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An exploration of the ways in which teachers navigate tensions in their professional lives

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**An exploration of the ways in which teachers navigate
tensions in their professional lives**

by

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*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of EdD*

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Abstract

Despite the extensive research into teachers' lives in recent decades, relatively little of it has focused on the experiences of motivated teachers. Past research has tended to focus upon the issue of retention in a profession that is dominated by regulation and performance measures. This thesis offers an original contribution to the field by exploring the experiences of established teachers who consider themselves to be motivated and who successfully navigate the tensions between the current education landscape and their personal values about teaching. The research provides insights into the complex context within which teachers work and the ways in which they manage this complexity. The methodology is grounded in the principles of adaptive theory which enables the analysis of subjective experience alongside analysis of pre-existing theories to reveal links between teachers' actions and the structures and systems which affect them. As such, the research offers a new lens through which to consider the complex nature of teachers' professional lives.

The research consists of in-depth interviews with six teachers over the course of a year. The research findings reveal how successful teachers are able to adapt behaviours to negotiate tensions and take control of their own practice. The teachers in this study demonstrate curiosity and critical awareness of the issues in education that go beyond their daily practice. They have a deep understanding of their own values and the factors that influence them and are therefore able to position themselves within the profession and the organisation within which they work. This enables them to take positive action rather than merely cope with the challenges they face. The findings have implications for teacher training and development programmes and the ways in which they enable teachers to navigate and shape their own professional lives.

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An exploration of the ways in which teachers navigate tensions in their professional lives

Chapter 1: Rationale

1.1 Introduction

This research project explores the ways in which experienced teachers talk about their practice and conceptualise the work that they do. The aim of the research is to illuminate how teachers respond to potential tensions between personal and professional values and the external pressures that currently face the profession. This opening chapter provides a reflective account of my own experience and existing professional knowledge about the work and lives of teachers that have led to the research questions posed in this study. This rationale is drawn from 25 years of working in educational settings, firstly as a primary school teacher and deputy headteacher and then as a lecturer and academic leader in a School of Education in a Higher Education Institution (HEI).

During my career, I have developed an interest in how the personal aspects of becoming a teacher influence their work. As a former teacher, I have experienced how the personal motivations that teachers hold at the start of their careers are challenged by the increasing regulation and accountability measures that have become dominant over recent decades. I have observed highly skilled and motivated teachers become despondent or discouraged by increasing workload and external pressures. They either no longer enjoy a job that they deeply care about, or leave the profession altogether. My experience has shown that teachers can respond in a personal and often emotional way to the work that they do, and that the personal aspects of teaching can be so strong that they cannot be separated from the professional (Nias, 1989; Hargreaves, 1998a; Day, 2004; Zembylas, 2005). I have observed that both newly qualified and experienced teachers often reflect on their own values as they talk about both the rewards and the challenges of their professional experience. As Zembylas (2005) argues, personal aspects such as values and beliefs are an inextricable part of teaching and, 'come into play as teachers make decisions, act and reflect on the different purposes, methods and meanings of teaching' (p.467).

This view of teaching suggests that personal aspects of the profession can help to sustain a positive sense of identity by helping individuals to feel affective, and enabling them to fulfil a

purpose within their practice (Day, 2004). However, this sense of purpose can be difficult to fulfil in a profession which is increasingly driven by externally imposed regulation and accountability measures. Whilst it is difficult to argue against the desire to increase standards in education, it is often the policy measures through which this is to be achieved that create a tension. As O'Connor (2008) suggests, policies in recent decades have led to 'a performative culture which emphasises accountability and the public demonstration of professional attributes above teachers' ethical and emotional qualities' (p.119). Berry's (2016) account of the recent drive to raise standards similarly highlights the impact that performance measures have had on teachers' and schools' priorities, claiming that 'the apparatus used to control and quantify this became a cart that drove the horse' (p.1). This research project explores these tensions and the extent to which teachers draw upon their values within their practice to help sustain motivation and a sense of personal purpose in their work (Day, 2004). My research examines how teachers talk about their experience, the ways in which they articulate their values and how they navigate their way through an increasingly complex and challenging professional environment.

Through the analysis of six teachers' narratives, I examine how personal values and beliefs are articulated as teachers talk about their professional practice, and reveal the ways these values and beliefs act to support teacher motivation in relation to external challenges in the profession. Much of the literature around teachers' work and lives in the last two decades has been dominated by the impact of increased government control and intervention and a discourse of prescription, accountability and decreased agency for teachers (Goodson, 2003; Sachs, 2005; Ball, 2008; O'Connor, 2008; Hextall and Mahony, 2013). Studies also highlight an alarming pattern of attrition with nearly half of teachers in parts of North America, Europe and Australia leaving the profession within five years (Karsenti and Collin, 2012; Gallant and Riley, 2014; Struyven and Vanthournout, 2014). Recent government statistics reveal that 30% of teachers in England leave the profession within the first five years of qualifying (DfE, 2016b). Gallant and Riley's study of the reasons why early career teachers in Australia leave the profession cite disillusionment and a mismatch between ideals and the reality of teaching as key factors. They suggest that such disillusionment is caused by a feeling of being constrained in their schools and by a lack of opportunity for personal growth. The indication is that accountability measures and regulation can lead to a decrease in teachers' motivation and

commitment, and this in turn could result in lowering attainment and outcomes for young people. As Sammons, Day, Kington, Gu, Stobart and Smees (2007) suggest:

We find that teachers who are not committed and resilient are somewhat less likely to be effective in promoting pupils' academic outcomes (p.698).

This view is reflected in Goodson's (2003) study of the work and lives of teachers which illuminates how a culture of constant reform and change in schools in the 1990s resulted in many teachers taking their 'hearts and minds' away from teaching (p.68). The findings suggest that teachers are increasingly following externally mandated reforms and regulation and taking a more rational view of their role, which may be in tension with underpinning passion and personal values. This rational approach is also recognised by Moore (2004) who describes many post-2000 teachers as 'pragmatic', as they tend to focus on what is 'effective and non-political, having come through an era in the 1990s of training the 'apprentice technician' (2004, p.40). This view of the technical professional stands in stark contrast to the teacher who is driven by moral purpose and emotional reward as depicted by Day (2004) and Zembylas (2005).

