (.) skill set now
362 to know and because of that experience I feel like I got the
363 confidence to say to senior leaders, "No actually I don't think that's
364 relevant" or "I don't think that's going to benefit the children" or
365 "How is that going to benefit the children?" So actually asking those
366 questions, whereas before I think because I didn't have the
367 confidence in my career, I think I was slightly more passive in just
368 doing as I was told because really that's how I've always been in
369 school, and I suppose in my teaching career, I've always been (2) a
370 model student, I suppose. So, I feel like I've got more confidence
371 and more knowledge of the curriculum and what children need to
372 say, "Actually that's not going to work" or "Actually that will work."

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373 There are of course loads of things that I do as a teacher that I
 374 don't agree with or I don't believe is going to make the impact, that I
 375 suppose senior leaders expect it to make them, but I feel like I've
 376 got more knowledge and more skills set to be able to understand
 377 the system a little bit better and how to play the game that way. I
 378 also think because I am teaching in Early Years, right now in
 379 reception, I think that you have more leeway (.) to (.) be flexible with
 380 the curriculum. Because it's not the national curriculum, because it
 381 is the Foundation Stage curriculum, I believe you have a bit more
 382 leeway to (2) develop the curriculum the way you see fit as
 383 opposed to the pressures of the national curriculum. I think the
 384 national curriculum falls short in a lot of ways and I think that for as
 385 long as I am teaching in this country (.) I want to be teaching in
 386 Early Years because I do not think that I would go back to the
 387 national curriculum from what I've experienced

388 R: (.) Right, thank you. Have there been any turning points in your
 389 career?

390 S: Yes (.) there have. I think I've sort of explained my main turning
 391 point but just to sort of reflect on it further. So, that time in Year Two
 392 at St Teresa's (.) actually going back before that there's a turning
 393 point in a sense that I felt like I needed a significant change. So,
 394 when I was in reception at St Teresa's we had (.) a coordinator, the
 395 Early Years coordinator (.) who I felt was really unsupportive (.) and
 396 (.) made me feel like I didn't have any professional discretion (2)
 397 over what happened in my own classroom. I felt very helpless to be

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398 able to do anything that I thought would benefit and reflect the
 399 cohort of children that I had, because as a good teacher I think you
 400 need to be very aware of the cohort of children that you have,
 401 there's going to be times where, you know, certain cohorts of
 402 children can do certain things and others can't do the same things.
 403 And it could be based on the majority of the children, the needs of
 404 the children's behaviour in the class, the social and emotional
 405 issues that might be (.) be relevant at the time. And I felt like I, as a
 406 class teacher, I knew my class really well and at the time I
 407 remember thinking that that particular group of children needed
 408 structure, they needed to be prepared for what was to come, which
 409 was the Year One national curriculum, they were ready for it, they
 410 were ready to sit down and do a bit more, sort of, structured work in
 411 a still a fun way and (2) she (.) And I thought it would really help
 412 with their transition into Year One because I think that can be quite
 413 big transition for children at such a young age; they go from having
 414 this free choice to being able to choose what they want to do and
 415 really guide their own learning, which is what I love about
 416 Foundation Stage, to being very much been told what to do, being
 417 sat in a chair at a desk for five, six hours a day and maybe not
 418 having as much (.) ability to actually think for themselves as they go
 419 into the national curriculum. I didn't want to take that away from
 420 them, of course, but I wanted to prepare them for what was to
 421 come. And when I went to our coordinator about this (.) saying that I
 422 felt that my class was ready for some different things, you know,

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423 different environment and structure in the class and she was (.)
 424 she said, "No" and (.) she was very against any sort of change
 425 within the classroom. And she didn't understand the needs of my
 426 class because she wasn't teaching them every day. And so I had
 427 to do to do what I felt was best for my class. I had to do it sneakily,
 428 for lack of a better word, I had to do things when I knew that she
 429 wouldn't be walking around looking at what is happening in the
 430 classroom. And it worked really really well. And the class were
 431 shown to be successful. But I just felt really (3) helpless again
 432 which is how I have felt over parts of my teaching career in this
 433 country (.) in a sense that I didn't feel like I could do what I felt was
 434 best as a teacher, I didn't feel I could think for myself and (.) and
 435 go with what I knew was best for my class (.) and that felt really
 436 unfair to me. So, I thought that maybe with the change of
 437 leadership and year group that would help so that was quite a
 438 turning point in my career in the sense that (.) I think I was
 439 expected in the school to carry on in Foundation Stage but I went
 440 to our head teacher and explained how I was feeling and that I
 441 thought I needed a change and (.) she allowed me to go up to
 442 Year Two the following year. And I really enjoyed Year Two in the
 443 autumn term. I couldn't believe the independence that they had and
 444 the still the excitement to come and learn and (.) you know how
 445 much they enjoyed school in that first term in Year Two (.) but then
 446 the next sort of turning point in my career happened when the
 447 onset, of sort of, practising (.) teaching to the test is really what they

Those in management roles may act as gatekeepers to allow a suggestion through, to consider it or to ignore the idea totally. An off-tangent idea it's interesting to consider what motivates different types of managers to have such varying responses. In this case the teacher felt shut down but was resourceful enough to find a way around it to do what she wanted for the best interest of her class. This story again speaks of perseverance. She found a way to do what she wanted but had to do it covertly, adding another layer of difficulty to the situation and undermining her wellbeing. However, she achieved the result she was hoping for as it was successful. A supportive team and leadership could have had further positive outcomes. Instead it led to a good practitioner leaving the Foundation Stage due to poor management and in the longer term the next move could have resulted in her leaving the profession permanently

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448 do, teaching to the test. You teach children how to take tests, you
 449 teach children in this country how to how to answer questions in the
 450 right way and the actual (.) curriculum, the knowledge and skills that
 451 they learn is not always necessarily what is sort of best for them or
 452 what is following the curriculum but in Year Two I felt it was really
 453 what was going to be found on the tests, types of questions that
 454 were going to be in the test which generally follow the curriculum (.)
 455 but in some ways they didn't and (.) I felt that that wasn't the best
 456 way to teach, not by any standards and (.) it made it quite boring
 457 the lessons because there are very (4) I'm not sure the word I'm
 458 looking for (3)

459 R: Repetitive?

460 S: Not really repetitive but very (7) prescriptive and (4) if you're
 461 going to prepare children, for example, for the reading
 462 comprehension part of SATS (.) there's not any fun way that you're
 463 able to do that. You literally have got two sets of tests, you've got a
 464 reading comprehension element where you have a little paragraph
 465 text and then you answer some questions about that paragraph and
 466 then you've got another paragraph and then you answer questions.
 467 There's no interesting way to teach those elements if you are trying
 468 to teach it very solely based on the test (.) which was at the school,
 469 that I was at, essentially giving practice papers so that they could
 470 see what it was about. There's interesting ways to teach inference
 471 and reading comprehension skills but (.) those teaching methods
 472 were tossed out the window because the focus was on making sure

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473 that they could answer questions in the format of a test. And (2) like
 474 I said before just felt completely helpless. I wanted them to do well
 475 on the test because I knew that obviously the school wanted them
 476 to do well and their families and their parents wanted them to do
 477 well and obviously for their own confidence I wanted them to do
 478 well. But the same time I knew that their education was (.) suffering
 479 because they weren't getting (.) the (2) they weren't getting (.) the
 480 well-rounded education that they should have and the fun and
 481 engaging and practical and exciting education that they should
 482 have. And they didn't have the independence to guide their own
 483 learning in ways that were interesting to them because so much
 484 was prescribed for them and it just made me feel really bad about
 485 myself as a teacher. And that is when I decided that I needed a
 486 break from classroom teaching which was quite (.) was the biggest
 487 turning point in my career because I never thought that I'd want to
 488 leave classroom teaching but I knew that I needed a break and
 489 wasn't qualified for anything else ((laugh)) so I thought I would have
 490 to do supply while I decided whether not I was going to be able to
 491 physically and mentally carry on teaching career in this country

492 R: ((nodding)) Have there been any significant people influencing (.)
 493 that have influenced your career? So that might be in school, that
 494 might be out of school but have there been any significant people
 495 that have influenced how you've ended up at this point in your
 496 career?

497 S: Erm (2)

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498 R: You've already touched a little on that with what you were
 499 referring to earlier about the Early Years coordinator

500 S: So these can be negative influences as well?

501 R: Yeah, negative, [positive

502 S: Yes] ((smiling)). I have had. I have had some negative influences
 503 and I have had some positive influences and some of them have
 504 been in school and some of them have been out of school so let me
 505 think. Well if I can go back to my teaching in Canada

506 R: Mmhmm

507 S: My teaching partner Rachel was fantastic. We were (.) both on
 508 the same page and she was a positive influence on me because
 509 we both bounced off each other and (.) we both had the same
 510 thinking when it came to education which was that children
 511 shouldn't be passive in their learning; they should be proactive.
 512 And to create that proactivity and those really positive learning
 513 behaviours you had to give them the opportunity to do that, which
 514 meant, you know, a lot of open-ended activities and then you know
 515 starting off that way and then coming back and actually finding out
 516 what was learned from those activities and (.) the opportunity to
 517 actually have a voice in what they were interested in and what they
 518 wanted to learn and then you tailor that to what actually needs to be
 519 covered within the curriculum. So, the children are very much
 520 partners with the teacher in their learning. And I think that's the best
 521 way to be teaching within the classroom and (.) it's a way that

Time required to work in the manner described. Highlights the need for planning and preparation time.

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522 ensures that children actually remember what they learn as well
 523 because if they're not engaged and not interested and they're not
 524 active in their learning then they're not going to remember what
 525 they have learned anyway so (.) it is a waste of their time as far as
 526 I'm concerned. And me and Rachel were really on the same page
 527 with that and we got some fantastic (.) teaching and learning
 528 experiences out of that kind of way of looking at classroom
 529 teaching. So, she was a really positive influence in my career. And
 530 (3) my Early Years Coordinator that I had, when I was in the two
 531 years of reception and one year of nursery, was a really negative
 532 influence on my career because as I said I felt like I was stripped of
 533 my ability to make my own professional judgements about how to
 534 deliver (.) the curriculum and my teaching and learning within the
 535 classroom, my classroom, and I felt like my (2) views and my
 536 opinions were dismissed really quickly. So, rather than, you know,
 537 we'd have phase meetings, for example, and rather than listening to
 538 what people had to say and, you know, taking that into account and
 539 trying to work out a way around things, while still following in the
 540 curriculum in the way that the school wanted to be run by sort of
 541 people senior to her, and she was just very dismissive and I don't
 542 know if I'm allowed to say this (2)

543 R: Say whatever you want. It's your story

544 S: But she came across slightly like a dictator in a sense that it just
 545 felt like we were told what to do and that was the end of it and we
 546 didn't have a say in it and (.) and it was her way or the highway

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547 basically. And it also felt like if you did have a problem or you had a
 548 concern about something that was going on in the classroom or
 549 with children in their home life or whatever it felt like she really
 550 didn't have (.) any time to give to you to, you know, brainstorm with
 551 to find a solution to the problem. And it also felt like if you did
 552 something that maybe the school would not necessarily (.) be
 553 happy with and something that you did in your class in the way that
 554 certain teaching and learning activities ran, she was very happy to
 555 sort of throw (.) her colleagues under the bus, for lack of a better
 556 phrase, and even if potentially the mistake or, you know, the
 557 misunderstanding originally came from her because she was very
 558 goal oriented. And I feel like her goal was to eventually maybe be a
 559 head teacher, or somewhere higher up in the school, and you kind
 560 of did feel working with her that she would step on anybody to get
 561 to where she wanted to be. And I don't think that there are room for
 562 people like that in a positive education environment. I think that to
 563 have a positive environment in education people need to be
 564 working collaboratively together, you need to be a cooperative
 565 individual, you need to and be able to listen and respectfully hear
 566 what other people have to say and come to a collective agreement
 567 of how things are going to work out, there needs to be compromise
 568 and flexibility and I didn't feel (.) that (.) my coordinator provided
 569 any of that. And then there was that feeling of helplessness, of not
 570 knowing what to do or how to make it better. I did try speaking to
 571 her a few times and it was met with very stern, negative reactions.

Connects to the idea of what motivates the actions of particular members of staff in their actions and decision-making

Appendix Eight

Sairse's Voice of...

Optimism

Struggle

Nurturer

Relationships

572 So, my wellbeing was extremely low while working with her
573 because (.) I constantly felt on edge and distressed when I was at
574 work and when I was at home thinking about work and (.) it meant
575 that I could (.) I lost a lot of sleep and (.) over sort of, you know,
576 issues and things I was worrying about that I felt like I couldn't
577 speak to her about. And I think that a teacher's wellbeing is so
578 incredibly important because you are you are teaching little people
579 how to be healthy little people, which means that they have a
580 healthy wellbeing and you can't teach that if you can't model that
581 yourself and (.) I again, I didn't feel like I was doing my best job as a
582 teacher for them while I was working essentially under her (.)
583 because my wellbeing was extremely compromised which meant
584 that, I'm a human being so if I am overtired and I'm stressed and I
585 am constantly worried and anxious in my working environment then
586 that is going to be subconsciously or consciously displaced
587 accidentally onto the children and (.) and the way that our
588 interactions with each other were potentially even sometimes in
589 front of the children was not what I would want them to understand
590 as healthy relationships. So, again there was that aspect of, you
591 know, you hope to model relationships with your colleagues that
592 you want the children to then model and their relationships and
593 friendships with each other. And if that positive aspect isn't there
594 then that is not an element of something that you really want to
595 teach children and I felt like that was happening in a really negative
596 way. Other influences (4) I worked with a teacher in Year Two (.)

Lines 572-577 indicate the difficulty of being able to compartmentalise work to working hours to try and achieve a healthy work-life balance. The lack of support she found in her colleague led her to identify her wellbeing as being jeopardised and she goes on to say in lines 582-590 how that had other repercussions

This seems to connect to teaching and learning as well as how she views her role as a teacher

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597 who was a really positive influence on me. Although we had very
 598 stressful times together (.) and she felt the same as me in regards
 599 to SATS and the pressure from the school she has a very laid-back
 600 personality. And it was fantastic working with her because I felt like
 601 she helps me to relax and I went from one environment in reception
 602 where working with colleagues it just didn't work, and we didn't get
 603 along, and we had very conflicting views, and I went from that
 604 experience to working with her and working in that Key Stage One
 605 corridor with some really lovely TA's and teachers including herself
 606 who, although ((laugh)) the actual element of teaching was not
 607 where I wanted it to be, the actual relationships with my colleagues
 608 was exactly where I wanted it to be. Which was friendly, in wanting
 609 to find about each other's lives, in encouraging each other to leave
 610 earlier on some days, to, you know, take care of our wellbeing and
 611 that was a really positive experience for me that year. And the last
 612 influence that I would like to talk about is the influence of my family
 613 and my husband ((smiling)) who have been an absolute (.) amazing
 614 influence in my teaching career. My parents have always been
 615 extremely supportive and have always built up my confidence
 616 ((laugh)) even when I have not been confident in myself, you know,
 617 particularly during that year in Year Two, where they said and
 618 reaffirmed that they knew I was a good teacher and it was what I
 619 was always meant to be (.) and it's things like them my granddad
 620 ((laugh)) doesn't really know how to use computers and certain up-
 621 to-date things properly and my cousins show him (.) and I guess

Lines 606-611 highlight the importance of supportive networks and environments within a stressful working situation. These protective factors being present may have been the support she needed to prevent her leaving during the school year that she was teaching in Year Two or may have prevented her from reaching total burn-out during the school year because it does sound like she was burnt out during that year due to SATS and the impact of working the year before with an unsupportive Early Years coordinator

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622 don't have much patience for showing somebody who doesn't quite
 623 understand what they are doing on how to work things and use
 624 things, and my mum always brings up the story of just me spending
 625 hours with my granddad on the computer and showing him how to
 626 work his phone when I came home to visit a few years ago and (.)
 627 the patience that I had in helping him (.) achieve what he wanted to
 628 achieve and learn what he wanted to learn. And she said that when
 629 she sees things like that she knows that I'm where I'm meant to be.
 630 That I'm meant to be teaching because that's what I was meant to
 631 do. So that really (.) my family have really built up my confidence to
 632 want to carry on in my teaching career. And my husband and is a
 633 fantastic influence on me because he reminds me that wellbeing is
 634 really important. He is also a teacher and when we first met he was
 635 teaching at a really difficult school for behavioural children and he
 636 was having difficult days where he was having to put children in
 637 restraints and deal with really difficult behaviours in the classroom,
 638 and out of the classroom, and there were days where he would just
 639 take a day off because he felt like he needed it for his personal and
 640 mental wellbeing. And I remember always thinking that was strange
 641 because (2) I never felt I could take a day off as a teacher, I always
 642 felt like I would be missing and I'd be creating more work for myself
 643 if I took a day off, even if I felt like I needed it due to, sort of,
 644 becoming ill or being overtired or overstressed, and usually due to
 645 work. And he is just such a positive influence because he, although
 646 he is fantastic at what he does and he's an amazing teacher, he

Lines 634-649 is almost a side story in a teacher taking action to manage their wellbeing in order to be present and available to the students he found himself working with

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647 has found that balance where he is able to understand that he can't
 648 do his best for the children that he works with unless he takes care
 649 of himself. And he has managed (.) to be that positive influence on
 650 me so that I can, although sometimes I forget, I have been better at
 651 taking care of my wellbeing as a teacher because I do know that it's
 652 really really important to model as a teacher to the children and for
 653 me to be at my utmost best so that I can do my best for them. So,
 654 he has been a positive influence in my career as well

655 R: It sounds like very clearly in those last two questions, or
 656 responses, that relationships and working in participation or co-
 657 production with the children that you're working with and the adults
 658 that you're working alongside and that kind of stems out into your
 659 relationships outside of work as well. It sounds like a very clear
 660 thread that the importance of relationships, that that is really
 661 important to you

662 S: Relationships, like with my colleagues [and

663 R: Yeah

664 S: relationships of the [children

665 R: Yeah]

666 S: Definitely, yeah

667 R: So it sounds like it's really added to the twists and turns of the
 668 different turning points and what's influenced your career

As I listened to her I was reflecting on the importance of relationships and I highlighted this in lines 655-661. And this is something she goes onto to reflect on up until line 688

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669 S: Certainly, I think I've always been one that has been influenced
 670 by my environment; and obviously people are part of your
 671 environment (3) I (.) yeah I think that relationships are really
 672 important, I think your relationship the children is really important
 673 because if they don't like you, if they feel like you're not there for
 674 the reason that you should be there, which is for them to, you know,
 675 make their time at school exciting and happy and nurturing and, you
 676 know, make them feel safe and happy and loving environment, then
 677 they can't then go on to learn what they need to learn and I think
 678 that's really important. When you make those connections with the
 679 children, they want to do their best for you and they want to learn
 680 and they want to be there and (.) I think the same goes for, you
 681 know, colleagues at work. If you are showing an interest in people's
 682 lives, and you are wanting to support each other, and work
 683 collaboratively with one another, you are all there for the same
 684 reason because you want to do it is best for the children and I think
 685 that creates a really positive working environment. And amongst
 686 other stresses that will come up in any working environment, I feel
 687 like if there is that positive relationship with your colleagues then
 688 you can get through it together thing sort of thing (2) yeah

689 R: That makes lots of sense to me ((smiling)). Okay, so have there
 690 been any curriculum which have been implemented during your
 691 teaching career and how did these affect you? I'm aware that
 692 you've worked in lots of different (.) systems and I don't know if you

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693 want to pick one particular one or if you want to make references
 694 across the different ones

695 S: They're weren't any changes when I was teaching in Canada
 696 because I wasn't there for long enough. But there were changes
 697 from when I started teaching in the UK to now. Now, I think it's
 698 difficult for me to say specifically what those changes are because I
 699 was only really growing to know the system and then things
 700 changed sort of the thing so I don't know that I'm really confident in
 701 saying specific changes. However, when Michael Gove came in to
 702 education and (.) he was the director of education wasn't he? Or
 703 the Minister of Education, we call it Director of Education in
 704 Canada. The system when I first came to the UK was difficult.
 705 There was a lot of paperwork, it was run very different to what I was
 706 used to. I felt the national curriculum had a lot of flaws within it, it
 707 created very passive children that were unable to really think for
 708 themselves generally (.) but I felt like when Michael Gove came in
 709 as Minister of Education things got even worse. I felt like the
 710 paperwork increased, I felt like (.) professional discretion was
 711 completely stripped from teaching (.) I felt like there was more of a
 712 (.) push for evidencing absolutely everything you do as a teacher.
 713 So, you know, every conversation you have with children and (.)
 714 every piece of work that they do being evidenced and analysed and
 715 annotated and written on (2) and any intervention that you want to
 716 do, anything additional that you feel like as a teacher you know that
 717 certain children need had to be documented in certain formats and

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718 performs and templates. And I've just felt like the paperwork and
 719 the evidence has just skyrocketed in teaching, the teaching
 720 profession, and I feel like that (.) has (2) just created such a
 721 negative impact on teachers because (.) when I was in Canada I
 722 felt like I had the professional discretion, I went to school and I
 723 trained to be teacher and, you know, obviously I was observed
 724 throughout my career as well and they had these positive
 725 observations and constructive feedback to give back to, you know,
 726 do better in certain areas. But I felt like I was given the discretion,
 727 the ability and opportunity to judge for myself what was best for the
 728 children that I was teaching. I didn't have to evidence every little
 729 thing because my (2) professional judgement was seen to be
 730 accurate because I have done all this training and I feel like this is
 731 what's different in this country. I feel like there is no professional
 732 discretion, you're expected to prove everything as a teacher and I
 733 feel that takes away, you know, you only have so many hours in the
 734 day, obviously six of them (.) six and a half are spent with the
 735 children. So you've also got time to sleep, and you want to have
 736 time with your family and your friends and, you know, to do
 737 extracurricular activities that may interest you, so fitting all that in
 738 plus having to do lots and lots of paperwork to show planning and
 739 evidence of specific things that you're doing and it's, you know, it's
 740 not sort of one line things that you can fill out, paperwork in the
 741 education system, what I've seen across schools, so not just
 742 individual schools that I've worked at, is pages and pages of very

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743 detailed notes that I never look at as a teacher because (2) I think
 744 that as a teacher when you make your own plan, and so many
 745 people work in so many different ways. So, for me, what benefits
 746 me, is even if I am doing practical activities with the children, I like
 747 to put things on a flipchart and I give myself prompts in the flipchart
 748 so that it can be in the background. I can be doing something in the
 749 classroom with them but it's prompted me or I've got key questions
 750 that I think that I am going to focus on and that ideally would be my
 751 planning. So just a flipchart. Other people would work in different
 752 ways. Some people prefer mind maps, some people prefer post-its,
 753 some people prefer a day diaries type thing. And I feel like the
 754 prescriptive element of paperwork in the education system is really
 755 difficult for teachers to manage because by the time you put all
 756 your effort into typing up and writing out planning and interventions
 757 and all these detailed reports of everything that you're doing, you
 758 don't actually get time to put into planning amazing lessons that the
 759 children are going to benefit from and gathering up the resources
 760 and making the resources that it takes to have an amazing lesson.
 761 And I feel like that is where the education system really falls short
 762 because there's so much time put into paperwork and evidencing
 763 everything. And on top of that funding for TA's has decreased
 764 significantly which means that you know having to do a lot of
 765 sticking in your books, displays (.) things that could be easily
 766 handed off or to delegated to somebody else but we don't have TAs
 767 that work past the hours of when children are actually in school.

Paperwork is one element that appears to be draining teachers of their ability and energy to complete other 'behind the scenes' roles such as practically planning and collecting up resources to be used in lessons

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Sairse's Voice of...

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Struggle

Nurturer

Relationships

Recognition

768 You know, in schools there's a lot of situations where TAs are being
769 shared between many classes. So teachers are having to do a lot
770 of paperwork and sticking and glueing and photocopying and
771 displaying on their own, as well as everything else they do, and
772 there's just not physically enough hours in the day, I think that's
773 where you (.) well that's where I start to feel really quite negative
774 about teaching because I feel like if I could put all the time and
775 energy that it takes me to do evidencing of things and paperwork, if
776 I could put that into buying supplies for really exciting activities and
777 making resources that are really going to engage the children and
778 thinking about really interesting ways to, like stimulating starts to
779 units of work, and fantastic finishes and things like that, you know,
780 that the way that I was actually trained when I was in teachers
781 college, I feel like the children would not only learn more but they
782 would have experiences like I had with my second grade teacher
783 who always made things extravagant and amazing and exciting. It's
784 unfortunate as teachers, or I feel as teachers we don't have time to
785 think about those kinds of things because there's just too much
786 other stuff to do. When you also take into account that generally,
787 well in my school now and at previous schools, you have at least an
788 hour and a half staff CPD training after school and you have
789 potentially responsibilities, so at my school I'm also the art
790 coordinator with a colleague so I have additional teaching and
791 learning responsibilities. And I don't have additional PPA time
792 during the day to support the teaching and learning responsibilities.

This highlights teachers are using time to complete admin tasks which could be completed by persons less qualified/less expensive resources in school

Line 784-786 emphasises the conflict within the role 'I want to be doing x but am required to do y instead'

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793 It's expected that I do that after school in my own time. When you
 794 factor all those additional responsibilities in data collection and
 795 we're meant to analyse data to the nth degree now. So, sort of
 796 analysing children who are pupil premium, analysing children who
 797 are SEN, analysing data of children who are EAL, analysing data of
 798 children who have traveller backgrounds or difficult home life or
 799 boys or girls and there's so much you're expected to do as a class
 800 teacher that you feel like you're a juggler, juggling like a million balls
 801 in the air. Really the most important thing is teaching the children
 802 and making it fun and it feels like that is really sucked right out of it
 803 and (2) I feel like over time since I have been here it has got worse

804 R: Alright, thank you for that reflection. I think (.) that is very well
 805 put. You said you weren't so sure about answering that one at the
 806 beginning, I think you can be very confident in your answer
 807 ((smiling)). Are you okay or did you need a break?

808 S: No, I'm okay

809 R: So how did, or how has, changing schools impacted on you?

810 S: How did changing schools impact me? Well I've had a few
 811 changes. Going from Canada to the UK, the change impacted me
 812 in both positive and negative ways. So positively, I think I learnt a
 813 lot more strategies for behaviour management because it's (.)
 814 something that was never really a concern or a problem at the
 815 school where I was teaching in Canada. So, I learned a lot of
 816 things, I was thrown in the deep end and although it was really

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817 scary but reflecting upon it I feel like I learned a lot from that
 818 experience. Negatively, I think it really it (.) made me feel like it like I
 819 questioned whether I'd made the right choice going into teaching.
 820 Because I didn't realise that something that I thought and did at one
 821 point made me so incredibly happy that it didn't feel like work to me,
 822 it just felt like this is where I'm meant to be. It went from feeling that
 823 was to feeling like I didn't know whether I was good at this job, I
 824 questioned my ability to do what I'd been trained and working my
 825 whole life to do and (.) I (.) I felt like that was quite a negative
 826 impact. I thought that maybe it would get easier after I had spent a
 827 few months or even a few years in this system, so I thought
 828 originally it could be because I didn't know the system well enough,
 829 I didn't know how things work but that has proven to not be the
 830 case. I was obviously at a very low point in my career at the end of
 831 Year Two at St Theresa's in London and I changed schools hoping
 832 that I would have bit more clarity onto or into what I wanted to do
 833 with my life. I did question quite a bit whether or not I was in the
 834 right career path. I think supply teaching (.) for that year after I left
 835 London (.) brought with it many highs and lows as well because
 836 supply teaching itself is an amazing experience but I don't know
 837 how people make a career out of that because I also find it not very
 838 rewarding. So, as a teacher you have so many rewarding moments
 839 where you get to see the children blossom and grow and progress
 840 and move through their education and through their lives and you
 841 develop those relationships and those connections with them and in

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Saoirse's Voice of...

Optimism

Struggle

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Relationships

842 helping them get there, and as a supply teacher you see them for a
843 day and then you might not see them again. You might not even
844 know what their names are and to me that's not what teaching is
845 about. So, that was quite a difficult point as well. And it made me
846 reflect on whether or not I should go back into classroom teaching
847 and seeing if I felt differently at a different school, in a different
848 county and in a different area. So, when I started at the current
849 school that I'm at, I originally felt amazing. I felt like I had more
850 control, more say over things, like I say I think a lot of that is to do
851 with teaching the Foundation Stage curriculum and not the national
852 curriculum, and I feel like to an extent a lot of Head Teachers don't
853 understand the Foundation Stage curriculum so they tend to not
854 put too much scrutiny on teachers working in the Foundation Stage
855 because they don't understand it so they probably feel they can't
856 scrutinise. I was thoroughly enjoying it until we had Ofsted. Since
857 then it has significantly got worse the school environment and (2)
858 we went from being a 'good' school to 'needing improvement'. We
859 went from seeing the Head Teacher all the time, him coming into
860 talk to us about how things were going with our children weekly, on
861 a weekly basis he would come and talk to us and say "How are
862 things going? Is there anything I should know? How are you getting
863 on?" There was a very big push for wellbeing because that was
864 actually part of my interview when I originally interviewed for this
865 position. One of the questions was 'How do you look after your
866 wellbeing as a teacher?' Which made me feel confident in that they

There was a real sense of turmoil as she spoke. During that time in her career she was reflecting on whether she should continue doing what she felt she was meant to do but the systems appeared to be stifling what she felt her role was. Unlike me, when I felt restricted by systems I spent some time thinking about what else I could do which I felt would help children realise their full potential and be able to help those in need better. I've come to realise that the role of the EP is at times restricted by systems too. But when I was making my decision, while I loved teaching and the children, I unlike Saoirse, had only invested ten years of my life to it. For her, she had been preparing since her earliest years. That really drives home the impact which the systems within education can have on adults working within it. Consequently, it must also impact the young people who are experiencing it

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Saoirse's Voice of...

Optimism

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Relationships

867 recognised as a school that wellbeing was important. But since
868 OFSTED and since we've moved down in the criteria and we've not
869 seen the Head Teacher. If you go into his office to ask something or
870 discuss a child protection issue, you get a hand in your face
871 ((holding up hand to demonstrate)) that he's too busy. It's a very
872 different environment to what it was. I feel like it was originally quite
873 a positive influence for me but (.) I feel like that might be changing.
874 However, one thing that is quite positive where I am at now is that I
875 enjoy very much working with most of my colleagues and (.) I have
876 obviously learned from that experience in London that wellbeing is
877 important and I've made it a bigger priority for myself and I've
878 learned that I can say no. So if somebody tells me something at
879 school, tells me to do something or (.) tells me they need something
880 from me, I make sure that I am setting the standards when they're
881 going to receive certain things and how they are done because I
882 believe as a teacher I do have professional discretion over what I
883 think is best for the children and as long as I am doing that and I am
884 teaching the children to the best that I can, paperwork and evidence
885 and anything else that is asked of me can wait until I'm ready to
886 give it, until I have the time to do it. So, I feel like although the
887 environment at school is becoming more negative and is not as
888 positive as when I started out in this school, I feel like because I
889 have developed awareness of what I think is really important, I have
890 tried to make that impact of the environment, I feel like it is less
891 because I am more aware of certain things

Lines 869-871: Raises the issue of one person being responsible for a number of different roles. Safeguarding concerns need to be addressed in a prompt manner. Being unable to speak to the safeguarding officer about a concern could have severe consequences for children and young people, it could lead to oversights. This relates to role because how much accountability are professionals being asked to be responsible for. While I don't advocate how the head teacher appears to be engaging with staff post-OFSTED, he must be under overwhelming amounts of pressure as the school has gone down in OFSTED grading's

Line 871/872: Really felt for her because it appeared she had found a school who valued wellbeing. Yet, this must not have been fully entrenched within the school systems as when pressure from external systems arrived, wellbeing has been downgraded in priorities

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892 R: Mmm, and am I right in thinking that even though the overall
893 thing from Ofsted was 'requires improvement' that wasn't reflective
894 of the Early Years area ((S nodding)) but even so you're feeling an
895 impact of that within your...

896 S: Definitely. Definitely, so we were rated as 'good' and we actually
897 were not given any targets in the Ofsted report of how to do better.

898 So, I was surprised that we didn't get 'outstanding'. But (.) although
899 it wasn't us that went below 'good' into 'needs improvement' we
900 have been (.) the governors have been relieved of duty and we
901 have been given an interim education board I think it's called,
902 which is basically governors are appointed by the council to come
903 in and do the role of previous governors of the school in managing
904 the school and supporting the Head. And the council have sent as
905 an adviser that comes in once every two weeks to do learning

906 walks and although we were rated 'good' we are still part of those
907 learning walks and still part of all the additional training that is being
908 put into the rest of the school so it hasn't been noted that (.) by the
909 school in the sense that we actually have done well and we should
910 carry on doing what we're doing because we're doing something
911 really right. And in fact, we are being brought into training that really

912 has nothing to do with us, the relevancy is not there. So, although
913 there is this idea in schools and with Head Teachers that 'well
914 everybody needs to part of the training because you can move year
915 groups any time' I don't understand that process because although
916 I agree, you could move any time, the thing about education it

Despite this, no recognition of the achievement of the Early Years. She goes onto say in line 906 that they are still included in the learning walks as a result of Ofsted even though her department were not given any targets by Ofsted

Real frustration

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917 changes so rapidly and even within a school (.) **systems and things**
 918 **that are in place change so rapidly**, one year you could be talking
 919 about, you know, a certain thing that you're putting in place for
 920 reading, and that could be changing the next year. So, **it doesn't**
 921 **really make sense to waste our valuable time that could be spend**
 922 **on our particular curriculum and environment and how to make it**
 923 **better at these staff meetings and training sessions that have**
 924 **nothing to do with us**. And instead that is not acknowledged and we
 925 are part of something that has, is not relevant to us. And **I think it's**
 926 **really unfortunate because I think that there are things that we**
 927 **could do that, like work on outdoor classroom and we've got goals,**
 928 **other goals within the setting that we want to work on, observations**
 929 **and things** (.) and we do not have, **there's only so much time in a**
 930 **week that we have to be able to do that and with additional, like I**
 931 **say, staff training and meetings that are not relevant to our Key**
 932 **Stage or curriculum** and (.) I (.) I also think there is an element of
 933 learning on the job in teaching there is a huge element of that
 934 actually. So, if you are, if I'm having a training on reading
 935 comprehension, which I did this week so that's why it's in my head,
 936 and actually it's only applied from Years 3 to 6, the woman said at
 937 the very end of the session ((laugh)). Unless I'm actually physically
 938 doing that intervention every day, I'm not going to remember them
 939 anyway. So, I'm sitting there listening to something that hasn't got
 940 anything to do with the relevancy of what I do now. And even if I did
 941 move year groups I'd have to re-do it; I'd either have to be re-

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942 trained or re-informed of what's actually happening because, you
 943 know, it's like a skill in maths, if you're not using something, you're
 944 not going to remember it, you're going to have to re-teach yourself.
 945 That's not thought about in this system ((laughs)) it's not thought
 946 about the best use of teachers' time and I think that's why a lot of
 947 time gets wasted and isn't efficient. And when there is that lack of
 948 efficiency that's when teachers become stressed because they feel
 949 they don't have the time to do things that would best benefit the
 950 children and I've kind of got off topic but (.) yes

951 R: That's okay

952 S: Yes

953 R: That was [

954 S: Sorry]

955 R: That's totally fine ((both laughing)) that's totally fine. I (.) okay (.)
 956 I don't want to put words in your mouth or anything but it comes
 957 across as you're so passionate about what you do but how does
 958 being a teacher make you feel? It's obviously not on the recording
 959 but I can see in your whole manner and the look on your face how
 960 you sort of feel about that but...