A key concern is that this tension between teachers' personal values and the external social structures within which they work can have a detrimental effect on a teacher's sense of identity. Sammons et al.'s (2007) large-scale, longitudinal research into the variations in teachers' work identified factors that influence teacher motivation and effectiveness:

Teachers' work is complex, emotional and intensive. Professional life phases and sense of identity influence all teachers but in different ways. Teachers' levels of commitment and their capacities for resilience are mediated by factors in their workplace, personal lives and by the kinds of direction and pace of national and local interventions in the curriculum and governance of schools which they will need to accommodate (pp.697-698).

It is this complexity that I aim to explore in teachers' narratives; how they negotiate conflicting influences and what factors enable them to remain motivated in light of the unstable and unpredictable nature of teaching (Coldren and Smith, 1999).

The purpose of such an exploration is to identify ways that teachers might be supported at all stages of their career. Jones (2003) and Alsup (2006) emphasise the need to consider the personal development of teachers and express a concern that such aspects of professional development are not consistently addressed in teacher training programmes. As a leader of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programmes for teachers in an HEI, I am interested in how such programmes might enable teachers to develop an understanding of their own professional identity. One of the key aims of the Masters programme I lead is for teachers to develop critical thinking about practice and gain a deeper understanding of the complex nature of the work that they do. This aim is underpinned by the premise that teachers' motivation is largely influenced by their notion of agency (Schmidt, 2000; Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt, 2000), their sense of purpose and their ability to contribute to their own professional future and that of their students. As Furlong (2008) argues, despite teachers' perceived lack of autonomy and control there is still a strong sense of vocation within the profession that keeps teachers motivated. This argument resonates with my experience of working with students on professional development programmes. I have noticed that, despite the fact that teaching has become highly regulated and target-driven, highly motivated teachers are entering the profession and are adapting to the environment in which they are working. I have spoken to teachers who have retained a positive view of their roles and show continued agency in the work they do despite the seemingly controlled environment within which they act. It is these teachers' stories of experience that I explore in this research project. My aim is to reveal the tensions and influences upon teachers' practice and how these teachers navigate their way through potential challenges. The project is underpinned by a premise that the relationship between structure and agency in the professional lives of teachers is highly complex. It draws upon the work of sociologists such as Giddens (1984) and Layder (1994) who highlight both the constraining and enabling functions of systems and structures within society. It is my view that if teacher education programmes are to support professional identity development and promote commitment and motivation, it is imperative to understand teachers' experience and the complexities of their professional lives more fully.

The research focuses on the experience of six teachers in the primary and secondary school sectors in England and explores the impact that their own beliefs and values, the school context, the socio-cultural environment and their professional development experiences have

on the ways they conceptualise their work. The participants are teachers who define themselves as successful and motivated and have been in the profession for at least eight years. Three in-depth interviews were constructed with each teacher over one year to illuminate their experience over time. As Gu and Day (2007) state:

A shift in focus from teacher stress and burnout to resilience provides a promising perspective to understand the ways that teachers manage and sustain their motivation and commitment in times of change (p.1302).

The approach chosen for this project is influenced by a realist perspective which argues that social phenomena can be investigated through interpretivist means to reveal causal processes that might occur at each level of the social world (Carter and New, 2004). I am interested in the lived experience of teachers as agents, but also want to explore this experience and agency in relation to the more objective structures and systems which affect individual action and interaction. To address both of these aspects, the research methodology is based upon Derek Layder's (1998) adaptive theory which is grounded in a realist philosophy. Through adaptive theory, Layder aims to address the criticism that social research tends to take either a 'structural' or 'agency' approach and fails to fully acknowledge the complex relationships between the two (Layder, 1994; Giddens, 1984). The approach provides a link between human activity and the contexts within which people act by using case studies of experience to identify emerging theory to inform or adapt existing theories (Van Gramberg, 2006). Such an approach enables me to acknowledge the complexities of the social world, and draw upon both the subjectivity of individual teachers' experience and the pre-existing theory that helps to explain the professional environment and teachers' responses. As Layder (1998) explains:

[Adaptive theory] allows the dual influence of extant theory (theoretical models) as well as those that unfold from (and are enfolded in) the research (p.133).

This continuous process of consultation of theory and analysis of empirical data throughout the research process aligns with the theme of 'navigation' which is central to this research project. As I explore the teachers' experiences and the complex inter-relationship between their responses and the structures within which they work, I continually draw upon extant theory from a range of disciplines to identify orienting concepts that guide me through, or help

me to navigate, the analysis of the data. Layder's adaptive theory is explored in further depth in Chapter 3.

1.2 Professional journeys

This research project draws upon six teachers' narratives of experience to illuminate how they respond to potential tensions in their professional lives. I have conceptualised this as a professional journey through which teachers act as 'navigators'. I feel it is important to distinguish the concept from a 'path' - a term often associated with careers - as a path suggests a trajectory which is straightforward and linear, whereas I see the 'journey' as something much more complex and unpredictable. As suggested by Tedder and Lawy (2013):

Journeys have a spatial dimension – they involve a trajectory linking different places; they have a temporal dimension – they take time; they are often undertaken in the company of others – they are social. Journeying evokes ideas of new experiences in new places, requiring the 'traveller' to deal with difficulties and challenges, to say nothing of coping with multifarious 'barriers' (p.55).

In this journey, teachers negotiate ways of working that take account of personal aspirations and a commitment to the profession as well the external accountability measures that they encounter. As Kelchtermans (2005) emphasises, teachers need to navigate the dynamic and complex inter-relationship between the technical, moral, political and emotional dimensions of teaching which constitute their professional lives. Previous discussions with teachers have provoked questions about the ways in which they navigate this journey, and whether the opportunity to reflect upon and understand one's personal values and beliefs can support forms of agency within the structures that govern the profession. This conception of the teachers' journey is illustrated in Figure 1.1.