961 S: Yeah, I'm definitely passionate about teaching. I think that a
 962 teacher (.) can inspire you to do things and make you feel you've
 963 got the confidence to do things that maybe you don't think you
 964 could before. I also think that being more than a teacher, being, you
 965 know, especially in early years being a mum, being sometimes a bit

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966 of a social worker, being, you know, a doctor, being so many
 967 elements of (.) of (.) different professions is really what children,
 968 especially young children need. I've got a lot of children in my class
 969 right now who have really difficult home lives. And it could be that
 970 I'm their (.) that person that has the longest conversation with them
 971 in the day, and gives them the most attention in the day, and, you
 972 know, gives them any kind of, you know, I know we're not supposed
 973 to cuddle the children but, you know, they might need to cuddle,
 974 they might need a bit of affection because they may not receive that
 975 at home. And I feel like it is the job of the teacher to provide the
 976 children with whatever they need, so if it's just time to talk then it's
 977 time to talk, if it's learning a maths skill it's learning a maths skill, if
 978 it's taking care of them when they've fallen over then it's taking care
 979 of them when they've fallen over and giving them some first aid. But
 980 I think that as a teacher, the best part is that you get to see different
 981 sides of children and you get to see (.) and you get to provide them
 982 with everything that they need to feel happy and safe in their school
 983 environment and knowing that they might not actually feel those
 984 things outside of school. It's amazing. I think it's so incredibly
 985 rewarding. Like I said when, you know, you've been working on a
 986 skill, or even an emotional skill, so learning how to make friends
 987 and learning how to maintain those friendships, learning how to
 988 understand and explain how they're feeling so that they can
 989 manage their emotions better which will then impact positively on
 990 their learning. Helping them move towards and when they do finally

Appendix Eight

Saoirse's Voice of...

Optimism

Struggle

Nurturer

Relationships

Recognition

991 get there it's amazing. And I do think that's why I can't leave
992 teaching, you know, despite all the stress and the anxiety that has
993 been created over the course of my teaching profession, especially
994 in this country, I feel that's the reason I can't leave, it's for those
995 high moments, where all the highs make it worth it (.) for those
996 lows, the highs make it worth it. And then it's nice that when the
997 children have moved on and are in different year groups and
998 classes still come back to you and remember you and want to give
999 you a little cuddle and want to give you a little high five because
1000 they're proud of something they've done and they remember you
1001 were their teacher and they remember that and you've had an
1002 impact and that connection with them and (.) that's really lovely as
1003 well. I got married this summer and I had children that I taught back
1004 in London that sent me cards and little presents that they made
1005 because they still remember me which is really sweet and I still
1006 remember them and I obviously had (.) a nice impact, a positive
1007 impact on them. So, yeah, I think teaching is amazing. It is a
1008 rollercoaster. ((laughs)) There are many highs and there are many
1009 lows but obviously the highs make it worth it.

1010 R: Mmmm, it sounds like it. Okay, you've shared so much and
1011 you've given lots of really rich detail in your account of talking about
1012 your teaching career; what would be the title of your story, about
1013 the things that you've talked about today, if you were to give it a
1014 title, what would that title be?

The children clearly come across as the reason for being in teaching. Saoirse has gone through a period of reflecting on whether she can continue to teach or not. She's come out of that reflective period as a stronger, more confident professional. Still maintaining the children are at the heart of role

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1015 S: (3) Well I have thought about this. Obviously I've spoken a lot
 1016 about highs and about lows and being a bit of a juggler with all the
 1017 balls you've got in the air when you're a teacher. And I think that if I
 1018 had to put a title on my teaching career it would be 'A Rollercoaster'
 1019 because you get on a rollercoaster and you have those drops
 1020 where your stomach sinks and you feel anxious and worried
 1021 because, you know, you've got that pit of your stomach, you don't
 1022 know what's going to happen and then it's okay again because then
 1023 the rollercoaster shoots up in the air, you know, it brings you back
 1024 on this high of feeling okay again and brings you back and it's
 1025 brilliant and exciting and thrilling and rewarding because, you know,
 1026 you're back where you want to be, and so, I think if I had to have a
 1027 title, it would be 'Rollercoaster'

1028 R: Super, thank you so much. That is really really fantastic. Is there
 1029 anything else you wanted to add that I maybe didn't ask you about?

1030 S: (4) The only thing that I think is really important, and I touch on a
 1031 little bit, it's the element of OFSTED which is also obviously recently
 1032 came up in one of the questions that you asked me. It's (.) if I'm
 1033 comparing two systems, so Canada and England, we don't have
 1034 OFSTED in Canada, we don't have anything similar to OFSTED in
 1035 Canada, so the way that it works is that you don't have to provide
 1036 Head Teachers with planning, you don't have to provide any
 1037 evidence of paperwork or anything, the only thing that you do need
 1038 to provide is data. So, you know at the end of the unit you provide
 1039 your summative assessment. Anything else that you collect as a

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1040 teacher, or any other way that you might work to collect that
 1041 information is based on you and how you work as an individual
 1042 which I think respects the individuality of people in general. There
 1043 are obviously pros and cons to the Canadian system but (.) I think
 1044 that's amazing. And as far as inspections and observations go, your
 1045 Head Teacher in your first three years of teaching will come in a bit
 1046 more frequently maybe, sort of, three, four times in a year. But as
 1047 you progress through you career, those observations go down to
 1048 once a year, and you're just trusted that you know what you are
 1049 doing (3) and having that sense of trust and feeling like you are
 1050 given that opportunity and responsibility to just do what you feel is
 1051 best, is really (.) amazing and (.)it makes the environment and the
 1052 whole idea of teaching so much more positive because it makes
 1053 you feel like, you know, you are in control, you know what you are
 1054 doing, you've been given the trust that you deserve after all the
 1055 training that you have put into your career and that you continue to
 1056 put in and you know what's best for your children. And it makes,
 1057 just a really great feeling as a teacher feeling that trust (.) and I feel
 1058 that is the different between Canada and here. It's that you don't
 1059 feel that you're trusted, you feel like you have to prove and justify
 1060 everything you do and you have to evidence everything that you do.
 1061 And with (.) the (2) with the (.) threat and I am going to use that
 1062 word, threat of OFSTED coming, you do, you have to do things that
 1063 the Head Teacher or a Senior leader say is for 'Our OFSTED'
 1064 which I find interesting because OFSTED's (.) motto or idealogy

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1065 or whatever you want to call it, is that there is no one right way of
1066 doing anything. They said that to us at the beginning of their
1067 inspection back in April, that they are not looking for one right
1068 system of doing something, that all they're looking for is that the
1069 systems that are in place are effective for the progress and benefit
1070 of the children. I agree with that to an extent that they probably (.)
1071 and I think that has changed over the last few years because I don't
1072 think that Ofsted always had that sort of ideology in place but it is
1073 what they are striving to work towards now. But if that were true and
1074 if that ideology was really properly followed through then things like
1075 (3) so one of the reasons we were put down as 'needs
1076 improvement' was that some of the data from the previous Year's
1077 Six SATS, again, was not was not ideal. That cohort in general
1078 didn't do very well. Now, again, OFSTED is looking at that, and
1079 other people looking at that as a group of numbers, not a group of
1080 people, of little people who are growing and developing and
1081 changing and turning into little adults and they've got their own
1082 mental and social and emotional wellbeing to look after and things
1083 are happening to them in their home life and their relationships. And
1084 that's not taken into account. So, they're not just a number, they're
1085 an individual and I don't feel that individuality is embraced in this
1086 country. The individual-ness and uniqueness of a child is not
1087 embraced (.) children are seen as numbers and targets and data (.)
1088 and that is (.) it's not real. I feel that children feel the impact of that
1089 and I feel that Ofsted is partially to blame for that (.) and I feel like

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1090 the atmosphere that Ofsted and the treat of Ofsted creates, for
1091 example, if you go down to 'needs improvement' there's all these
1092 things, like the council's interim education board we've got in place,
1093 and the school decides to throw loads and loads of training into so
1094 many different things (2) when actually sometimes it's about doing
1095 one thing really well. Like sometimes schools get so worried that
1096 they've had a bad OFSTED report that rather than actually coming
1097 together as a school and saying 'Okay, what we do really well?
1098 Because I think that there are areas that we do really well. What
1099 areas do we need to improve? What shall we really focus on and
1100 put our energy into and do it well?' I don't feel like that happens. I
1101 feel like (.) systems (.) schools have this breakdown where they
1102 don't want to do so they throw their energy into a million different
1103 balls in the air, and again it's that juggling act. And they can't do
1104 anything, they don't do anything well. They just do lots of things
1105 poorly. I feel like that is in part due to OFSTED. I also feel like when
1106 you're a 'good' school, you're constantly striving to be an
1107 'outstanding' school. And when you're an 'outstanding' school,
1108 you're constantly trying to maintain the 'outstanding' status. And I
1109 just feel there's so much within a school environment that is
1110 constantly catering to this idea of OFSTED reports. When actually
1111 it's a group of individuals, that are there for a few days, they don't
1112 know what the school runs like on a whole, they don't know, they
1113 can get a little bit of a picture but they don't know the ins and outs
1114 of everything. What they're seeing is maybe not necessarily always

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1115 accurate or maybe they're not seeing the whole picture from the
1116 time that they do do an observation or a look through a book. And I
1117 don't think they generally look at children as individuals. And I think
1118 that creates that tone in the environment that actually, yeah,
1119 children are just a group of numbers. Yeah (.) I just think that it's a
1120 really unfortunate system that's in place in this country because I
1121 think it creates a law of this, the whole evidencing and (2) the extra
1122 paperwork that goes into a school. I think that schools then feel
1123 they then need to use that to prove OFSTED that they are doing
1124 certain things and actually they just need to trust that teachers are
1125 doing what they're doing. And children will actually do better on
1126 those summative assessments if they have those amazing lessons
1127 and those amazing learning experiences that can only be planned
1128 in when teachers have the time to plan them in

1129 R: Thank you

1130 S: So, yes, that's the only additional that I wanted to add

1131 R: Thank you. Thank you so much for your time and thank you for
1132 everything that you've shared with me

1133 S: Thank you

Appendix Nine

Luke's 'I Poem'

Background

I'm an English teacher

I was Head of English

I've also taught

I spread around

I've held so far

I'm an assistant head

I teach English

I've got quite a spread

Most challenging thing I've done

I've worked

I've always been keen on working in schools like that

I suppose that's one of the biggest shifts recently

I turned to academies for purely financial reasons

Why Teaching?

I know that sounds

I can go with that

I first started working

If I'm going to be really honest

I became a teacher

I finished

I had a 56 grand student loan

Best Moments

I suppose

When I became Head of English

I moved

I improved results

I've delivered at

If I don't continue in a school

I forget the name

I'm considering

I still enjoy schools

Worst Moments

I guess

I've had that happen

I had knives pulled on me

I left

I'd go and do bus stop duty

I had to

I had to deal with her

Said I was being racist

I was going

I wanted

I saw those members of staff

I just think that's a bit of a disgrace

I think that's wrong

I mean at the minute

I'm working ten to twelve hour days

What I do at work

What I take at work

What I take home

What I don't take home

I care

People I work with

If I take anything more home

I wouldn't have a relationship

I certainly wouldn't see my daughter

I'm very lucky

I do know a number of Heads

I know

I'm very lucky to have a Head who understands

I think

I wouldn't

I made a decision

I'm not going to work for that type

I'm sure that can work

I haven't seen an example

I wasn't looking

I wasn't looking

I like working

I wanted

I was a bit nervous

I didn't like

I'd never seen anything like that before

I just thought

I actually thought

I really like that

I was quite keen

I upped the concentration

Turning Points...

I very nearly left

When I worked

I very nearly left the profession completely

I thought

I took redundancy

I was being quite arrogant

I know

I'm good at what I do

I'm walking

I was kind of playing

So I did

I took the cheque

I suppose

I was deputy

I wasn't pleased with their tone

I wasn't

I wasn't being treated like that

I took the deal

I'd signed the paperwork

I was the only one

I took the money

I left

I was very close to stopping

I thought

I'd re-train

I would have gone

I was definitely drinking more

My wife and I's relationship changed

I was always stressed

I stopped

I stopped

I missed it massively

I really missed it

I started looking

I stayed until the end of the year

I wasn't able

I took that time

I made the decision

I want

I was interested

I also got

I would like

When I make the next move

I will take a hit

Or I'll move up

I have been happy

I went back

I cannot see myself not working with children

I can muck about in a classroom

I can come out

I really don't mind

I get really nervous

I get really anxious

I much prefer

I'm lucky

I teach

So I deliberately

I want the exam classes

I want Key Stage 5

I run the sixth form

I need the English results to be goo

I can pretty much guarantee

I feel

I can be a bit blunt

I definitely delegate

I would teach

I won't teach

I have meetings before

I'm somewhere else

I regret taking on the additional

I couldn't allow

I alone

I earn

I was completely offended

I think it's absolutely shocking

I wouldn't want to be a head teacher trying to get the balance right

Significant People

When I started

When I first started

I was greedy for more money

No way I was going to get

So I said

Then I'd like

So I did

I set it up

I got that running

Difference to what I was earning

I've created

I've led

I've been

Since I was an NQT [Newly Qualified Teacher]

I was very aware

I was confident enough

I had

I got

If I ever step any higher

I'm getting her

I started

I'm 39

I suppose

I say similar things

I think that's a bit of privilege

I find it disturbing

I still have hope

I think those two stand out

I was very green

I stepped

I left

I was really happy

I made sure

I've got

I line manage

I got CPD

I was given the right opportunities

I think it's really important

I do that to other people

I've seen managers

Curriculum Changes

I refer to it as double jumping

I will sit down with staff

What was I saying?

I don't quite know how they make their decisions

I think what they have

I think the reason why

Do you know what I mean?

I don't have discipline problems in my class

I think that's pushed a lot of people

I have a member of staff

I was frustrated

I just found it

I suppose you could argue

I mean what does any of that stuff mean

I don't necessarily think

But I do sometimes wonder

I look at

What I taught

Why am I doing this?

Why am I doing

What I'm doing

I'm not even

I enjoy teaching

I love teaching

I love

I don't really know

Changing Schools

I worked in

Every year I got

I had to make a decision

Am I going

Am I going to stay

I wanted

I wanted to become Head of English

That's what I wanted

I went

That's what I got

When I moved

I suppose

I was a little too big for my boots

I wanted to change whole school systems

I wanted to be able

I would be quite bullish

I wanted to change quite a lot

I got pushed back

I only did it

I wanted to have an influence

I learnt that

I was also

I did that

That's why I

I wanted

I became quite interested

I realised the politics that go on

I was dealing with people

How do I word this?

I felt that was frustrating

I've had to change

I've presented myself

I would be quite aggressive

I was told

I had to learn

I made loads of adjustments

I suppose

If I were to look back

If I really look

I had

If I look at the way

I dealt with things

I was Head of English

Beyond what I was

I was arguably

I've calmed down

I present

I want things

I've presented

I do think

As a teacher I feel...

I feel very privileged

I do feel very lucky

I've felt more and more

I differentiate

I don't get marking done

I either have to sacrifice

I've 200 essays to mark over Christmas

I can leave that

I can do extra

However I do it

I'm actually a child-carer

I don't get the time

The way

I used to

I'd work Monday

I'd get all my work done

I'd have three or four days off

I'm not willing to give up all of my evenings

I'm not willing to give up all my weekends

I can't give up

Before I had a child

I would

I'd just crunch it

I'd work a few hours

I would go

I can't do that anymore

I never sit in my office

I might do

I stay late

I stay til about seven

I pulled up a teacher

I find that quite refreshing

I have to take home

A Title...

I have my day

I took sixth form

I find them quite hard to relate with

I think

I'm a bit of a bull in a china shop

I said

I charge around the place

I'm not slack at all

I'm very high in my expectations

I wouldn't allow

I would always acknowledge

I pulled the reigns

I wanted it

I never even thought

I'll try

I guess

I do talk

I'll make that very, very clear

Appendix Ten

This is a sample of quotations that demonstrates each of the identified voices in Luke's narrative. Further examples are available in Luke's full transcript (Appendix Eleven, pg. 311-378) and each voice is colour coded. Highs are pink, Low are green, Cultivation is teal, Awareness is blue, Balance is grey.