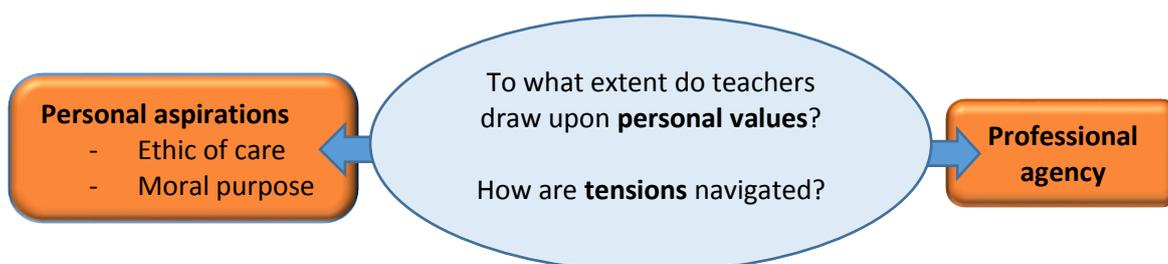


Figure 1.1: Initial conceptual model of a teacher's professional journey

The conceptual model (Figure 1.1) reflects my preconceptions that a teacher's professional journey often starts with what Day and Gu (2007) define as an intrinsic motivation at entry into the profession, and 'emotional commitment is associated with an ethic of care for the well-being of their students' (2007, p.427). My informal explorations into teachers' work and lives, through my own experience and discussions with both trainees and experienced practitioners, suggest that these personal aspects of teaching are closely related to the values that underpin practice, and the fact that most teachers care and feel passionately about what they do (Nias, 1996; Woods and Jeffrey, 2002; Day, 2004). Emotions can therefore help to sustain a positive sense of identity by helping individuals fulfil a moral purpose within their practice (Day, 2004). Values are therefore placed at the centre of the model, indicating that they underpin practice and are drawn upon to support and guide teachers to maintain motivation and gain emotional reward for the work that they do. However, it is also clear from discussions with teachers that there is a degree of uncertainty in the profession that affects teachers' view of their practice. Whilst the personal aspects of teaching can be motivational drivers, they may also be causes of potential frustration and anxiety when the structures that govern the profession are in tension with one's values and aspirations.

This distinction between the positive and negative effects of emotion on identity is illustrated through Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotional labour. She argues that the increasing neoliberalism within the public sector which puts emphasis on market forces and state intervention, has caused service workers to become commoditised and forced to engage in professional practice where emotions are controlled and a public face created. Similarly, in a study into the experience of primary school teachers, Woods and Jeffrey (2002) found that education reform can challenge the holistic, humanist aspects of the profession and has resulted in teachers having to take on new school personas that can be in conflict with their actual feelings. Hochschild calls this learnt behaviour 'surface acting' (1983, p.37) whereby practitioners display the characteristics of emotion that might be considered appropriate but not necessarily felt. As Crawford (2007) observes, in a context of regulation and accountability, 'developing teachers and leaders learn certain ways of looking, sounding or even "being"' (p.96). The concern this raises is that the emotional drivers that motivate teachers might be challenged and teachers' real selves might become concealed (Woods and Jeffrey, 2002).

I am therefore interested in how teachers navigate what Koster (2011) refers to as 'tipping points' (p.74), when the positive, driving emotions of passion and purpose have the potential to develop into negative emotions of disillusionment and demotivation that might be caused by the pressures of accountability and regulation. My experience indicates that many teachers are able to maintain a sense of balance between the pressures and motivations and as Day (2012) suggests:

Many teachers, despite some 'bumpy moments,' also maintain their commitment to teach to their best across a career and in changing, sometimes challenging, circumstances (p.8).

This research project aims to explore the factors that enable teachers to maintain this commitment and that influence the navigation of their personal journeys. In accordance with the theoretical flexibility and open nature of adaptive theory, the exploration of teachers' professional lives draws upon a range of disciplines and emphasises the inter-relationship between humanist, socio-cultural and psychological perspectives.

1.3 Teachers as active agents within the profession

The aim of this research project is to capture the complex personal responses teachers make to the current educational and political environment, placing teachers as active agents in their personal and professional lives (Giddens, 1984). The research is influenced by a humanist tradition which values human experience and posits that the truth about the world exists within people's experience of it (Newby, 2010), whilst recognising the dynamic interplay of individual experience with the social environment as emphasised by Veugelers (2011):

Humanism is about personal autonomy, moral responsibility, and about solidarity with humanity...It is always about the dynamics between autonomy and social involvement (p3).

The place of the individual within the social structures has been central to studies of teachers' work and lives in recent decades. As the work of authors such as Nias (1989), Hargreaves (1998a;1998b), Pring (2001), Woods and Jeffrey (2002), Fullan (2002), Day (2004) and Zembylas (2005) highlights, the links between the personal and professional aspects of

teaching are significant, and the 'person of the teacher' (Korthagen, 2004, p.79) is central to effective teacher development. This humanist perspective posits that the teachers are active in their own professional and personal development and are generally motivated by a sense of personal agency and intentionality (Gage and Berliner, 1991; Huitt, 2009). Huitt (2009) suggests that humans engage with their environment to connect their values with personal action. Bandura (2001) makes a similar claim:

To be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by one's actions. Agency embodies the endowments, belief systems, self-regulatory capabilities and distributed structures and functions through which personal influence is exercised (p.2).

Such a perspective might be criticised for over-emphasising the agency of the individual and not fully addressing the structures and external influences that govern the profession (Layder, 1994). However, I also acknowledge that the teachers' personal journeys take place within a context – at a particular time in history, within a current political structure and within specific social and organisational systems and structures. As Layder (1994) states, 'the individual is never free of social involvements and commitments' (p.3). Therefore in this research project, the work and life of the individual teacher is explored within the wider socio-cultural context of teaching and education.

1.4 The socio-political context of teaching

The socio-political context of education and schools is an important factor in this research as the impetus of national and global education reform and policy-making in the past four decades has had a significant impact on the ways the schools and individual teachers work.

It has been argued that such developments in England have been influenced by the 'emphatic turn towards neoliberalism in political-economic practices and thinking since the 1970s (Harvey, 2005, p.2). As education has become increasingly influenced by the processes of globalisation and increasing competition between nations in this time (Bottery, 2006; 2007), policies have developed and been reinterpreted by successive governments as a means of raising standards of education and achievement in schools (Whitty, 2000; Barker, 2008; Furlong, 2013). As Barker (2008) observes:

Since the early days of the 1988 Act, governments have pursued large-scale education reform on a sustained and systematic basis (Chitty, 1989; Chitty and Dunford, 1999). The result is that policy, structure and operations are closely aligned to improve productivity and to secure the achievement goals identified (p.670).

Apple (2006) claims that the ultimate goal of neoliberal reformers is to convert educational systems into markets. This process of globalisation and the marketisation of services such as education has led to what Bottery (2006) sees as a paradox: governments require organisations to be creative in developing productive employees for a competitive economy yet also continue to want to control, direct and monitor their activity:

Economic globalisation does not produce just greater demands for flexibility: paradoxically, it also increases demands for standardization and predictability, and many organisations are being driven down this road rather than the road to flexibility (p.104).

This paradox clearly creates challenges for school leaders and teachers. Such a focus on economic rationality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness (Apple, 2000), has led to increasing regulation of the curriculum and increasing monitoring of teachers' performance, particularly in relation to pupils' attainment (Ball, 2008). The resulting impact on teachers during these reforms has been stark as such reforms signal a potential threat to teachers' values and ideas about 'what really counts' in education (Eisner 1991, p.10). A warning of the potential impact on teachers was offered by Ball in the late 1990s:

It is difficult not to conclude that political enthusiasm for accountability and competition are threatening both to destroy the meaningfulness of 'authentic' teaching and profoundly change what it means 'to teach' and to be a teacher. The global trends of school improvement and effectiveness, performativity and management are working together to eliminate emotion and desire from teaching – rendering the teacher's soul transparent but empty (Ball, 1999, p.9).

Following Ball (1999), there has been a significant body of literature that suggests that the personal aspects of teaching are increasingly challenged by the socio-political context in which teachers are working (Jeffrey, 2002; Day, 2003; Goodson, 2003; Sachs, 2000; Groundwater-

Smith and Sachs, 2002; Mahony, Menter and Hextall, 2004; Bottery, 2006; Ball, 2008; Pring, 2012). For example, Goodson's (2003) study of teachers' professional lives suggests that teachers are increasingly following externally mandated reforms and taking a more rational view of their role that is constrained by a growing culture of accountability. Mockler (2010) agrees, arguing that current policy in Australia is dominated by 'what works' and 'what counts' and privileges what is easy to measure over 'more complex and untidy dimensions of a very human enterprise' (2010, p.518). These concerns are reflected in Bottery's (2006) claims that:

...private sector values— primarily those of efficiency, effectiveness and economy— become the criteria of success, whilst other values like care, trust, and equity are increasingly perceived as second-order values (p.103).

Similar tensions have been explored by Sachs (2000) and Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) in Australia; their proposal that there are distinct responses that teachers can make to such challenges is a useful lens through which teachers' narratives of experience can be examined. Sachs' (2000) proposed responses are, 'to act as an entrepreneurial professional – that is, as a careerist – or as an activist professional' (in Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002, p.342). This emergence of an entrepreneurial professional implies that many teachers are conforming to the requirements of accountability measures as it is possible, for example, to use the system to show their competencies and skills and have them recognised as professional assets. Groundwater-Smith and Sachs suggest that this leaves 'little requirement for trust and moral professional judgement' (2002, p.352), and thus propose the need for a more 'activist' profession that encourages more democratic and participatory practice in order to take back some of the control and values-driven practice within the profession.

Such a discourse might suggest a somewhat pessimistic view of the state of the teaching profession, and I am interested in the extent to which this is reflected in the experience of teachers more than a decade after many of these studies were carried out. The participants in this research project have been working in the fifteen years after the work of Groundwater-Smith and Sachs and others and, as Day has acknowledged more recently, despite the challenges, there are 'teachers who remain skilful, knowledgeable, committed and resilient regardless of circumstance' (2012, p.7).

My research therefore explores the interplay between the wider context and individual experience and addresses what Layder (1994, p.1) refers to as the “micro-macro’ issue’; how the personal experiences of teachers relate to the more general features of educational life such as the impact of national policy and management of schools. I am interested in the ways that accountability and managerialist policies are accepted or resisted in the ways that teachers talk (Mausethagen, 2013). I also explore the relationship between the individual teacher and the organisation at a time when there is both a focus on individual competence and performance targets and, somewhat paradoxically, an emphasis on centralised and standardised provision.

In accordance with the adaptive approach, this project draws upon both general and substantive theory identified from existing literature (Layder, 1998, p.163). The substantive theory focuses on research into teachers’ experience and is used to explore the nature of teachers’ values, their motivation and challenges, whilst general theory explores the broader theoretical issues in social life such as the relationship between structure and agency and the concepts of professionalism and identity. These theoretical aspects are explored in Chapter 2.

1.5 Research aims

This research project aims to gain insights into teachers’ professional journeys in the current socio-political context and the ways in which potential tensions between personal values and beliefs and external structures and accountability measures are navigated. The project has been designed to address the following research questions:

1. How do teachers reflect on personal values when talking about their professional journeys?
2. How do teachers navigate potential tensions between their personal values and external influences on the profession?
3. What are the implications for understanding teachers’ professional identity and for their professional development?