Voice of ...	Examples
Highs	<p><i>"You see those kids get results, that's still pretty special, yeah, it's pretty amazing"</i> (Appendix Eleven, pg. 306, lines 125-126).</p> <p><i>"I improved results by 20% and that was quite a big achievement"</i> (Appendix Eleven, pg. 306, lines 128-129).</p> <p><i>"When you can just focus on the kids it's alright 146-147 the classroom is the best place to be. Without a shadow of doubt."</i> (Appendix Eleven, pg. 321, lines 449-450).</p> <p><i>"Still the classroom is great"</i> (Appendix Eleven, pg. 322, line 465).</p> <p><i>"Can't be running anything unless you've got good people working alongside you"</i> (Appendix Eleven, pg. 329, lines 635-636).</p> <p><i>"You get to work with young people. I think that's a bit of a privilege."</i> (Appendix Eleven, pg. 330, lines 660-661).</p>
Lows	<p><i>"Adults mess schools up, kids don't"</i> (Appendix Eleven, pg. 307, line 146).</p> <p><i>"Being attacked by students. I've had that happen 8, 9, times now. So, from being spat in the face to being hit with tables, I had</i></p>

	<p><i>knives pulled on me in my school” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 307, lines 151-154).</i></p> <p><i>“So to be a member of staff standing 100 metres away from a kid being handed a package of drugs and not being able to do something that went against everything that feels natural to me with regards to looking after young people.” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 308, lines 170-173.</i></p> <p><i>“But most frustratingly so was that both members of staff walked away from that with good references and walked away to work in other inner London schools” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 310, lines 206-209).</i></p> <p><i>“Sometimes your stomach does turn over because you don’t know how you’re going to deal with the next day or the next two days. You have parents coming in and trying to take you apart. You’ve got to stand really firm, you’ve got to hold on tight” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 362, lines 1405-1408).</i></p>
<p>Cultivation</p>	<p><i>“So, it was constantly about making sure that she was moving forward too” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 332, lines 693-694).</i></p> <p><i>“That person should be taking your job if you’re doing your job properly. You should be line managing them to have your job. That’s one of the mentalities that I’ve got when I line manage ... You need to give them all the opportunities you can (.) particularly if you’re looking to recruit and recycle staff into more</i></p>

	<p><i>senior positions in your own school” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 332, lines 697-712).</i></p> <p><i>“I wanted to change whole school systems” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 346, lines 1024).</i></p> <p><i>“You’re meant to personalise set targets for students” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 356, lines 1274-1275).</i></p> <p><i>“You’re kind of like their stand in parent.” (Appendix Eight, pg. 362, line 1396).</i></p>
Awareness	<p><i>“It was one of the reasons I left is that we were thinking of having a baby and Trudie was like ‘that has to stop’” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 307, lines 154-156).</i></p> <p><i>“But actually having Carys (.) my 20-month year old daughter (.) she’s kind of (.) made me turn things off and a little bit better, a little bit more regimented about what I do at work and what I take at work (.) what I take home and what I don’t take home” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 311, lines 235-238).</i></p> <p><i>“Getting that balance right is quite important” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 312, line 256).</i></p> <p><i>“I made a decision that I’m not going to work for that type of a head teacher” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 314, lines 284-285).</i></p> <p><i>“No, I couldn’t let my mind go there in a daily basis. It would just be too much” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 342, lines 929-930).</i></p>
Balance	<p><i>“I’ve calmed down with the way I present my things, the speed with which I want things down and that’s relatively good for mental health too” (Appendix Eleven, pg. 345, lines 1104-1106).</i></p>

"I've had to change the way I've presented myself in senior meetings" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 347, lines 1062-1063).

"I was told my facial expressions were quite (2) aggressive and confrontational. I had to learn there that the way to get things done is through democracy" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 347, lines 1063-1065).

"And if I look at the way I dealt with things when I was the head of English, it was trying to prove myself beyond what I was. Trying to be something that I was arguably wasn't at that stage in my career." (Appendix Eleven, pg. 1049, lines 1098-1100).

"And that's really difficult because I'm not willing to give up all of my evenings and I'm not willing to give up all of my weekends and I can't give up the majority of my holidays. Before I had a child, that was how I would deal with it before" (Appendix Eleven, pg. 356, lines 1255-1258).

Appendix Eleven

Luke's Voice of...

Highs

Lows

Cultivation

Awareness

Balance

Comments

1 Researcher (R): So, thank you Luke, (.)

2 ((laughing))

3 R: And nobody is probably even going to listen to this part but you

4 and I but...

5 Luke (L): It's all good, it's all good

6 R: Alright. So, if initially you could just give me a little bit of

7 background to what your teaching career is like, so where you've

8 taught and the age range that you teach...

9 L: Yep. So, [I've] always taught in secondary schools, so 11-18

10 R: ummhmm

11 L: Started in 2004, so 14 years ago. [I've] always worked in inner

12 London schools. So, worked in the Convent of Jesus and Mary first

13 in Willesden which was an all-girls school but boys came into the

14 sixth form

15 R: okay

16 L: Then worked at Brightfields school in Barnet, which was

17 completely mixed and not a catholic school

18 R: Okay

19 L: Then moved to Brookfields school in Bright City which was the

20 most inner city school I'd ever worked in. That was completely mixed

21 and non-denominational and I am currently working in St Augustine's

22 church of England in Hampstead, although it's 80% Muslim students

Different to my own
experience as I was primary
trained

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23 it's still a very much inner city school. Those are the four schools I've

24 worked in

25 R: okay

26 L: I'm an English teacher but have become an assistant head in the

27 last four years. Before that I was Head of English but I've also

28 taught media, film, psychology, RE, history, ethics and a little bit of

29 PHSE

30 R: So that's quite a varied

31 L: I spread around quite a lot (.) and at the minute I'm head of sixth

32 form at St Augustine's

33 R: okay

34 L: Which is the most senior position I've held so far in my career

35 R: And you do that alongside the assistant role...

36 L: I'm an assistant head at the sixth form and I teach English to Year

37 Eight, Elevens, Twelves and Year Thirteens so I've got quite a

38 spread of exam classes as well

39 R: Okay

40 L: (.) results have always been really good (.) it's much more

41 difficult in a management position (laughter) much more difficult

42 R: I can imagine

43 L: Ownership of other people's result is the real challenge (2) yeah,

44 so head of sixth form is the most challenging thing I've done

As well as classroom teaching I also had additional responsibilities; one of these was as the Literacy coordinator to cover a maternity leave for a colleague

The difficulties he highlighted in taking on a management role resonated because I was involved in book looks and had to provide feedback to colleagues as well as trying to maintain standards within my own classroom

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- 45 R: okay
- 46 L: Head of English was tough but head of sixth form is something
- 47 else
- 48 R: Okay, wow. And you know when you referred to the mixedness of
- 49 the schools earlier, did you mean it in relation to the pupils
- 50 attending?
- 51 L: So all of the schools have been completely comps, all abilities are
- 52 allowed in
- 53 R: okay
- 54 L: They don't cherry pick. They do band.
- 55 R: Okay
- 56 L: So in all the schools **I've worked** in primary school children come
- 57 in and do their banding tests and then the school will choose 25%
- 58 from the lowest ability and 25% up all the way to the highest quartile.
- 59 So, **I've always been very keen on working in schools like that** (.) it's
- 60 why the progress results, which is now how everything is measured
- 61 as opposed to A-C grades
- 62 R: Yeah
- 63 L: My schools have always been quite well reflected in that because
- 64 of the lower ability students that we take in
- 65 R: okay

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- 66 L: (.) yeah, I suppose that's one of the biggest shifts recently is that
 67 different measurement
- 68 R: Okay, and none of them have been academies?
- 69 L: So, the two schools in the middle
- 70 R: Yeah
- 71 L: were academies. My first school wasn't – academies weren't really
 72 that much of a buzz at that stage, they were still just
- 73 R: Sure
- 74 L: The two in the middle were. I turned to academies for purely
 75 financial reasons, just purely finance, the results were very good.
 76 And then this current school is the only independent school in
 77 Westminster so we don't, we're not being taken over but there is
 78 always the threat. So, if we have two years of poor results then an
 79 academy will be sniffing around very quickly, yeah
- 80 R: Okay
- 81 L: Very quickly ((laughter))
- 82 R: Okay, thank you. So what is been your best moment since been a
 83 teacher is the general question ((laughter)) if that's hard to pin down
 84 into one thing then...
- 85 L: (.) for me the reason why I like the job for all the difficulties it's got
 86 is the kids. I know that sounds a little bit cheesy

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87 R: I realise that I've asked you them in the wrong way round, but not
 88 that this matters but I was thinking of what made you want to
 89 become a teacher first of all, I dunno if that links into

90 L: That's alright. I can go with that one. All my family are teachers

91 R: Yes, okay

92 L: My dad was the head of English in the boys' school that was
 93 twinned with the girls' school that I first starting working at so he was
 94 head of English there for 35 years. My mum was involved in Early
 95 Years education

96 R: Okay

97 L: So she turned into an Ofsted inspector for nurseries after running
 98 her own nursery

99 R: Okay

100 L: Both my older sisters are teachers, then there's me, brother below
 101 me is a teacher, brother below that is a social worker for kids who
 102 come out of prison, and then my sister below that is a teacher, my
 103 uncles and aunties are teachers ((smiling)), my cousin is on the
 104 education board for the Republic of Ireland, making education
 105 decisions for them

106 R: Okay

107 L: My auntie is on the education board in Northern Ireland. It was
 108 kind of entrenched within us ((smiling))

Historically in-built from a young age
--

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109 R: Okay

110 L: But if I'm going to be really honest, the reason that I became a
 111 teacher was that when I finished my degree, well a helping dec (.)
 112 helping make that decision was you got a ten grand 'golden hello'
 113 and they paid your student loan. And I had a 56 grand student loan
 114 so it was certainly an attraction...

Line 109-113: This reason resonates with me as I was initially drawn to the training because I was paid while I trained

115 R: Yess

116 L: (.) into the system. I do love the job. I'm very lucky to have the job

117 R: And you've stayed there despite that. Yeah, okay

118 L: With all the difficulties (.) and to lead onto the other question which
 119 is my best moment

120 R: Yes, thank you

121 L: You see, and again it's a bit cheesy but you see kids get results

122 R: Yeah, sure

123 L: And you see kids get results that never had them before or
 124 families that have never owned books or been to university or had,
 125 have had anything like that at all and you see those kids get results,
 126 that's still pretty special, yeah, it's pretty amazing. Otherwise than
 127 that personally I suppose (.) when I became head of English I
 128 moved to Brightfield I improved results by 20% and that was quite a
 129 big achievement, that got me recognised in a few different places
 130 (.) and some of the national conferences I've delivered at, they've
 131 been quite big moments too because if I don't continue in a school I'll

Reasoning behind best moments resonates because I also loved teaching for the simple fact of working with the children. Different to my experience though because I didn't get to see them move onto college, university or jobs. Generally, I'd lose contact with them once they moved to secondary school unless they had younger siblings and I still saw their parents at school

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132 go onto one of these big companies that are helping teaching
 133 learning, something like the Pixel program or (3) I forget the name of
 134 the other one (.) where they go around helping groups of schools at
 135 the same time

136 R: Okay

137 L: Quite a lot of people are leaving the profession and going into
 138 those support networks

139 R: Okay

140 L: So I'm considering that but at the minute I still enjoy schools still
 141 just a little bit too much ((Laughter))

142 R: And I can just see in answering that your whole face lit up when
 143 you were talking about that your whole face lit up into a smile when
 144 you were talking about young people

145 L: Yeah, yeah

146 L: Adults mess schools up, kids don't, so when you can just focus on
 147 the kids it's alright. As challenging as they can be ((laughter))

148 R: That's great, thank you (.) so I guess then at the opposite end of
 149 the spectrum, what has your worse moment been since being a
 150 teacher?

151 L: I guess they could fall into two categories. One would be being
 152 attacked by students. I've had that happen 8, 9, times now. So, from
 153 being spat in the face to being hit with tables, I had knives pulled on
 154 me in my school in Goats Bush. It was one of the reasons I left is

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155 that we were thinking of having a baby and Trudie was like 'that has

156 to stop'

157 R: Yeah

158 L: (.) going outside the school in Brookfields, in Bright City, and

159 seeing, so I'd go and do bus stop duty and you'd see (.) blacked out

160 windows and Porsche 4x4s pull up just out of the estate, right in one

161 of the roughest estates around and you'd see all your little Year

162 Sevens lining up and then someone inside the car would hand them

163 their first package of the evening, their first delivery because they'd

164 used Year Sevens to deliver drugs on the estate because they're too

165 young to get arrested

166 R: Okay

167 L: That was a pretty dark ((uncomfortable laugh)), pretty dark week

168 that one. And there was nothing you could do. These people have so

169 much power and such a threat that we were told as staff 'don't do

170 anything'. So to be a member of staff standing 100 metres away from

171 a kid being handed a package of drugs and not being able to do

172 something that went against everything that feels natural to me with

173 regards to looking after young people. That was pretty horrible. With

174 regards to adults, taking staff through capability measures

175 R: Okay

176 L: Is really not pleasant

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177 R: What does that involve? Just to add a little bit of context to
178 capability measures

179 L: So, in Brightfield, as head of English, there were two members of
180 staff who were effectively not doing their jobs. One wasn't marking
181 the books, she wasn't planning her lessons, she wasn't giving any
182 feedback to the students. And there's quite a long process for a
183 teacher who isn't working well. And the first steps of that are offering
184 support and help and not being too aggressive at all with them
185 however she didn't turn it around at all and she didn't show any
186 interest and was quite disengaged with the whole process (.) so after
187 making sure you clarify and show evidence of the guidance and help
188 and support that you've given **you then have to start measuring**
189 **performance on that, start going to meetings with the union and head**
190 **teacher about 'look, this isn't working, what do we do?'**

Additional workload in
addition to regular classroom
responsibilities

191 R: Yes

192 L: The second lady who **I had to** put through that was getting
193 students to write essay plans on the inside of their arms before
194 they'd go into an exam. So, one of the (.) teaching assistants came
195 out of an English room and said 'they've all got essay plans on the
196 inside of their arms, they're about to go into a GCSE what are you
197 going to do about it?' **So of course you've got to deal with that**
198 **immediately**

199 R: Right

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200 L: The threat of that, first of all to the students, they won't get their
 201 results, the school itself, the reputation and kudos of it and all that
 202 stuff, plus it's just wrong, it's cheating, you can't do that (.) so I had to
 203 deal with her. Unfortunately, she pulled the racism card, said I was
 204 being racist against her, and having those kinds of accusations being
 205 thrown at you, that was quite an unpleasant month or so (.) but most
 206 frustratingly so was that both members of staff walked away from
 207 that with good references and walked away to work in other inner
 208 London schools. So that when I was going to interviews in other
 209 inner London schools when I wanted to make my most recent moves
 210 (.) I saw those members of staff on English teams

211 R: Okay

212 L: And I just think that's a bit of a disgrace. To behave that poorly

213 R: Yeah

214 L: Actually the way the school gets rid of you is to give you a good
 215 reference, to get out of our school

216 R: And was that two different schools? That had that same type of
 217 policy?

218 L: Two different schools. Yeah, absolutely. We'll just give you a
 219 reference if you get out. I think that's wrong. Yeah, student wise (.)
 220 aggression. Staff wise (.) pulling people who deserve to be going
 221 through capability (.) Putting them through that process

222 R: Yeah

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- 223 L: It's not a pleasant thing to do
- 224 R: No
- 225 L: No
- 226 R: And I get the impression that that would overflow into outside of
- 227 school? You'd be taking that home with you as well (.) it's kind of
- 228 hard to [park up at school
- 229 L: [It's very] difficult not to take things home
- 230 R: Yeah
- 231 L: [I mean at the minute I'm working (.) 10 to 12 hour days. You come
- 232 home (.) you're exhausted
- 233 R: Yeah
- 234 L: [But actually having Carys (.) my 20-month year old daughter (.)
- 235 she's kind of (.) made me turn things off and a little bit better, a little
- 236 bit more regimented about what I do at work and what I take at work
- 237 (.) what I take home and what I don't take home
- 238 R: Okay

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- 239 L: It's (.) it's (.) not easy mentality thing to do because (.) because
 240 you care ((laughing))
- 241 R: Yeah
- 242 L: It's very difficult not to do something extra if you care. While I
 243 care about the students, the people I work with and manage
 244 etcetera etcetera (2) it's always that crossover between vocation
 245 and the job
- 246 R: Yeah
- 247 L: And to not (.) put in an extra ten (.) fifteen (.) twenty per cent
 248 when (.) kids kind of need it (.) it's hard thing to do
- 249 R: Sure
- 250 L: So, to get everything done in the school day s very difficult (.)
 251 but if I take anything more home (.) I wouldn't have a relationship.
 252 We may well be together but we wouldn't see each other. I certainly
 253 wouldn't see my daughter
- 254 R: Yeah
- 255 L: So, getting that balance right is quite important. I'm very lucky to
 256 have a head teacher who's had children, who understands that and
 257 is quite understanding. For instance, he takes Wednesday afternoon
 258 off as head teacher to pick his kids up from school and spend some
 259 time with them. So, he does commit (.) he commits to that personally
- 260 R: Okay

Real struggle apparent in trying to balance work and needs of the children with own personal life. I felt this particularly when I worked in Key Stage Two and would say it was a time when I had a very poor work-life balance. I would be at school from prior to the 9am bell for staff meeting or to prep the classroom and would usually be getting kicked out when the cleaners closed school around 7pm. I would still need to take work home and regularly found myself working up until mid-night on week nights to stay abreast with my work, which I never was. Suffice to say I had very poor relationships outside of work because I was living to work

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261 L: But I do know a number of heads who would not give that support
 262 (.) or leeway (.) or acceptance. Sometimes you're not going to be
 263 able to come in because baby's sick or you're not going to be able to
 264 come in because baby needs to be taken to the doctors. But I know
 265 a number of friends who work in other schools and that would be an
 266 absolute no-no. No, you're not going to your child's Christmas
 267 assembly (.) you're not going to (.) her ear appointment

268 R: Yeah

269 L: So, I'm very lucky to have a head teacher who understands that. I
 270 think that's one of the reasons he's held onto the school being (.) as
 271 an independent school (.) as opposed to the school being an
 272 academy school

273 R: Did you know that before you went there? Like was that a part of
 274 your criteria for where you wanted to move to next?

275 L: I wouldn't have gone into a school with a head with a bad
 276 reputation

277 R: Okay

278 L: And there are loads of them. But they're often so poor now (2) that
 279 it would take a very quick conversation (.) or sometimes a very quick
 280 Google search

281 R: Okay

282 L: And it would give you a bit about the head teacher and I made a
 283 decision that I'm not going to work for that type of a head teacher.