1.6 How the work will make a distinct contribution to knowledge

The research will illuminate the value of exploring personal and professional experience in understanding teacher identity. This research builds upon the significant amount of research carried out in the 2000s which highlights the importance of identity in the professional development of teachers (Beijaard, Menter and Hextall, 2004; Sachs 2005; Flores and Day, 2006; Olsen, 2008; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009). It is my view that there is still a great deal to be learnt about how teacher education programmes can support identity development and the impact that this might have on teacher agency and motivation, particularly in times of increased accountability and regulation. Therefore, the findings will inform professional development programmes in my own institution and also support other teacher development providers to consider the role they play in enabling the hidden aspects of teachers' work to be made explicit (Olsen, 2008). This is particularly significant in the current environment, in which there is a significant trend towards more school-based and school-led teacher education and decreasing involvement of HEIs in teacher training and professional development (Carter, 2015; Hilton and Tyler, 2015; Brown, Rowley and Smith, 2016). It is my view that such a move has the potential to limit teachers' awareness of practice beyond the schools within which they train (Woodbury, 2017) and therefore limit individuals' understanding of their own agency within the wider socio-political context of the profession.

1.7 Project outline and structure

This chapter has provided a rationale and context for the research project and outlined the aims and key research questions to be addressed. Chapter 2 is a literature review which critically examines the key concepts and previous research that underpin this project. It begins with an exploration of the nature of identity and how this links to values, personal agency and motivation. This critical review of the literature leads to the identification of orienting concepts which are used to inform initial analysis of teachers' narratives later in the project. Chapter 3 outlines the research design and the methodology chosen for this research. It provides a rationale for the use of adaptive theory and explores the ways in which data were generated. The chapter outlines the process of data generation through in-depth semi-structured interviews with the six teachers and provides justification for the decisions and choices made at each stage of the process. The process of analysis is explained, with a focus on adaptive theory and the use of orienting concepts to generate key findings from the data. This chapter

also includes reflections upon the challenges and limitations of the approach, and examination of aspects such as ethical considerations and the quest for authentic and trustworthy findings. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of teachers' narratives, informed by the orienting concepts drawn from the literature. It focuses on how values and beliefs are revealed by the teachers, followed by analysis of the ways in which tensions are articulated in the narratives. Chapter 5 presents the findings from the final stage of analysis to highlight the ways in which teachers navigate their professional lives. It outlines the implications for teacher identity and professionalism in current times. Chapter 6 outlines the conclusions drawn from the findings, the implications for future practice and research and a personal reflection on the research process.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

2.1 Introduction

The literature review in this chapter aims to build upon the links made in Chapter 1 between teachers' identity, values, agency and motivation (Figure 1.1), by critically analysing a body of literature and theoretical perspectives that seek to explain how teachers think and behave. The purpose of this review is to explore key concepts for the research that can be used to guide the analysis of teachers' narratives of experience.

This chapter critically reviews a body of literature to consider ways of viewing teachers' experience within a complex and ever-changing professional and socio-political environment. The review acknowledges the complex interplay between sociological and psychological perspectives that underpin this project. The first section provides an overview of the literature relating to professional identity development and explores influences such as context, personal values and social interactions. This is followed by a review of literature that examines the relationship between values and identity in order to identify orienting concepts for the research (Layder, 1998). The critique examines the notions of agency and its connection to teachers' professional lives, such as personal agency, agentic behaviours and the relationship between these and personal values. An exploration of the relationship between structure and agency identifies potential tensions and the impact of accountability measures on teachers' work and on the relationship between the individual and the organisation. The implications for teacher identity development and teacher professionalisms are then explored.

2.2 Professional identity: sociological and psychological perspectives

This research project is underpinned by a perspective that recognises the influence of context and social interaction upon professional identity (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002; Lasky, 2005; Day 2012) whilst acknowledging the unique nature of individuals and the place of personal values and beliefs in identity development (Nias, 1989; Zembylas, 2003; O'Connor, 2008). As Layder (2004) argues, people are both influenced by the social environment but are also unique individuals and that 'the self is both social and psychological in nature' (2004, p.7). This complexity is also highlighted in Beijaard et al.'s (2004) review of research on teachers' professional identity. They identify the range of ways in which researchers define the term 'identity', from an emphasis on personal self-concept that can be seen as a somewhat static

state of what someone is and believes, to a more postmodern and sociological perspective that views identity as an on-going, changing state that is informed by experience and social interactions (Sachs 2005; Flores and Day, 2006). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) similarly highlight the diverse ways in which identity can be conceptualised and the fact that, 'notions of identity thus range across approaches from these disciplines, even within the literature on teaching and teacher education' (p.176). Therefore this section seeks to explore the nuanced nature of both identity and self-concept within psychological and sociological bodies of literature, and examine how they might be formed and develop over time.

In the context of teachers' professional experience, I am defining self-concept as 'what a person believes about himself, or a map that each person consults in order to understand himself' (Zlatkovic, Stojiljković, Djigić and Todorovic, 2012, p.378). This definition aligns with the analogy of a 'journey' as it suggests both a dynamic process with self-concept acting as a guide through professional lives, and something that is rooted and unified in terms of a 'map'. According to Yeung, Craven and Kaur (2014), teachers' self-concept can be formed from the beliefs and values that they hold about the purpose and value of education, but also their perceptions of their own teaching ability and skills, all of which might change over time. This challenges the view of a fixed self-concept and suggests that an individual's self-concept is not necessarily static. This view is reflected in Woods and Jeffrey's (2002) findings from a study of the impact of regulation on teachers' sense of self:

The previously unified self is in danger of becoming fragmented in a number of ways. There is a yearning by teachers to retain the old values, but strong pressure on them to adopt a new persona (p.103).

Ball's term, 'assigned social identities' (Ball, 1972 in Woods and Jeffrey, 2002, p.91) is helpful in explaining a possible distinction between one's self-concept and professional identity in this context, as it distinguishes between a desired or prescribed appearance that someone portrays and their personal self-concept. Gee (2001) similarly describes people as having, 'multiple identities connected not to their "internal states" but to their performances in society' (2001, p.99), a view reinforced by McCaslin (2009) who states:

Emergent identity is a continuous process of participation and validation that is co-regulated by personal, cultural, and social influences and the relationships among them (p.144).

This view aligns with Akkerman and Meijer's (2011) depiction of identity which recognises the influence of social interactions upon individuals. They identify three key characteristics that highlight this interaction, namely the multiplicity, discontinuity and social nature of identity:

The three characterizations stress that identity is not a fixed and stable entity, but rather shifts with time and context. These postmodern characterizations represent a fundamental shift in defining identity in comparison to earlier and more broadly accepted psychological understandings of the human mind (p.309).

However, Akkerman and Meijer then challenge the one-dimensional nature of these characterisations and suggest that whilst such a conception is valuable, it fails to fully recognise individuals as 'unique and transcendent agents' (2011, p.316) who are able to maintain a stable sense of self over time. They therefore propose a more nuanced approach to describe teacher identity as evolving with simultaneous social and individual dimensions suggesting that these dimensions of identity act inter-dependently and in a state of continual negotiation. This 'dialogical' approach recognises that teachers may take on different and conflicting identities or 'I-positions' (Bakhtin, 1981, 1986 in Akkerman and Meijer, 2011, p.311) whereby they might adapt behaviour in response to circumstance, but also acknowledges that these positions act in dialogue with the teachers' inner, more unitary and consistent self. For example, teachers might assume a compliant, managerialist approach in staff meetings or in discussion with parents yet take on a more resistant and principled persona in the classroom or in discussion with friends and colleagues. Thus, whilst multiple I-positions might suggest a discontinuity of identity, teachers also demonstrate patterned and more continuous behaviour which is informed by their personal beliefs and values.

The dialogical approach illustrates the inter-relationship between psychological and sociological conceptions of identity akin to the view of teacher identity as outlined by Olsen (2008). In considering the complex interplay between identity and context, Olsen draws upon the earlier work of Mead (1964) and Holland, Lachiocotte, Skinner and Cain (1998), to argue

that teachers are both products of their personal histories, values and beliefs, but also are able to change and adapt in relation to context and circumstance. This perspective suggests that teachers have the capacity to respond in a range of ways to their context and experience and might reassign identities as they develop in their careers (Woods and Jeffrey, 2002; Jenkins, 2008). Such a perspective draws on the work of humanist psychologists such as Maslow (1943; 1968) and Rogers (1951) who emphasise that people are aware of their own intentions and motivations and most ways of behaving are consistent with one's sense of self. However as Layder (2004) argues, various constraints affect individuals' abilities to develop in the ways that they hope or desire and these have to be navigated. This is reflected in the current education environment where neoliberal policies and processes of target-setting and accountability emphasise certain aspects of teachers' work, and where teachers' own aspirations and motivations may be challenged. Therefore, as Jenkins (2008) emphasises, identity becomes a process; not something one has, but something one does and it requires elements of reflexivity for individuals to recognise how their own professional identity is developing. Similarly, McAdams (2001) argues that identity is not synonymous with self-concept but refers to how individuals understand and make meaning of the different aspects of their lives. It is this inter-relationship between personal, social and professional aspects that Alsop (2006) argues makes teacher identity complex and challenging. She emphasises the need for teacher education to provide opportunities to develop positive identities so that teachers can respond positively to the challenges they might face, and suggests that by understanding one's sense of self, teachers can learn how to 'embody a workable professional teacher identity without sacrificing personal priorities and passions' (2006, p.ix). However, this may require compromise and negotiation; teachers might have to adopt an assigned social identity that may be in conflict with deeply held personal values, or need to modify their behaviour to act in a certain way as they attempt to respond to the external influences upon their work. (Flores and Day, 2006; Isenbarger and Zembylas, 2006).

In relation to this view, Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) emphasise the need for teachers to reflect on how their own identity develops in relation to their self-concept and the wider context of their work:

Reflection is recognized as a key means by which teachers can become more in tune with their sense of self and with a deep understanding of how this self fits into a larger context... in other words, reflection is a factor in the shaping of identity (2009, p.182).

Reflection is similarly highlighted as an important aspect of identity development by O'Connor and Scanlon (2006) who argue that, 'creating and sustaining a professional identity as a teacher is an intricate social and psychological process' (p.1). This view is supported by Eccles (2009) who suggests that individuals have both individual and social identities which are influenced by their agency in interpreting their social roles and experiences. Layder (2004) refers to this interpretation as the 'emergent self-narrative' that occurs as individuals 'grapple with issues about what sort of person we are, what we should become and how we should live our lives' (p.154). The term 'grapple' refers to the fact that individuals are managing a number of events and circumstances that are beyond control and that can limit ambitions and desires. This reflexive 'grappling' is revealed in the findings of Day, Kington, Stobart and Sammons' (2006) longitudinal study of teachers' professional lives which found that teacher identity comprises the interactions between competing dimensions of their work and lives. Their findings suggest that it is the balancing of the 'fluctuations' between these dimensions that test the commitment and resilience of the teachers, as managing these dimensions requires energy and a clear sense of vocation and agency (Day and Gu, 2006, p.431). The notion of self-narrative also implies that having opportunities to reflect upon and discuss their own beliefs and values might support teachers in responding to the personal challenges they face in their daily work (Jones, 2003). In this way, narrative can provide a structure through which various events and experiences can be formed into a coherent identity (Polkinghorne 1991; Bullough, 2015). As Beijaard et al. (2004) highlight:

Identity...is formed and reformed by the stories we tell and which we draw upon our communications with others. In other words, stories inadvertently shape teachers and teaching (p.123).