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- 284 Often they're not through the education system. They've been
 285 dropped into run these academies or these academies trusts
- 286 R: Yeah ((nodding))
- 287 L: And they're not from education (.) they're from business
- 288 R: Yeah
- 289 L: Now, I'm sure that can work but I haven't seen an example of a
 290 head teacher who's running a school properly who's running it like a
 291 business
- 292 R: Mmhmm ((nodding))
- 293 L: There was an interesting Panorama show on a couple of months
 294 back about how academies are twisted round to make profit instead
 295 of the focus on what it should be which is children's education. And
 296 that's doing quite a lot of damage too. So, yeah it was quite a lot to
 297 do with a choice to go to a school (2) I wasn't looking for a (.) I wasn't
 298 looking for a white Christian school in inner London. I like working
 299 with challenging young people of all ethnicities (.) colour of skin
 300 doesn't matter to me at all
- 301 R: Yeah
- 302 L: So, I wanted an inner London school and they're quite difficult to
 303 find that aren't academies
- 304 R: Sure

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305 L: So, this one stood out as an independent school. I wanted to go
 306 and have a look at it. I was a bit nervous about it being a Christian
 307 school (.). There were parts of working in the Convent, in a catholic
 308 school, that I didn't like how it was controlled (.). I was from a catholic
 309 education as well and an awful lot of control goes on in that. But
 310 actually in the Christian school (.). it is actually 82% Muslim (.). it is (.).
 311 10% Christian and ((inaudible)) offers a full range. So, on my walk
 312 around there was a church service for the Year Eights and (.). there
 313 was a Muslim girl carrying the incense for the priest, these was a
 314 Muslim boy carrying the bible for the priest, there were Muslim
 315 students coming up and reading from the bible. I'd never seen
 316 anything like that before. Ever. I just thought, I actually thought "Is
 317 this okay. Is everyone alright with this?" And that's just how they do
 318 it. And I really like that. I was quite keen on getting in there then,
 319 yeah, and I upped the concentration a little bit on the interview day
 320 ((smiling and laughter))

321 R: Sounds good ((smiling)). I was wondering whether there had been
 322 any turning points in your career. You might have already touched on
 323 that a little bit (.). with thinking about moving

324 L: I very nearly left when I worked in Brookfields. I very nearly left the
 325 profession completely (2) The way the school was being run was
 326 awful. It was being taken over aggressive by Future Academies, Lord
 327 and Lady Nash (2) And I thought that the way there were treating
 328 staff that had worked for a long time in a really, really tough inner city

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329 estate school was awful. They said they were going to wipe away

330 whole departments and bring in their own teams etcetera etcetera

331 R: Okay

332 L: So, at that stage I took redundancy. From the school. So, they

333 offered all senior leaders (.) they said "Do you want to take a

334 package or do you want to fight for your jobs?" And I went (.) rather

335 arrogantly, I was being quite arrogant but also because I know I'm

336 good at what I do

337 R: Yeah

338 L: I'm not being treated like that

339 R: Yeah

340 L: If you want to treat me like that I'm walking. I was kind of playing a

341 little bit of double bluff ((laugh)) but they called it. They went "walk."

342 So I did. I took the cheque

343 R: And at that point you were doing the head of English role as well

344 as (.)?

345 L: Head of English, assistant head and I suppose I was deputy

346 leading the sixth form then

347 R: Okay

348 L: because the sixth form was an area that they needed to develop

349 significantly. And the sixth form is worth so much money. Students

Despite how staff were being treated, this does not appear to have shaken his identity as being a capable teacher: "I know I'm good at what I do"

How do situations like this impact other teachers with a less developed self-belief?

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- 350 pull in so much money that then gets spread around the rest of the
 351 school. So, the sixth form really has to be a working sixth form
- 352 R: Okay
- 353 L: Otherwise you're better off taking more students in the lower years
 354 and not running a sixth form. So, I wasn't (.) wasn't pleased with their
 355 tone. Or their attitude
- 356 R: Sure
- 357 L: And for someone who had improved results massively, worked
 358 really well, had been threatened and had knives thrown at him (.) I
 359 wasn't (.) I wasn't being treated like that. So, I took the deal. Two
 360 weeks late they took the deals off the table but because I'd signed
 361 the paperwork
- 362 R: Yeah
- 363 L: I was the only one that got the deal. So, I took the money and I
 364 left. And at that stage (.) I was very close to (.) stopping. I thought I'd
 365 re-train as an electrician. I would have gone and learned a trade
 366 somehow. (4) They were (.) they were pretty dark days actually (2)
 367 And when you look back on it you can see the things that were going
 368 on at that time. so, I was definitely drinking more, the idea of just
 369 coming home and just drinking to just turn off
- 370 R: Yeah
- 371 L: Didn't have a child at that stage so wasn't abusive ((laughs)) Our
 372 relationship, my wife and I's relationship, changed quite significantly.

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373 We didn't really spend any positive time together. I was always
 374 stressed. Most of the grey hair you can see now came at that time
 375 ((smiles)) So it was borderline whether to continue to be honest
 376 R: Okay
 377 L: When I stopped (.) so when you take a redundancy deal you're not
 378 allowed to work for three months. So, I stopped for two and I missed
 379 it massively ((laughing)) I really missed it
 380 R: Okay ((smiling))
 381 L: So, I started looking for some supply work
 382 R: Was it in the middle of the year when you
 383 L: No, I stayed until the end of the year. So, it was the summer
 384 holidays and then September and October I wasn't able to go back in
 385 and work. So, I took that time (.) I made the decision that I want to go
 386 back into it. A lot of my experiences have been positive, a few of
 387 them have been negatives [and
 388 R: Yeah]
 389 L: Just try a little bit (.) try something a bit more (.) and it was a case
 390 of finding the school. So there were a few schools around here that I
 391 was interested in (.) then this school in Camden turned up. So this
 392 one, even though I also got one in Queens school up here in Bushy
 393 R: Okay

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- 394 L: Which is a really really good school. I would like to end up there
 395 eventually. The difficulty with moving out here and getting the same
 396 level job is about 10 grand in pay
- 397 R: Okay
- 398 L: Which is a lot of money (.) A huge amount of money. So we
 399 weren't ready for that just yet
- 400 R: Yeah
- 401 L: So when I make the next move out here, I will take a hit in pay. Or
 402 I'll move up to deputy and the pay will be less. So yeah, there have
 403 definitely been some unpleasant times. But those unpleasant times
 404 (.) For the first 10 years of my career they were challenging yeah
- 405 R: Yeah
- 406 L: But no thoughts about stopping or concerns about stopping at all, I
 407 have been happy for the last two years. It is really just been that five
 408 years, sorry three years, in between that somewhere that
- 409 R: Sure
- 410 L: were pretty rough. The changing, the curriculums, the changing of
 411 the grade boundaries, the expectations, the lack of guidance, the
 412 lack of teachers. That is a massive problem at the minute because
 413 nobody wants to work in the profession. So you are kind of filling the
 414 spaces with people who aren't specialists or are very good at what
 415 they do (.) Those changes happened about that time. And English
 416 lead a lot of the pilots

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- 417 R: Sure
- 418 L: so English turned before a lot of other subjects did. So all during
- 419 that upheaval was quite tricky
- 420 R: Mmm
- 421 L: but it's all right now
- 422 R: but in essence it was the missing the teaching that brought you
- 423 back? That confirm the decision?
- 424 L: yeah. So my first job when I went back after was just as a
- 425 classroom teacher. No responsibilities at all
- 426 R: that was a supply job?
- 427 L: yeah. So that was (.) A school not too far from here. An Academy.
- 428 Had a reasonable reputation but was been run awfully. I mean, the
- 429 Head Teacher was really bad. And has since been sacked and told
- 430 to go away. Going back into the classroom there (.) Actually made
- 431 me realise how hard classroom teaching is. So when you go up
- 432 management and senior leadership you end up with less classroom
- 433 contact
- 434 R: Sure
- 435 L: it is a kind of perverse system that the better you are in the
- 436 classroom the quicker they take you out of the classroom
- 437 ((laughing))
- 438 R: Yeah

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439 L: which is a bit odd. So going back into that classroom and teaching
 440 six periods a day was exhausting. Oh my goodness me, so
 441 exhausting. But not having to deal with any of the crappy meetings
 442 that go around that

443 R: Yeah

444 L: was quite refreshing (4) but yeah I cannot see myself not working
 445 with children somewhere along the line

446 R: Okay

447 L: still the classroom is the best place to be. Without a shadow of
 448 doubt. I can muck about in a classroom. I can come out of the
 449 cupboard dressed up as Macbeth [or

450 R: ((laughing))]

451 L: make a complete idiot of myself. And I really don't mind. And the
 452 kids either get on board or they look at you with those sad eyes as
 453 though to say "what are you doing?" But they're on board, they get it.
 454 But standing up in front of adults (.) Or meetings or governors, that
 455 sort of thing, that is where I get really nervous. I get really anxious,
 456 can't hold paper my hands because my handshake. Whereas people
 457 who have seen me teach and they've seen me deliver in front of
 458 adults, they say it is like ((laughing)) two completely different people.
 459 Yeah, I much prefer working with young people. I enjoy Key Stage 4
 460 and Key Stage 5 more than Key Stage 3, they're a little bit needy, I
 461 am not interested in their "where's my pencil?"

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462 ((both laughing))

463 L: Just like, let's go, let's go. So yeah, still the classroom is great. I'm

464 lucky to hold onto the amount of classes that I teach. So I

465 deliberately take on four classes not three, I want the exam classes, I

466 want Key Stage 5

467 R: Okay

468 L: partly because I run the sixth form and I need the English results

469 to be good and I can pretty much guarantee that my classes will get

470 the results. (5) also I feel that I can be a bit blunt (2) and maybe a bit

471 bullish with the young ones and it's not the style they need. So I

472 definitely delegate back to other people ((laughing))

473 R: so what does your week look like? How many classes do you

474 teach?

475 L: so I would teach three or four periods a day. Monday, Tuesday,

476 Wednesday, Thursday

477 R: which is more than half?

478 L: Oh yeah, yeah, more than half. And then on Friday I won't teach

479 any lessons at all. That is how my timetable has worked out. So, all

480 the gaps on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday are taken up

481 with meetings

482 R: Okay

483 L: so I have meetings before school on a Monday and Wednesday

484 and after school on a Monday and Tuesday. We have parents

Appears his reasons for taking the older year groups relates to grades which I imagine is quite pressure inducing but also links to self-recognition that he's better suited to teaching the older students

At this point in the interview I began to feel quite panicked about whether he met the 'full-time' criteria I had set out at the start of the study

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485 evening on a Thursday (.) So it's six or so Thursday evenings across
 486 the year. Friday is where I do all my catch up. My sending
 487 messages, my book checks, my staff checks, my observations. So
 488 Friday is (.) On paper my (.) Freest day but it is actually the day that
 489 flies past the quickest because I'm literally going (.) Every 50 minutes
 490 I'm somewhere else, doing something else

491 R: Okay

492 L: So Friday flies by

493 R: Good name for it! So would it be (.) The classes across the week,
 494 would they be classed as a full timetable?

495 L: No. It's still not a full timetable

496 R: Okay

497 L: No, a full timetable would be five or six periods a day

498 R: Okay

499 L: Now I regret taking on the additional A-level class (.) But there
 500 was nobody in the school that could take it

501 R: okay

502 L: if nobody takes it, who gets those kids those grades?

503 R: Yeah

504 L: so yeah, you could have cover supply or a supply teacher to come
 505 in or the option was the Key Stage 4 (.) The catering teacher has half
 506 a degree in English, from 40 years ago. So she wasn't going to take

I decided to ask the question that was filling my stomach with dread: would his teaching timetable be classed as a "full timetable." I decided to continue with interview and when I reflected on it afterwards I recognised that each participant identified themselves as a full-time teacher with additional responsibilities. I also realised that this is how I described myself even when I had additional time out of class for additional coordinator duties

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507 that class. You just can't let that happen. While I'm sure she'd get it,
 508 she wouldn't be sharp, she's not going to be up with the marking. So,
 509 I couldn't allow that decision to be made. So, when I'm talking to the
 510 head about time management etcetera etcetera he does kind of say
 511 "Well you asked for that." It's kind of on your head

512 R: Okay

513 L: But there weren't any other teachers or choices. We advertised for
 514 staff (.) I alone manage science, psychology, sociology, politics (.)
 515 and the library. Now in all three of those areas in the last three or
 516 four years you cannot get the staff. Had an NQT come in last year
 517 just looking for a teaching science post and she wanted 5 grand less
 518 than what I earn and I was completely offended by that. What she
 519 was saying, the reason why she should get that was that her
 520 academy had offered her that but she didn't want to work under the
 521 academy rules. She liked the freedom of our rules but she liked the
 522 money but that's not the way it works (.) can't have that (.) no way.
 523 So it's really difficult to get staff. The best place we can get staff at
 524 the minute (.) we get good staff who've been used by the academy
 525 that they're in

526 R: Yeah

527 L: So, they're so fed up by the system that they're in and they're
 528 good at what they do they're just looking for somewhere else that
 529 isn't going to treat them like that. So, our cherry staff from last year
 530 (.) our best staff, that's where we've got them from because they're

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531 so fed up with the academy that they're in that they are looking to
 532 leave education or looking for a last chance. A place that isn't going
 533 to make you work until six o'clock in the evening and you're not
 534 allowed to leave the building or you have to mark all your books
 535 every week. There are things which are too much (.) There's a head
 536 teacher in a school who openly says that he wants to break all the
 537 young staff that he's got and then send them out to work in other
 538 schools

539 R: Because?

540 L: Because he gets all the work out of them and he gets all the drive
 541 out of them until he breaks them. So he might get a year, two years.
 542 And he says this quite publically (.) large speeches that this is his
 543 policy

544 R: Okay

545 L: I think it's absolutely shocking. It's really really bad. Especially as
 546 now Ofsted are meant to coming to judge us by talking to us and one
 547 of their key questions should be 'How are you managing the work-life
 548 balance of the staff that you manage, who you lead?'

549 R: Uh-huh

550 L: Now we've got a couple of things that we do for that. So, we have
 551 hallow weeks where we have no meetings. We have a very lenient
 552 marking policy, where we're expected to formally mark two pieces of
 553 work a half term. You're still expected to have excellent classroom
 554 delivery and set all the homeworks etcetera etcetera. And we're an

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555 Outstanding school. Lots of very good, they're very positive results.

556 Even with that leniency, a number of staff are finding it difficult to get

557 their all work done

558 R: Okay

559 L: We have limited class sizes. Our class sizes are under 25 at the

560 minute. Of course we're under a huge amount of pressure[

561 R: Across] the whole

562 L: Across the whole lot. Now that costs staff to spread the 160-odd

563 kids into smaller classes and that's where the financial squeeze

564 comes

565 R: Sure

566 L: So we can get rid of staff to make the classes substantially bigger.

567 Or not. And keep staff hopefully teaching to a lower ratio of kids and

568 doing a better job. I wouldn't want to be a head teacher trying to get

569 that balance right. Because it's very easy to throw another six kids in

570 a class. That's a lot more work. That's a lot more challenging. And

571 actually in our building it would make some of our classes over-filled.

572 So, you'd get kids sitting on the end of tables, instead of having their

573 own space

574 R: Yeah

575 L: So you'd share the tables but in some classes now, we're sticking

576 students on the end of those tables, which again isn't the way it

Really comes out in all he's said so far that the young people are central to everything. Definitely resonates with me and how I saw my role in preparing children for the next Key Stage, school and rest of their lives

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577 should be. Which is quite frustrating. Again because it's not right for

578 the kids, it's not the right thing to do which is really difficult

579 R: A really tricky situation (.) Okay that's been really interesting,

580 thank you. I'm just thinking about whether there have been any

581 significant people who've influenced you during your career?

582 L: Oh, without a doubt. Yes. The (.) My first head of English (.) so

583 when I started at the Convent, he was my NQT mentor as well, we're

584 still close friends now

585 R: Okay

586 L: He showed me an awful lot (.) very calm (.) very peaceful (.) didn't

587 take any crap (.) stood up for his department, defended his

588 department openly in front of the head teacher (.) who was a bit of

589 bullish (.) a bull of a head teacher but she was very good at what she

590 did (2) Yeah, he was a big help (.) told me I couldn't say yes to

591 everything

592 R: Okay

593 L: Helped me set up a department. When I first started I was greedy

594 for more money. There was no way I was going to get a lead English

595 position. So I said if you allow me to set up a media department in

596 the school (.) then (2) and that's successful (.) then I'd like to be paid

597 on management money

598 R: Okay

Very balanced way of reflecting back on the situation. He may not have been a big fan of the Head but recognised she was good at her job

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599 L: And the head teacher went "Well if you set out and make it work
 600 then I'll back pay you"

601 R: Oh wow!

602 L: So, I did it. I set it up. Made it work. The results were the best
 603 results in the school. Media in those days wasn't that hard at all. Set
 604 all that up, I got that running and then she back paid me for the year
 605 which made quite a bit of difference to what I was earning. And then
 606 of course it allowed me to go to interviews saying that I've created a
 607 department, I've led a department, I've been a part of middle
 608 management since I was a NQT. And those kinds of things go down
 609 quite well ((laughing))

610 R: How resourceful of you!

611 ((both laughing))

612 L: When you ask questions for management jobs, they want you to
 613 know that you're not only good in the classroom, what you've done in
 614 the department, what have you done in the whole school, what's
 615 your influence beyond the classroom. So (.) Almost immediately in
 616 my career I was very aware of that. I was confident enough to be
 617 able to stand up and deliver (.) those kinds of things (.) to students
 618 there (.) setting up for adults wasn't too much of a problem in the
 619 department because the media department was just me (.) it was just
 620 me doing it. So it was quite nice running it. So, yeah he was a big
 621 influence. When I was head of English I had a two IC in English

622 R: Two IC?

Recognises his achievement but at the same time modest in his description "media in those days wasn't that hard"

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- 623 L: So, second in charge
- 624 R: Okay
- 625 L: Both of us went for the head of English job. I got the head of
 626 English job. She was offered the second in English job. She took it
 627 which was great. And she was amazing So at least 50-50, if not
 628 arguably maybe 60-40 to her. That was one of the reasons results
 629 went up by 20%
- 630 R: Okay
- 631 L: So, she was unreal (.) and made me realise that (.) as a leader of
 632 (2) a good sized team, that was an English department with 11
 633 people in it (.) can't be running anything unless you've got good
 634 people working alongside you (.) or if you're going to talk about it in
 635 hierarchical terms (.) below you (.) I don't like that term (.) but (.) So
 636 she (.) she was unreal. And if I ever step any higher or get to run my
 637 own school, I'm getting her, she's amazing. The head of English that
 638 I started with at the beginning left education when all the changes
 639 started
- 640 R: Okay
- 641 L: He said "I'm not doing it" so he went and to become a carpenter (.)
 642 a very happy man
- 643 R: Okay
- 644 L: In the Isle of Dogs building people sheds and playing bowls. But
 645 he is (.) So I'm 39 (2) he'd be 45 and left (3) eight years ago. So he

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646 left (.) in his mid to late thirties. He saw what was happening to the
 647 education profession and went "I'm not jumping through those
 648 hoops" (.) so left. And he was (.) he was amazing (.) he was
 649 absolutely amazing. Kids under control, engaging, thoughtful, really
 650 passionate about what he did. Again he says (.) well I suppose I say
 651 similar things to him in term of (.) it's the adults who mess it up (.) it's
 652 not the kids. The kids just come around every single year and that's
 653 it. So it's interesting that someone of his quality and a number of
 654 people with those qualities are saying "No, I'm not doing it, I'm
 655 getting out of the profession." So even with all the perks, the holidays
 656 (2) what other perks are there (.)

657 R: ((laugh))

658 L: The pay's not bad (.) you get to work with young people. I think
 659 that's a bit of a privilege. Even with all those things (.) people are still
 660 saying "It's not for me, I'm not doing it anymore"

661 R: ((nodding))

662 L: Now, that was his career for twenty years and he still walked away
 663 from it. I find it disturbing. But also I think the problem we've got (.) is
 664 people coming into management with experience or people coming
 665 into senior leadership with experience, there are no head teachers
 666 around anymore because they just get abused and treated badly too
 667 (.) except they get it from all angles (.) the government and the
 668 governors but they also get it from disgruntled staff that can't handle
 669 what to do

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670 R: Mmhmm

671 L: All of those positions are really (.) really thin on the ground (.)

672 which is disturbing for the future but I still have hope (2) that it's

673 going to come full circle a little bit. It's going to come soon (.) in time

674 for my retirement ((laughing))

675 R: ((laughing)) Well good. Hopefully yeah. Is there anything else in

676 that group? Other people or?

677 L: (2) Lots have people have been very positive. Lots of people have

678 been very challenging. I think those two stand out as (4) I suppose

679 inspirations for me

680 R: Okay

681 L: One when I was very green and then one when I stepped into my

682 first serious management role

683 R: Okay

684 L: So while head of media was a management role, it was very

685 small. To look after an English department means everybody (.)

686 everybody is on your books across the whole school (.) so to have

687 her there (.) and then when I left she became head of English which I

688 was really happy about as well. So the things that she didn't have in

689 the two and a half years that I worked there, I made sure that she got

690 R: Okay

691 L: So, it was constantly about making sure that she was moving

692 forward too

Two positive influences on him at two key times in his career

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693 R: Okay

694 L: Which taught me a lot about management of people, leading
 695 people (.) that is if you're moving away (.) that person should be
 696 taking your job if you're doing your job properly. You should be line
 697 managing them to have your job. That's one of the mentalities that
 698 I've got when I line manage (.) and she really appreciated that too. I
 699 think she's now a deputy head in that school, she's gone all the way
 700 to the top, overtaking me immediately ((both laughing))

701 R: I love that teamwork type approach

702 L: It's (.) it was done to me. So people all helped me out and made
 703 sure I got CPD and I was given the right opportunities and I think it's
 704 really important that I do that to other people. One for the health of
 705 the profession, two because it's how people should be treated (.) and
 706 if you are managing somebody (.) in quite a lot of areas I've seen
 707 managers (.) almost keep a lid on those members of staff. Which is
 708 completely the wrong way round to do it. You need to give them all
 709 the opportunities you can (.) particularly if you're looking to recruit
 710 and recycle staff into more senior positions in your own school. You
 711 don't want your best staff going to another school. You want to keep
 712 your staff in your school. When they stay it means they're being
 713 developed (.) it's kind of a healthy way round to do it (2) There's only
 714 so many jobs and there's only so many gaps ((laugh))

715 R: Sure. Super thank you. You've already sort of touched on this but
 716 thinking about there being any curriculum changes which have being

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717 implemented during your teaching career, about how these have
718 affected you

719 L: Well (.) the (2) new nine to one grading system and the new
720 English curriculum (.) it's become harder because there's more
721 content to cover

722 R: Yeah

723 L: There's more of an expectation on the students are going to be
724 doing it by themselves

725 R: Sure

726 L: Now (.) in an inner city school (.) that's really difficult (.) I mean
727 we've even considered in our school not even setting any homework
728 at all

729 R: Okay

730 L: Because quite a lot of our students go home and share bedrooms

731 R: Yeah ((nodding))

732 L: Or they're in a two bed room flat and there's six kids and two
733 adults or uncles and aunties are living with them. There's an awful lot
734 of our students that don't have a family home with bookshelves (.) or
735 even English speaking families (.) so it's very difficult to try and get
736 those (.) to do the amount of work (.) they need to do (.) to do well

737 R: Sure

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738 L: It's no longer about just what you deliver in the classroom. They
 739 have to do independent stuff as well. Now you can get past it a little
 740 bit at GCSE by cramming (.) very much an exam factory instead of
 741 more creative, free teaching but you can't do that at A-Level. There's
 742 just so much they have to have under control. So that spoon feeding
 743 at GCSE to maintain the GCSE scores does (.) do damage at A-
 744 Level. So, I refer to it as double jumping. We made this student jump
 745 as far as they can at GCSE. Literally squeeze everything out of them
 746 but when they get that GCSE result that's used to set their targets for
 747 Key Stage 5. So, if they've managed to get an eight then all of a
 748 sudden their targets are A* at A-level but they don't then have that
 749 ability to work independently and autonomously and they don't have
 750 that drive sometimes (.) at Key Stage 5 to do really well. And
 751 therefore the Key Stage 5 results regards progress drop off all the
 752 way. Then the school is labelled as an under-performing school

753 R: Sure

754 L: Or a poor school. So I think that's a bit of an unfair way of doing it.
 755 The whole targets are being debated at the minute. The DFE have
 756 got an independent research study on whether or not targets are the
 757 best way to do it and research came back and said no, targets
 758 should not (.) be being used the way that they're being. It's being
 759 debated. So the DFE have verbally agreed with this research but
 760 they're not endorsing it, they're not going to push it through or we
 761 can't see that they're going to push it through any time

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762 R: Okay

763 L: So, I will sit down with staff at the beginning of the year and say
 764 these are your class targets, if you don't get this, this and this you
 765 won't get your performance management. So if you think about that
 766 as the targeted system (.) it's a very unfair way of doing it. And
 767 almost sets teachers against each other to cherry pick the classes
 768 that they want. So, interestingly thing there, people don't want the
 769 higher ability students. They want the lower ability students because
 770 they've got lower targets and if they deliver it to the class they show
 771 progress

772 R: Yeah

773 L: So that means that we've got staff who for their own pay and their
 774 own careers and their own (2) lives are not looking to teach the most
 775 able students. That can't be a system that's healthy. It just can't be.
 776 How does that work? The other things that have changed with
 777 regards the curriculum, are (.) is one that they don't give us the
 778 grade boundaries anymore. So, grade boundaries are set when they
 779 mark the papers. Which means they just move things

780 R: So, you don't take an A-C paper anymore?

781 L: In English there's (.) no foundation or higher. Everyone has the
 782 same test. It's all linear so you can't do any course work, so you
 783 can't any things out of the way in Year Ten. But you can't (.) what
 784 was I saying? (2) Yes, the grade boundaries. So where in previous

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785 years you could say 53 is a C, 64 is a B (.) a 70 is an A or whatever it

786 might be

787 R: Yeah

788 L: So you'd be marking your work beforehand and you'd be making

789 your predictions and the thing that you get judged on is how accurate

790 your prediction or results are going to come out. But they move the

791 grade boundaries according to the cohort in the summer. So we will

792 only know what the grade boundaries are when the results come out

793 R: So, does it work on a bell curve type idea?

794 L: I don't quite know how they make their decisions. So, I think what

795 they have (.) they get all the students who do the exam and they go

796 okay top three per cent, you're a nine, next ten percent, you're an

797 eight

798 R: Is this within an individual school or across the country?

799 L: From across the country

800 R: So, even when the papers are handed over I have no idea

801 L: Still don't know. So, to be judged on your predictions (.) and to be

802 setting students' predictions for UCAS (.) or for sixth form entries, for

803 a new course, for a new curriculum that they don't give much

804 exemplar writing on, they don't give you much CPD on (.) it's all kind

805 of flapping around in the dark a little bit and you really don't know (.)

806 what's going to happen on the third Thursday of August when the

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807 results comes out. Well, that creates an awful lot of pressure (.) it
 808 creates an awful lot of stress

809 R: Yeah

810 L: You don't quite know the level (.) there's no level playing field. And
 811 what seems to be is that you could have a year group that is
 812 particularly strong (2) in comparison from one student from one year
 813 to the year before. One student could be much stronger because
 814 they moved the grade boundaries to fit that cohort

815 R: Okay

816 L: That's wrong. That's just wrong. Why would you be able to do
 817 that? So that's quite frustrating

818 R: Mmm. And almost a system set up to fail teachers in their making
 819 their predictions and just a stab in the dark really

820 L: I think the reason why they do it is they want to control the
 821 outcomes. They want to control the headlines. They want to control
 822 how many people have done this or how many have got that. It's not
 823 student-centric, it's not balanced, it's not fair, it's not equal. It just
 824 undermines everything. The job has always been challenging. My
 825 dad used to speak about it (.) 30 years ago. It's really tough, you've
 826 got to deal with students every single day, you don't know what
 827 moods they're going to be in, they're going through changes of the
 828 teenage years and you have to try and make them interested in
 829 Dickens or Shakespere, do you know what I mean? ((R nodding))
 830 You can do that, you can definitely do that but you apply all those

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831 elements of the ambiguity of what the grades are, the lack of
 832 support, increased pressures, the class sizes, judgements on your
 833 pay, you're not going to be getting pay rise or a promotion because
 834 your class results weren't good enough. I don't have discipline
 835 problems in my class, my classroom discipline is really strong but a
 836 number of inner city kids misbehave in classes and staff, while they
 837 may be subject experts or very good teachers, they're not behaviour
 838 experts, they don't necessarily have that under control. All of that, if
 839 you accumulate it all, plus the hours, the marking, the expectations,
 840 all of it, put all of that together (.) those additional add-ons of (.) lack
 841 of clarity or a lack of knowledge or a lack of knowing what the
 842 outcomes are going to be within a certain window, I think that's
 843 pushed a lot of people a step too far and they've disengaged
 844 completely. So, I have a member of staff who openly says to me "I
 845 don't care about the targets, they'll get what they'll get." Kind of in my
 846 head I agree with him. I can't sit there across the desk in my office
 847 and just say "Yeah, ignore those, do whatever you want to do"

848 R: Yeah ((nodding))

849 L: Because his measurement of how successful he's going to be in
 850 the school is directly related to the grades walking out of that class.
 851 So if you're underperforming at certain stages of the year and you've
 852 got students who are not targeted to get the grades that they are told
 853 they should get then you have to offer interventions, you have to
 854 offer things after school, you have to offer things on your Saturday
 855 mornings, you have to give days up in your holidays. And that's

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856 becoming an increasing trend too: the teacher should just give more.
 857 That's that balance again of the vocation side of it and the business
 858 side. It's not necessarily just down to the teacher having to give
 859 more. There has to be at least a little bit of a shift with regards to
 860 what young people are doing, what their expectations are of
 861 education for themselves. The premium students they do it for
 862 themselves. They read books. They've had books read to them
 863 every single time mummy and daddy have put them to bed. The kids
 864 that don't have that, particularly in inner London schools, the kids
 865 that don't have that, well, as soon as they leave school they're not
 866 thinking about picking up a book, or doing a bit of research or doing
 867 a bit of wider reading or going to a museum. It's those students that
 868 often will have reasonable targets but will be massively
 869 underperforming and that could trigger an Ofsted (.). And if Ofsted
 870 come in and they fail you, that triggers academisation. And all of a
 871 sudden your school has completely lost its independence or lost its
 872 control (.) and you're being sucked into this big (2) conglomerate of
 873 'this is that way you do things, we all do things exactly the same'.
 874 And I just think that's horrible (.) really bad (4) Yeah I think they're
 875 the big ones

876 R: Mmm

877 L: I was frustrated when they took away American literature. While
 878 English texts are wonderful, I just found it very (2) very Brexit to
 879 take away other texts. Chaney was on there, he's not on there
 880 anymore. Or any of the American or African or Iraqi writers, they're

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881 not on our curriculums now. It's just studying English texts. So, I

882 suppose you could argue even with the new curriculum, the things

883 they're asking us to look at the, the education system is arguably

884 outdated. What are we actually training young people to become?

885 R: Sounds quite narrow, even within that one subject

886 L: Even within the skills sets it's quite narrow. Big Chinese business

887 men are talking about a different education model where you don't

888 teach subject content, you teach teamwork, you teach creative

889 thinking and you teach (3) problem solving

890 R: Interesting

891 L: So that you develop the part of a brain of a child where they can

892 go out and do anything

893 R: As opposed to pass a test

894 L: As opposed to pass a test ((nodding)). Learn quotes from

895 Macbeth, I mean (.) are (.) what does any of that stuff mean

896 anymore? I don't necessarily think that's completely true but I do

897 sometimes wonder if I look at what I taught (.) a fifteen-year-old or an

898 eighteen-year-old in a year and they make a decision at the end of

899 that year to step out into the world, they're probably going to use

900 very little of what we forced them to learn and that can't be a system

901 that works ((whispered)). So you add that other layer of slight

902 frustration with it and it's just another hammer on why am I doing

903 this? Why am I doing what I'm doing when I'm not even setting these

904 up to be what they potentially will be. That's a bit of a weird one

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905 actually, (4) I enjoy teaching Shakespeare. I love teaching Dickens.

906 Poetry rocks. I love Seamus Heaney. We can have a great couple of

907 afternoon lessons. But is it actually helping those students to be

908 something? I don't really know anymore. Have our business leaders

909 (.) so PWC and Barclays, Santander and big companies that want to

910 come and work with us because we're an inner city school and

911 independent, they're really keen to contribute back into education

912 R: Yeah

913 L: But if I'm being really cynical, what those companies are coming

914 and doing is coming to cherry pick our best students to come and

915 work with them. However, when those students do get those

916 opportunities and work for them that's their careers arguably worked

917 out

918 R: Sure

919 L: You get an apprenticeship with Price Cooper Waterhouse, unless

920 you screw it up, you're set for life. Because they will work you and

921 work your way up. So having those (4) having that connection

922 between the value and content of what students are working on and

923 the value of what they need when they go out can sometimes be a

924 bit of a disconnect

925 R: Do you feel that internally in relation to the role and what you do

926 on a daily basis or is more of a reflection type?

927 L: That wouldn't be on a daily basis. No, I couldn't let my mind go

928 there in a daily basis. It would just be too much

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929 R: Yeah

930 L: I guess it happens more when I'm measuring or talking to students
931 about what they're applying to next or what they're doing next

932 R: Okay

933 L: I've put a drive in our school to get apprenticeships going. So
934 students who aren't necessarily academically enjoying themselves,
935 and I do think enjoying is the correct word there, it's not necessarily
936 not academically doing well

937 R: Yeah

938 L: Some students are doing A-levels and will say "I really don't want
939 to do this but my mum tells me I have to do this" Or go to university
940 or whatever the case may be. Actually there could be other
941 pathways, other options for them to choose. As much as I disagree
942 with an awful lot of what Mr Gove said and implemented and tried to
943 implement, there's some things that I do agree with, which is the idea
944 of giving the right education for the right student, giving them
945 choices, not making them choose their career pathways really early
946 and not having any freedom from there. That was a Gove thing and
947 not a Gove thing to be honest with you, to choose the type of school
948 from very young. **You've got to give them those options and those**
949 **skill sets.** I think it's predicted that our children will have 8-10 careers
950 in their lives. **So, what are we doing to prep them up for that?**

951 R: Yeah

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952 L: We're just forcing them to learn outdated content (.). Can you call
 953 Shakespeare outdated? I don't feel comfortable with that but do you
 954 know what I mean? **We're forcing them to learn academic content**

955 R: Yeah

956 L: **Which might not even be a skill set (.). or developing the part of the**
 957 **brain that will allow them to be successful in the future (.). that's what**
 958 **I find frustrating.** Yeah, when you see other models in other parts of
 959 the world, Sweden does the same, Austria does something very
 960 similar, they teach them life skills. And apparently there is a (.). we
 961 can measure parts of the brain, the size of that part of the brain. So,
 962 your creative thinking part of the brain is more active or your
 963 problem-solving part is more active. There isn't too much of that,
 964 there is still some, but there isn't too much of that which goes on
 965 within classrooms anymore. **We've got to do the exam, we've got to**
 966 **learn the content, we've got to get it done in 45 minutes. Then I've**
 967 **got to so that again. And I've got to do it again. And again.** So, our
 968 students get tested (.). there are formal tests at the end of every term.
 969 Then, there are informal, checkpoint tests at the end of every half
 970 term and all your homeworks within that. **Well, I can train a Year 10**
 971 **student by the end of Year 11 to be able to write a 45-minute essay**
 972 **that's got six paragraphs, six quotations, that's got this context but**
 973 **it's just learnt. Maybe just memorised and not even learnt and**
 974 **understood. That feels a little bit fake. Just to try and get the League**
 975 **Table or the badge of honour for results.** That feels a little bit fake.
 976 And with the profession naturally having (.). academic professionals

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977 within it, they see that. You've got staff who haven't come through
 978 the new system but have come through 20, 30, 40 years. They see
 979 what it used to be as opposed to what it has turned into