In summary, the inter-relation between the psychological notion of self-concept and a sociological perspective of identity underpins the analysis of the teachers' and the teachers' narratives in this project. This inter-relationship acknowledges both the influence of context and social interaction upon professional identity and the unique nature of individuals and their

personal values. In this section, I have identified the challenge that researchers face in 'grappling with the notion of how identity shifts and reshapes' (Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009, p.175), and suggested that Akkerman and Meijer's (2011) concept of a dialogical identity provides a useful lens through which to explore teachers' conceptions of their experience. I have also argued that the process of identity formation and transformation requires individuals to be active, reflexive and aware of their own participation in the development of their professional identity (Layder, 2004; Jenkins 2008; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Eccles, 2009), suggesting a need to consider the factors that enable teachers to be and remain active and reflexive in their work (Jones, 2003). Critique of the literature has illuminated that teachers' sense of professional identity in such a dynamic context is largely influenced by their notion of agency and opportunity to act in line with their personal beliefs and values (Day et al., 2006; Day and Gu, 2007). Therefore, the relationship between beliefs, values and identity provides an important theoretical dimension to the research project and is explored through critical literatures in the following sections of this chapter.

2.3 Teachers' beliefs and values

This section examines a body of literature that explores the importance of beliefs and values in teachers' work, and the extent to which they are fixed phenomena or socially formed and reformed by situation and context. Firstly, the ways in which personal beliefs and values influence decisions to enter the teaching profession are examined in the literature. This is followed by an analysis of how teachers' values develop in practice, and the ways in which they influence professional identity and motivation.

In this study, beliefs are defined as people's understandings and assumptions about the world that they hold to be true (Watt and Richardson, 2014), recognising that these will be unique to individuals depending on their experiences and influences. Watt and Richardson (2014) posit that beliefs for teaching come from a range of sources such as personal experience, previous schooling experience and can be deeply personal (Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 2003). These experiences form teachers' generalised assumptions about education and learning, and it is these beliefs that inform the values that teachers hold, that is what they deem to be important in their daily lives that affect their ongoing attitudes and behaviours (OECD, 2009). In this way,

both beliefs and values act as the frames and filters for practice and professional attitudes and behaviours (Fives and Buehl, 2012).

My research is underpinned by an assumption that a clear sense of both beliefs and values in teaching is a necessary condition for maintaining an emotional commitment to the role (Nias, 1989; Zembylas, 2003; Day and Gu, 2007). Pajares (1992) observes the importance of beliefs in teachers' ongoing development:

Few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn, affect their behavior in the classroom, or that understanding the belief structures of teachers and teacher candidates is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices (p.307).

This view emphasises the importance of understanding the nature of teachers' beliefs and the need for teacher educators to unearth sources of beliefs and how they might be demonstrated. An international study by the OECD (2009) of teachers' beliefs and attitudes identifies three key aspects upon which teachers' beliefs are based. They found that teachers' views about teaching and whether they adhere to a transmission or constructivist approaches to learning has a strong influence upon how they approach their practice. They also identify teachers' attitudes to working with colleagues and their relationships with pupils and important indicators of personal values. This is supported by the work of Fives and Buehl (2012) who suggest that teachers' beliefs can be framed into similar themes. However, they also identify an additional dimension relating to teachers' beliefs about themselves and their sense of efficacy and identity. An additional challenge to identifying teachers' beliefs emerges; whilst some beliefs may be conscious and influenced by context (Richardson, 2003), others might be more psychologically held understandings about the world which are more difficult to make explicit in practice (Fives and Buehl, 2012).

A situated, sociological perspective suggests that beliefs are not completely individual characteristics but are co-produced and shared within a context such as a classroom or school (Skott, 2009). However, Fives and Buehl (2012) take a more psychological view of beliefs as more innate and becoming activated rather than formed by the situations or contexts in which the teachers work. This perspective suggests that beliefs might become more conscious to

the teacher when they are being challenged or are not congruent with practices in the school (Yerrick, Parke and Nugent, 1997). Therefore, the following sections examine literature around the beliefs and values that motivate individuals in becoming a teacher, and how these might become re-formed or more conscious by the situation and context in which they then work.

2.3.1 Beliefs and values: becoming a teacher

The view that personal beliefs influence people's decision to become a teacher is widely acknowledged in the research literature of recent decades (Goodson and Hargreaves, 1996; Jones, 2003; Richardson, 2003; Flores and Day, 2006; Watt and Richardson, 2014). For example, Richardson (2003) emphasises the importance of beliefs in the development of teachers entering the profession:

[Trainee teachers] bring with them strong and perhaps central beliefs about teaching into their teacher education programmes. Within a constructivist conception of learning, beliefs are thought of as critical in terms of what and how the candidates make sense of what they are studying. They are also thought to guide teaching action (p.4).

These 'strong' and 'central' beliefs often relate to personal attitudes about education, teaching and learning (Collinson, 2012). They can inform teachers' motivations for entering the profession and influence what they value in their practice (OECD, 2009; Watt and Richardson, 2014). Raths (2001) argues that whilst beliefs are self-generated and are often untested or not fully examined in practice, they transform into values as they are examined, challenged and tried out in relation to alternatives. The values then inform action within a particular context (Veugelers and Vedder, 2003). In this way teachers' values represent a set of beliefs (Collinson, 2012) and it is these values that have a direct impact on decision making and practice (Jones, 2003). This link between values and action is reflected in Schwarz's (1994) definition:

[values are] guiding principles in the life of a person...[that] can motivate action - giving it direction and emotional intensity (p.21).

This emphasis upon the links between values, motivation and action suggests that recognising and acting upon one's values is an important aspect of becoming a teacher. However, the

nature of the values themselves and how they are formed can be difficult to define and identify. To address this challenge, Schwartz (1992, 1994) proposed a set of distinct 'universal' values that people in a range of cultures and contexts might recognise, ranging from those focusing on personal self-direction, the desire for achievement and security to those of benevolence and desire to enhance the lives of others (Schwarz, 1994). Whilst Schwartz presents these values as universal, the typologies can reflect the more specific nature of teachers' values about the profession, as teachers' motivations appear to derive from both a desire for their own achievement and security and a desire to see others develop (Eccles, 2009). Therefore, these universal values provide a useful lens through which the nature of teachers' values can be examined.