980 R: Yeah

981 L: Quite a lot of open meetings, where we have middle managers,
 982 maybe thirty people in the room, **that debate can go on for two hours.**
 983 **Because there's no definitive answer**

984 R: Sure

985 L: **But the way all those meetings finish are: how will we be judged?**
 986 **Therefore, that's what we've got to do. It's pretty sad** (4) I'm waiting
 987 to see what will come (.) because the content is there, they're not
 988 going to change that. They're not going to change a whole education
 989 system into something more creative (.) or more diverse (.) or more
 990 culturally relevant. I don't know how that one gets tackled. I need to
 991 do a bit more research to see how Finland did it or how Sweden did
 992 it. I don't know. We're actually collecting Chinese students because
 993 they're fed up with the Chinese system because it works them too
 994 hard and breaks them. We've got seven or eight Chinese students in
 995 the sixth form at the minute. So, we've got one whose parents are
 996 working for the Chinese embassy and they've obviously spoken to
 997 others so we've got that cycle coming through

998 R: Okay

999 L: But they've left that system (.) because it's too hard (.) because of
 1000 the suicide rates are really high

Line 989-990: "I'm waiting to see what will come" – still has hope that the systems will evolve

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- 1001 R: Yeah ((nodding))
- 1002 L: And again it's just about working ten hours a day. It's not a healthy
 1003 way to do it. Not a healthy way to do it at all
- 1004 R: Really thought provoking
- 1005 L: It is. I'd be out of a job though if it was down to creatively and
 1006 problem-solving, that's not my skill set at all
- 1007 R: Well you sounded very creative when you started off so you
 1008 should be able to ((inaudible)) ((both laughing)) Alright, so just
 1009 thinking about how did changing schools impact you? Across all of
 1010 them or just particular ones
- 1011 L: Until I got onto senior leadership so the last two schools (2) the
 1012 first school I worked in for eight years or so (.) every year I got some
 1013 kind of a promotion or responsibility
- 1014 R: Yeah
- 1015 L: I had to make a decision, am I going to go down the Media, Film
 1016 route or am I going to stay with English. I wanted English because I
 1017 wanted to become head of English. A head of English came up at
 1018 Brightfield. That's what I wanted so that's what I went for and that's
 1019 what I got
- 1020 R: Yeah
- 1021 L: So, when I moved there, I suppose I was a little too big for my
 1022 boots because I wanted to change whole school systems

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1023 R: Right

1024 L: I wanted to be able to change whole school systems instead of

1025 being able to improve or be able to reform a whole English

1026 department

1027 R: Okay, sounds quite interesting

1028 L: So, I would be quite bullish (.) so I would consider head of English

1029 to be (.) if not on par with an assistant head then ((inaudible))

1030 because you have a direct influence over every student in the

1031 school. So, if you don't get your English results, the school is in

1032 trouble. So, I wanted to change quite a lot as a middle manager and I

1033 got pushed back quite a lot. Hence why I only did it for a few years.

1034 So, results improved astronomically but I wanted (.) to have an

1035 influence over the whole school

1036 R: Yeah

1037 L: Instead of all the students studying English. So, I learnt that

1038 becoming head of English. But I was also told by friends and family

1039 that you don't stay head of English very long because you get

1040 screwed from above, you get screwed from below and it's just so

1041 intense. So, it was just two and a bit years that I did that. That's why I

1042 went for assistant head because I wanted to have influence across

1043 the whole school

1044 R: Yeah

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- 1045 L: So behaviour policies, teaching learning policies, communication
 1046 policies (.) community, getting parents involved. I became quite
 1047 interested in all that side of things. But in the first school of doing that
 1048 I realised the politics that go on. The blocks that are put in the way
 1049 and the constant battles against other peers (.) or leaders above you.
 1050 And that was really frustrating. Especially, when I was dealing with
 1051 people that hadn't been in the classroom for a long time
- 1052 R: Yeah
- 1053 L: Or head teacher who (3) how do I word this (.) head teacher who
 1054 didn't have a clue how to run a classroom. Had an idea of how to run
 1055 a school
- 1056 R: Yeah
- 1057 L: But was disjointed and so far removed from what happens with the
 1058 classroom, I felt that was frustrating
- 1059 R: Mmm
- 1060 L: And I've had to change the way I've presented myself in senior
 1061 meetings. So, I would be quite aggressive (4) I was told my facial
 1062 expressions were quite (2) aggressive and confrontational. I had to
 1063 learn there that the way to get things done is through democracy as
 1064 opposed to look, listen to me, this is the way it should be done. So, I
 1065 made loads of adjustments coming into the new place here but it's
 1066 also a much more open and willing to listen to ideas team. So,
 1067 there's a lot more embedded confidence within the SLT team in my
 1068 current school. Out of the seven of us, four have been in the school

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1069 for over 25 years. So, they've gone through the process. They really
 1070 have a love and care for the institution of those students. The head
 1071 teacher has been there for 11 years. So, they are so much more
 1072 confident in their positions, there's so much less politics and
 1073 insecurities going on around conversations

1074 R: Sure

1075 L: So, you could suggest an idea of something and it could happen
 1076 or it can't happen. And it can't happen happens about equally to the
 1077 idea being run with

1078 R: Yeah

1079 L: You don't get said no to or closed down. It's always an open
 1080 forum. It's always open to discussion. And the final decision, nobody
 1081 gets offended by or upset by (.) you that was an idea, it hasn't
 1082 worked, lets come back to something else next time. So, it's a much
 1083 (.) healthier process

1084 R: Okay

1085 L: But it comes from a real security and confidence of those staff

1086 R: Sure

1087 L: Which in my experience is quite rare

1088 R: And not just something that can just be built overnight

1089 L: No. It must take years to do

1090 R: Yeah

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1091 L: And also down to the individual as well. Being willing to listen to
 1092 things. Being willing to change things. That takes a confidence too. I
 1093 suppose if I were to look back on my career it would be leaders who
 1094 were above me (.) if I really look closely at those ones who I had the
 1095 most difficulty with, it's probably because they were quite insecure.
 1096 And if I look at the way I dealt with things when I was the head of
 1097 English, it was trying to prove myself beyond what I was. Trying to be
 1098 something that I was arguably wasn't at that stage in my career. It's
 1099 an interesting way to look back on things

1100 R: Yeah

1101 L: I definitely deal with being an assistant head now for five years.
 1102 I've calmed down with the way I present my things, the speed with
 1103 which I want things down and that's relatively good for mental health
 1104 too. You're not always feeling that you're pushing something and
 1105 you're not always feeling that you're going to get told "No"

1106 R: Yeah

1107 L: So, half a dozen things I've presented, changes have happened.
 1108 Half a dozen, they haven't but it's being heard and turned down for
 1109 these reasons. So it's a healthier environment to be in. I do think
 1110 though that running a school is a relatively simple thing. It doesn't
 1111 need to be over complicated. It needs to be relatively simple.
 1112 Pressure comes from how we're being judged. How we're being
 1113 measured. That's my problem

Very reflective comments on own and other people's practice. Without this interview where would these thoughts have ever been aired?

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1114 R: Ideally, am I thinking this right, you'd prefer it to be more pupil-
1115 centric?

1116 L: **If everything isn't pupil-centric then what are we doing?**

1117 R: That's a really good question. And is it important to you, even if
1118 you're taking on more senior roles that you have contact within
1119 classrooms?

1120 L: **You have to. If you're not,** you're not at the (.) coalface to use a
1121 cliché, **you're not at the front line. Dealing with what would ultimately**
1122 **be what we're being measured on.** So, I find it very frustrating that
1123 the one (.) member of the senior leadership team who doesn't teach
1124 any classes does have quite a big opinion about how classes should
1125 be run

1126 R: Okay

1127 L: Now, we listen to it because it's the environment and it's the way
1128 it's done but actually people around the table who should be talking
1129 about this more are people who deliver curriculums because you're
1130 aware of those changes. It's okay to say (.) actually two weeks ago
1131 we had a discussion about an expectation to have another piece of
1132 work to be marked every half term. So, it was discussed, reviewed,
1133 answer: no. But the only votes around the table that was 'yes' was
1134 the members of staff that don't teach classes. So, didn't realise what
1135 that would mean. So, an option subject, or a smaller subject, say
1136 drama. There's one member of staff who teaches every single drama
1137 class. And you add an extra piece of homework for him, that's nearly

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1138 400 extra pieces of homework a half term. You can't do that. You just
 1139 can't do it. You do that for an English teacher, who teaches Year 10,
 1140 11, 12 and 13 and there's an extra 70 or 80 pieces of work that I've
 1141 got mark in a half term. So, an essay takes me 20 minutes to mark,
 1142 that's hours and hours and hours, you can't do that. It was interesting
 1143 that the people who had an immediate understanding of what that
 1144 would mean, we voted no. So, there were other members of the
 1145 senior leadership team who have deliberately removed themselves
 1146 from the classroom, they voted 'yes'

1147 R: Sure

1148 L: Our head teacher doesn't teach classes. **And if it's ever something**
 1149 **I do become headteacher then I would continue to teach classes.**
 1150 **You still have to have that content. I think it gives you authority when**
 1151 **you're talking to staff, I've got to do it too. I've got to hit the deadline**
 1152 **on reports, I've got to make sure I'm ready for parents evening.**
 1153 **That's if I was headteacher.** In my experience a lot of senior leaders
 1154 push for positions to get out of the classroom which (.) I find that
 1155 quite odd

1156 R: Yeah

1157 L: **To get away from the kids to be a senior leader is completely**
 1158 **contrary to how I think it should be. I teach every afternoon and I look**
 1159 **forward to those lessons. They're knackered. They produce an awful**
 1160 **lot of work, but they're still the best parts of the day. Without a**
 1161 **shadow of a doubt, they are the best parts of the day**

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- 1162 R: I imagine if a I was a teacher in that school without a middle or
1163 senior leadership role, whether I knew it or not, that is something
1164 quite powerful to have those advocates that are actually doing the
1165 role and maybe they don't even realise how powerful that is, that
1166 they've got people
- 1167 L: I think a lot of people realise quite quickly
- 1168 R: Yeah?
- 1169 L: Even if it's just in your line management. Because you appreciate
1170 how difficult things, you appreciate the deadlines. But I don't think
1171 everyone gets it
- 1172 R: Mm ((inaudible))
- 1173 L: Morale's not bad in our place. We've gone through a non-teaching
1174 staff review which has taken two years. So non-teaching staff are a
1175 little bit fed up and annoyed. Their jobs are up in the air. But it's also
1176 still a school that still has LSAs. We have 14 LSAs. **The school I left**
1177 **got rid of all their LSAs as a financial cut. So all those needy**
1178 **students lost all their direct support in the classroom. It was just put**
1179 **on the classroom teacher. Our SEN department is one of the only,**
1180 **well it's the only deaf provision in the borough, in the tri-borough**
1181 **actually**
- 1182 R: Okay
- 1183 L: **We have a SENDCO, deputy SENDCO and third in charge of**
1184 **SENDCO in order to give so much support to that area**

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1185 R: Okay

1186 L: But all that has been cut. We've got an ex-England footballer
 1187 who's a physio and works with our ADHD students. So, he takes
 1188 them outside to play football and he calms them down. I don't know
 1189 any other school that's offering, that's still offering that kind of
 1190 provision. But again it's what those kids need

1191 R: Yeah

1192 L: Now if you take that away you've got to put it on the classroom
 1193 teacher

1194 R: Yeah

1195 L: What else is the classroom teacher meant to do? They're meant to
 1196 be an expert, a lot of children in our school have Charge syndrome,
 1197 they're meant to be that expert, you're meant to be a delivery expert
 1198 to deliver to the deaf students that we've got, plus you've got lower
 1199 ability, middle ability, higher ability

1200 R: Counsellor, social worker

1201 L: Again we've got one counsellor which we've been lucky to hold
 1202 onto. Again incredibly rare. If all of that is put on the classroom
 1203 teacher, plus the curriculum, plus the marking, plus the behaviour
 1204 management that's a lot, that's a lot. And if someone comes into
 1205 observe you, they'll look at your register and go "Right, what are you
 1206 doing for your deaf student? What are you doing for your student
 1207 with behaviour needs? What are you doing for your student that likes

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1208 kinetic learning or the student that likes to read more? Are you aware
 1209 the student at the back has taken their glasses off because they
 1210 should be wearing them?" What am I meant to be doing here? As
 1211 opposed to let me deliver some high quality teaching and learning.
 1212 You always need to differentiate but it's differentiated to those
 1213 extremes without that being your area of expertise and not having
 1214 much training. And then being judged on the end. Being judged on
 1215 your students whether or not you'll get a pay rise. Well maybe not.
 1216 That's really challenging

1217 R: Thank you. Okay, how does being a teacher make you feel?

1218 L: In the majority (.) I feel very privileged to have my job. I do feel
 1219 very lucky in a number of ways. My days are not bad days.

1220 R: Yeah

1221 L: Some days do they take me apart? Yeah, of course they do,
 1222 they're kids. You go home, you wash your hands and you come back
 1223 the next day and are completely the same.

1224 R: Yeah

1225 L: And when kids build that bond with you and they realise that
 1226 you're not going to go away and that you are going to come back
 1227 and you're going to give them a smile in the morning and you're still
 1228 going to bollock them for swinging back on their chair but you're not
 1229 abusing them or hurting them or deliberately trying to make them feel
 1230 small then that's pretty cool.

The importance of relationships and rapport is apparent here (lines 1228-1233)

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1231 R: Yeah

1232 L: That's pretty cool. On the dark side is the (.) I've felt more and
 1233 more (2) marking is very important. It's a direct way to speak to a
 1234 student. So you have to deliver to a collective. You may well
 1235 differentiate through questions. But the main way I differentiate is
 1236 through marking. It takes quite a long time. Increasingly now, I don't
 1237 get marking done during the week (.) I either have to sacrifice either
 1238 whole weekends or I've got to sacrifice large chunks of the holiday.
 1239 So, I've 200 essays to mark over Christmas. So, while I can leave
 1240 that til over Christmas or I can do an extra two hours per night or
 1241 however I do it, you have to get the balance right

1242 R: Yeah

1243 L: It is difficult accumulating that work and having to do that in the
 1244 holiday time. And with Trudie not being a teacher she doesn't get the
 1245 same holidays and with baby not going to the child-minder during the
 1246 holidays, I'm actually a child-carer through the holidays so I don't get
 1247 the time the way I used to. So on a half term I'd work Monday,
 1248 Tuesday, Wednesday, 9-5, and I'd get all my work done and then I'd
 1249 have three or four days off. It'd be the same over the Christmas
 1250 holidays. Summer holidays aren't six weeks, they're about three
 1251 weeks because I go back in to get the results, enrolments, things like
 1252 that. My own time is being encroached on more and more and more.
 1253 And that's really difficult because I'm not willing to give up all of my
 1254 evenings and I'm not willing to give up all of my weekends and I can't

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1255 give up the majority of my holidays. Before I had a child, that was
 1256 how I would deal with it before, I'd just crunch it. I'd work a few hours
 1257 and then Trudie and I would go out in the evening. But I can't do that
 1258 anymore. The accumulation of marking is the most (.) it just builds up
 1259 and builds up and builds up and you've got to find the hours to do it.
 1260 They get tested so regularly so that marking accumulates and you've
 1261 still got to hit the marking policy so that marking accumulates but
 1262 there's no time in the school day, it's either classes or meetings. I
 1263 never sit in my office. Never sit in the office doing my work. It's
 1264 always meeting somebody or observing somebody or leading
 1265 something or whatever the case may be. So there's no point keeping
 1266 marking in my office because I (.) there's no time to be able to get to
 1267 do it

1268 R: Yeah ((nodding))

1269 L: I might do an hour and a half on Thursday because on Thursday I
 1270 stay late. I stay til about seven. So in an hour and a half I'd get (.)
 1271 five essays done. A-Level it would be less. You're meant to
 1272 formatively mark. You're meant to personalise set targets for
 1273 students, you can't just tick and put a smiley face or 'very good' or
 1274 'well done'. I pulled a teacher up for doing that, you're not allowed to
 1275 do that anymore; it doesn't mean anything. To formatively mark it
 1276 takes thought, it takes care, know your student, know their needs (.)
 1277 so I suppose that's one thing that feels like a weight around my neck.
 1278 You are never on top. Ever

Line 1281: "You are never on top. Ever." For me, no truer words were ever spoken and I would have described myself as a hard-working teacher

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1279 R: Yeah

1280 L: But then that does have its flip side. So even if you have a really
 1281 bad year, come September, you have a whole new set of kids. So,
 1282 whether you've been successful or whether you've failed, you're
 1283 always going to have a fresh set of kids. So, I find that quite
 1284 refreshing. You're never down for too long. You've just got to go
 1285 again, go again, go again. Once you've got your systems right then
 1286 you can work well (.) the amount of work I have to take home is not
 1287 balanced at the minute

1288 R: When you mentioned systems there do you mean personal
 1289 systems or school systems?

1290 L: Personal. Well school systems can have a heavy influence on
 1291 that. My sister works in a school in west London. She has to mark
 1292 her books (.) no book is ever allowed to be not marked within a two-
 1293 week period. Now (2) I've seen her feeding her child while marking a
 1294 book. I've seen her sitting up at the table marking, not on Christmas
 1295 Day but when we're together and she's marking books before dinner
 1296 goes on the table. And you're like, this is your family time. This is
 1297 where you need to relax. This is where you need to turn off for a little
 1298 bit and smile and have some fun. She can't do it. She has no
 1299 responsibilities. She's a classroom teacher. I have two other sisters
 1300 that work in primary schools and the amount of work they have to get
 1301 through. Now they do pull evening shifts. But I don't get home until
 1302 six in the evening. Feed baby, bath baby, put her to bed, there's

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- 1303 eight o'clock. I've been at work since 7 o'clock in the morning, if not
1304 earlier. I've not got much more to give ((laugh))
- 1305 R: Sure
- 1306 L: So, even if I was sitting down marking books, you're going at half
1307 the pace because you're struggling to read the work and
1308 comprehend it
- 1309 R: Okay
- 1310 L: Cognitively you're slowing down. The high, personalised target
1311 that you want to set for that student becomes a bit of gobbled-gook
1312 or very very samey across all the books you're mark. Well that's not
1313 good. That's not a good way to work on any level. If I go past nine, if
1314 I go past ten o'clock at night, but it does start slowing down after
1315 nine, but I also won't be able to sleep. Because you're not slowing
1316 down,
- 1317 R: Yeah
- 1318 L: You're not relaxing, you're not turning off
- 1319 R: Yeah
- 1320 L: Hence, historically for me it was drink. It's not anymore which is
1321 really good (.) but I could see how those things could become quite
1322 heavy, quite quickly
- 1323 R: Yeah

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- 1324 L: When my brother lived with us for six or so months, again he
 1325 works in a private school, he would drink every night. We actually
 1326 had to have (.) a little (.) chat about it with regards to that's what I
 1327 used to do but I don't do that anymore. You are aware that you're
 1328 doing four cans of beer a night? And then on a Thursday you might
 1329 add a whiskey chaser or one last drink? And then on Friday, well it's
 1330 Friday, so I'll have a proper drink. And it's a lot (.) a lot of drink
- 1331 R: Yeah
- 1332 L: You have to be careful of that. There are a lot of teachers who are
 1333 alcoholics in their older years or are really unwell in their older years
 1334 and that needs to be considered too. But then how do you get that
 1335 right? (4)
- 1336 R: It's tricky, isn't it because it might work in the short term
- 1337 L: It is tricky
- 1338 R: But then it might become a problem in the long term
- 1339 L: Yeah, it is really tricky. Asking students to produce less exam work
 1340 (.) is one way. There is one member of senior leadership who wants
 1341 to stop all homeworks. So we just deliver in class. There's a couple
 1342 of schools where I've read about where students do all their
 1343 preparation at home and when they come into class they do all their
 1344 assessments
- 1345 R: Like flipped learning?

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1346 L: Yeah. Which is quite an interesting idea. But if the student doesn't
 1347 do any work at home then they're just not going to be able to do the
 1348 work in class then so it does depend on the cohort you've got. I don't
 1349 have an answer for that one yet ((laughing))

1350 R: I'll come back to you ((laughing)) So, that was about how you feel
 1351 and then to sum up what would the title of this, what you've been
 1352 talking about, this story as a teacher, what would that be?

1353 L: ((laughing)) (10) Let's go with roller coaster

1354 R: Yeah?

1355 L: It's still really exciting, you still don't know what's going to happen
 1356 tomorrow. So, while I have my day set up per period (.) anything
 1357 could happen (4) drugs, knives, joy, could be sadness, kid going
 1358 mental, kid coming in and giving you a Christmas present and you
 1359 didn't even think that they liked you (.) I took sixth form over last year
 1360 and we've got quite a lot of quiet, reserved Muslim girls (2) I find
 1361 them quite hard to relate with (.) and I think they think I'm a bit of a
 1362 bull in a china shop. So this girl came into my office and she gave
 1363 me a card and I said "That's very kind of you Samira. Thank you very
 1364 much. I'll have a look at that later on." And I was pretty sure she
 1365 didn't like me. The card she wrote was this beautifully written card:
 1366 "Sir, when you took over I thought you were going to ruin everything"
 1367 [

1368 R: ((laughing))

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1369 L: This was at the beginning of the card. My face was going red.
 1370 "You told us off straight away, you told us off about our uniform, you
 1371 told us you expected us to do three hours of work at night" (2) She
 1372 went onto be much more positive about me and was really thankful
 1373 at the end because she'd got her offer through from the university
 1374 she wanted and her predicted grades were good enough. And in the
 1375 end, she got the grades as well. So, it's interesting sometimes you've
 1376 got to stop and think how do these young people see me
 1377 ((both laughing))
 1378 L: I charge around the place, always busy, I'm not slack at all, I'm
 1379 very high in my expectations in how you address yourself, how hard
 1380 that you work, I wouldn't allow a sixth former to walk past me without
 1381 acknowledging me because I would always acknowledge a sixth
 1382 former. All these things, I pulled the reigns on because I wanted it to
 1383 be a more academic sixth form
 1384 R: Okay
 1385 L: And I never even thought that some of them might not even like
 1386 me ((laughing)) or might be like, well who is this guy coming in? But
 1387 when you get little notes like that or you see their faces on results
 1388 day or sometimes they'll come up to you and give you big hugs and
 1389 I'll try and give them finger-tip taps on the back of their shoulders
 1390 ((laughing)) and you see that they genuinely do care and appreciate
 1391 it then (2) I guess it's a little bit like (.) what's the Latin phrase, in loco
 1392 parentis

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1393 R: Yeah

1394 L: You're kind of like their stand in parent. I do talk to some of my
 1395 classes that we do have a lot of characteristics of love. Now, it's not
 1396 sexual, I'll make that very, very clear

1397 R: Yeah

1398 L: At all. But we care for you, we guide you, we tell you off for the
 1399 right reasons, we'll forgive you. Well they're all the characteristics of
 1400 a good parental relationship. And when you get the cohort or year
 1401 group on side with that, it's a real sense of (.) so to connect it to
 1402 rollercoaster, it's a real sense of momentum. It's really exciting
 1403 sometimes. Sometimes your stomach does turn over because you
 1404 don't know how you're going to deal with the next day or the next two
 1405 days. You have parents coming in and trying to take you apart.
 1406 You've got to stand really firm, you've got to hold on tight. You get all
 1407 that done. You get off the rollercoaster and September comes round
 1408 again and you get back on again

1409 ((both laughing))

1410 L: You just keep going on and on and on. Yeah, it's overwhelmingly
 1411 positive ((smiling)). With the challenges and hiccups along the way

1412 R: Thank you so so much. Is there anything else that you wanted to
 1413 add?

1414 L: I have noticed within the last (2) five or six years that students
 1415 have become lazy. Without a shadow of a doubt. It is possibly

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1416 something to do with the school I work in and the background that
 1417 they've got. But a number of them have never read a book. Or never
 1418 had a book read to them. Or have no books in the house at all
 1419 except for the Qu 'Aran or non-English books and don't speak
 1420 English at home. Yet they're expected to do well in the English
 1421 education system and it's not set up for that. There's also a little bit
 1422 more of students expecting to be spoon-fed. So, if it's a lesson of
 1423 mine, it's my fault that they don't have the notes (.) Or they didn't get
 1424 the grade that they wanted. So, it's almost that students have picked
 1425 up on this idea that's it's the teacher fault and not mine. And that's
 1426 the adults fault in the classrooms and schools because if you go into
 1427 observe the teachers and judge the teachers and that's what kids
 1428 know that teachers are judge on. I'm sure some teachers tell them
 1429 that your results will mean that I get a pay rise or not get a pay rise
 1430 and that kind of pressure. Because young people have almost
 1431 elevated senses of their own (4) 'rights' is too extreme because of
 1432 course they've got rights. And I don't ever want to go back to the
 1433 days where children got hit or (.) sanctioned in that way at all. Never.
 1434 But they do need a little shot in the arm that your success is down to
 1435 you. How hard you work is going to reflect how successful you are
 1436 and you can't always be pointing the finger. So that's been a growing
 1437 problem I feel for (.) yeah five or six years. But I'm sure adults that
 1438 taught me said I was like that. I'm sure older people always say
 1439 these things about younger people. I noticed it more recently, that
 1440 there's this culture of gratification, 'I want it now, it's my right'

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1441 R: Mmhm

1442 L: That can be a real difficulty in the curriculum with all the content to
1443 learn. If you're not able to read two sides of A4 in fifteen minutes,
1444 you're not getting a GCSE. And that's as cold fact as it can be. If you
1445 don't understand what those words are (.) A few years ago the word
1446 'dormitory' was in the unseen text

1447 R: Okay

1448 L: Half the students didn't know it. And that's not a high tech word.
1449 And even in the context of the text itself, they should have been able
1450 to work it out, well no. Half of them had no clue. And that really did
1451 damage on that paper. So, it's difficult when students (.) The majority
1452 are self-motivated and have a self-driven, embedded literacy to study
1453 in any other subjects. And the ones that do arguably don't need
1454 teachers as much. They just get it done, they just need a little bit of
1455 guidance, they need to be engaged and motivated. And their parents
1456 are usually on the case anyway. Those students caught in the middle
1457 or at the lower end (.) I do wonder sometimes if they are going to go
1458 through (.) five to seven years of education (.) and never really get
1459 anything (.) possibly walk out with okay GCSEs because they've
1460 been spoon-fed it so much

1461 R: Yeah

1462 L: I know how to answer this question, fine. I know how to structure
1463 this answer, fine. But what are they actually getting out of it, how

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1464 much are they enjoying it? Are they really developing themselves?

1465 There's quite a big question mark over that

1466 R: And what kind of citizens are they being prepared to be without

1467 that structure around them

1468 L: Yeah. If we have students that go to university from our sixth form

1469 who drop out in the first year. That is a negative light shined on us

1470 R: Oh, really?

1471 L: Because we haven't prepared them well enough to do well at

1472 university. But if you track that back to what I said about Key Stage 4

1473 and spoon-feeding, target-setting and the lack of autonomy and

1474 independence for a lot of students at key stage five, but then they're

1475 also getting into university much easier. On a BBC news report last

1476 week said that 80% of students with two D grades got the university

1477 of their choice. Half of our students in the sixth form got

1478 unconditional offers. So, quite a lot of them got those unconditional

1479 offers before they had sat the end of year 13. So, quite a lot are

1480 turning off at the end of year 13 instead of turning on

1481 R: Yeah

1482 L: Those unconditional offers make students stop working because

1483 'I've already got my place; I don't need to work'. If I want my figures

1484 to look good, I should really be taking them off those courses. I'm

1485 also sitting down with those young people and asking "Do you want a

1486 physics A-level at 30 or don't you?" "Well I'll have my degree." Well

1487 let's say you do or let's say you don't but having a physics A-level on

Lines 1478-1480:
That's a high
percentage of students
getting their first
choice on quite a low
pass

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1488 top is better to give you more choices. A student who is studying to
1489 study and all A-level students should struggle to study because it's
1490 bloody hard, no-one should be finding it easy. They're finding lack of
1491 motivation as a reason to not try as hard because the next step has
1492 already been approved and then we're judged as a sixth form on the
1493 results that they get. I've got to take a moral decision about whether
1494 to take them off courses. This year I can't do that. So, I sat down in
1495 front of the governors (.) there were nine students that got degrees
1496 on unconditional offers. I sat in front of these 12 governors asking
1497 "Why did these students get allowed through?" Because they should
1498 be allowed to try it for a year and see if they get a qualification.
1499 "We're not doing that this year." So you want me to drop kids off
1500 courses? Yeah. You get the same amount of funding if a student
1501 takes one subject or three. **That's not right either. The unconditional**
1502 **offers should stop. They have stopped offering them.** They want
1503 money. They can't afford for seats not to be filled. But then what sort
1504 of degrees they're walking out with, I don't know. Are they dropping
1505 degrees? We get a letter when a student drops out of university. I
1506 don't know what repercussions there are for us as a school but
1507 there's certainly a mark against us

1508 R: Yeah

1509 L: You're not getting quality out of that school. How do you win that
1510 battle? Stop giving unconditional offers. Stop making it so easy to get
1511 into university. And a big thing we try to push is that university isn't
1512 the only option. There are lots of other paths as well. You can get on

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1513 a good apprenticeship or a good work placement, I mean a good
1514 work placement. Like Barclays or Santander. Some placements will
1515 pay for your university as well. So, you'll get a degree and work
1516 experience and a job which is a great opportunity. I think younger
1517 students coming through are most used to those terms. But students
1518 over the last few years, and this years students, they hear words like
1519 apprenticeship and work placements and they consider those to be
1520 failure options. For students who can't go to university. So, it's about
1521 making sure those pathways are clear and obvious and really
1522 supported. And we have a committed member of staff that just looks
1523 after that. In other places someone would be doing that as well as
1524 being assistant or deputy. But we also don't want too many people
1525 going on those other pathways because we need bums on seats in
1526 our sixth form to fund the school

1527 R: Yeah

1528 L: Sixth form funds are spread across the rest of the school. So, we
1529 increased the size of the sixth form by 20% last year, that's worth
1530 tens of thousands of pounds. That's somebody's job. That's a
1531 serious set of resources or a new science lab or whatever the case
1532 may be. Our school would be in trouble if we didn't have a sixth form.
1533 So we've got to recruit into the sixth form. Same kind of issue
1534 happens to get students into sixth form. Same kind of issue happens,
1535 we had to lower our prerequisite grades to come into the sixth form
1536 because GCSE results dipped. They didn't go bad, they were still
1537 positive results with regards to the Progress 8 measurement which

Appendix Eleven

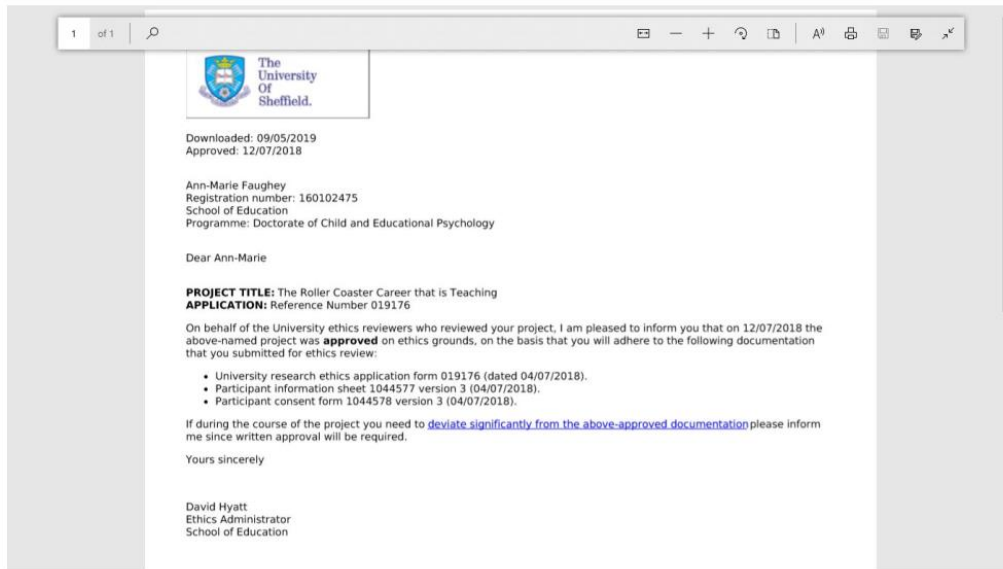
1538 was .64 which is really good. But with the results dipping we had to
 1539 lower prerequisite grades so that our numbers were healthy. So now
 1540 we have weaker students who are struggling with the academic
 1541 content of the sixth form. So the finance person on the governors is
 1542 really happy because there's money. But the person responsible for
 1543 the academic result at the back end really frustrated asking "Why
 1544 have you let a student onto an A-level course if they only got a C-?"
 1545 we needed to do that for recruitment. "But what grade are they going
 1546 to get?" Well they're on track to get an E. "Well what should they
 1547 get?" They're predicted to get a D/C. "So, that students failing then?
 1548 It must be the teachers fault." And you're like "No, it doesn't
 1549 necessarily just work like that." So, that's tough

1550 R: Complicated


1551 L: Really complicated. We like giving students the chance to prove
 1552 themselves so we do let them in. But the argument there is that I'm
 1553 letting a student the opportunity to sit a course for two years and fail.
 1554 Whereas, if that person was told "No, you're not coming in" that
 1555 might be the kick up their arse to either change or don't change. Just
 1556 to allow them to continue because it fills our coffers well that's a bit
 1557 wrong as well. It's always about that balance.

1558 R: Super, thank you. Thank you, that is amazing

Appendix Twelve



1 of 1

 The University Of Sheffield.

Downloaded: 09/05/2019
Approved: 12/07/2018

Ann-Marie Faughey
Registration number: 160102475
School of Education
Programme: Doctorate of Child and Educational Psychology

Dear Ann-Marie

PROJECT TITLE: The Roller Coaster Career that is Teaching
APPLICATION: Reference Number 019176

On behalf of the University ethics reviewers who reviewed your project, I am pleased to inform you that on 12/07/2018 the above-named project was **approved** on ethics grounds, on the basis that you will adhere to the following documentation that you submitted for ethics review:

- University research ethics application form 019176 (dated 04/07/2018).
- Participant information sheet 1044577 version 3 (04/07/2018).
- Participant consent form 1044578 version 3 (04/07/2018).

If during the course of the project you need to [deviate significantly from the above-approved documentation](#) please inform me since written approval will be required.

Yours sincerely

David Hyatt
Ethics Administrator
School of Education

Appendix Thirteen

A copy of the email which was sent to each participant prior to the member check is below. The attachment sent with each email was a Word document version of their individual 'I poem'.

Hi [participant name],

Thank you for assisting me in my research on teacher wellbeing. To help me analyse the data I used an approach called 'The Listening Guide' (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch, 2003). One of the steps within the Listening Guide is to create 'I poems' from the narratives each participant shared.

I've attached your personal 'I poem' which has been created by listening to your interview for the 'I' statements within it. Each line is made up of the I pronoun, the associated verb and sometimes a few other words. I've divided it into stanzas using the questions as a dividing point. Each phrase is recorded in the order in which it was spoken.

'I poems' are meant to pick up on the rhythm of the voice. They allow the story being told to be heard in a way which picks up on an associative stream of consciousness carried by a first person voice. It cuts across a narrative rather than being 'contained' by the structure of full sentences. Sometimes the 'I poem' may capture something not directly stated, at other times it may not.

I cannot put into words how immensely helpful your participation in this research on teacher wellbeing has been. I am truly grateful. I'll give you a call [date and time] to discuss the findings and the 'I poem'. If you have any questions before, please do get in contact with me.

Kind regards,

Ann-Marie.