To gain an understanding of the specific nature of teachers' values, it is helpful to examine the reasons that they have for entering teaching as these are key indicators of what teachers believe to be significant or important about their role (Jarvis-Selinger, Pratt and Collins, 2010). The personal factors that lead to individuals entering the profession can also influence what Dollard (1949 in Kelly and Howie, 2007) describes as the 'embodied nature' of the teacher (p.139) - their personal goals and life concerns that then affect their future choices and actions. As Flores and Day's (2006) study of the developing identity of teachers highlights, it is important to recognise 'the key role of personal biography in mediating the making sense of teachers' practices and their beliefs about themselves as teachers' (p.230). Jarvis-Selinger et al. (2010) posit that the personal reasons for becoming a teacher can have an effect on their continuing commitment in the profession. Their analysis of identity in Canadian trainee teachers identified that those entering the profession have varying reasons for becoming a teacher, from being a 'fall-back choice' to 'feeling joy from previous teaching experience' or 'always wanting to be a teacher' (2010, pp.74-75).

The reasons teachers gave for becoming a teacher consistently correlated with how they viewed their sense of teacher identity and commitment to the profession. For example, those teachers with high commitment tended to focus on children's development rather than their own career prospects, reflecting Schwartz's distinction between personal achievement and benevolent values. Flores and Day's (2006) study also suggests that individuals' early positive experience of being in a teaching context and supporting others' development can lead to a

strong personal commitment and, 'positive attitudes towards teaching' (p.230). Fullan (2002) defines this view of teaching as, 'principled behaviour connected to something greater than ourselves that relates to human and social development' (p.1). This suggests that the aspects of the role that are valued by many committed teachers go beyond classroom competencies and are associated with the personal growth of themselves and others (Huitt, 2009). As Rinke's (2011) in-depth case studies illuminate, teachers who are motivated to fully integrate into the education system rather than merely participate within it are more likely to embrace reform and change as opportunities for personal and professional development and actively engage in the wider educational issues that face the profession.

The different perspectives that teachers take towards their work is also recognised by Eccles (2009) who used an 'expectancy value perspective' (p.78) to explore the ways in which values inform behavioural choices. Her study highlights two sets of self-perception: those relating to skills and competencies and those relating to personal values. Such a distinction is pertinent when considering the nature of teacher identity in a time when a focus on performance indicators might be at odds with personal values. Eccles (2009) concludes that it is the way in which an individual's personal values interact with their self-efficacy and their ability to enact these values that influences their actions. This suggests that challenges to teachers' values as they enter the profession will have a significant impact on their agency and professional identity.

The significance of the beliefs and values about becoming a teacher is apparent, as they shape teachers' choices and behaviours and initial commitment to the profession (Richardson, 2003; Eccles, 2009; Jarvis-Selinger et al., 2010; Watt and Richardson, 2014). The literature highlights a correlation between the beliefs and values that bring people into the profession and their ongoing commitment and motivation (Fullan, 2002; Flores and Day, 2006). This connection is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

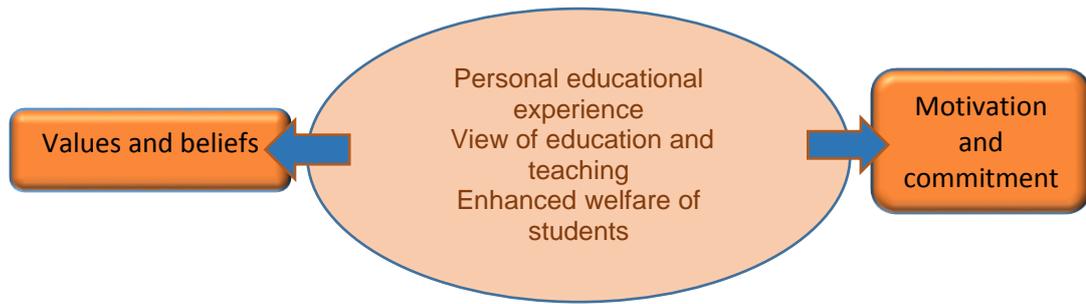


Figure 2.1: Becoming a teacher: orienting concepts

Whilst identification of value types is a helpful way of considering how values might be recognised, there are potential issues of conflict and compatibility between them, particularly for teachers. For example, the desire for security and stability in one's role may lead to a teacher conforming in a way that is in conflict with their own need for self-centred satisfaction or what they view to be the enhanced welfare of their pupils. As Richardson suggests, teachers' values can often be 'highly idealistic' and 'traditional' (2003, p.6) and might be challenged by expectations and requirements in practice (Jones, 2003). Therefore, in the following section, the nature of beliefs and values held by teachers will be considered in light of the ways in which these values might be either reinforced or compromised by the context in which teachers work.

2.3.2 Beliefs and values: ongoing motivation

The previous section highlighted the significance of teachers' beliefs and values as they enter the profession but, as Jones (2003) and Jarvis-Selinger et al. (2010) suggest, teachers' initial personal beliefs about teaching can be challenged or developed as they continue to engage in a range of experiences and enter different social contexts. Similarly, Eccles (2009) identifies a distinction between personal and social identities; there may be tension between the psychological function of being unique against the social need to strengthen one's place as part of a group. This section therefore explores these perspectives of beliefs and values in relation to teachers' ongoing motivation and identity. This inter-relationship between the psychological and sociological perspectives is highlighted by Kaplan and Flum (2009) in their review of research in this field:

The concepts of motivation and identity received numerous different definitions and were conceptualized through multiple theoretical perspectives. Both concepts have

been treated in terms of content as well as in terms of process, as dispositions or as situated constructions, as an individual or as a social phenomenon, and as various combinations of these dimensions (p.74).

A key concept in the consideration of motivation is that of self-efficacy, that is the extent to which teachers feel able to carry out their role in a way that aligns with beliefs and values (Flores and Day, 2006; Eccles, 2009) and aspirations. For example, Eccles (2009) cites 'expectations for success, confidence in one's abilities to succeed, and personal efficacy' as important mediators of behaviour (p.81). Similarly, Watt and Richardson (2014) emphasise the place of successful outcomes in considering the self-efficacy of teachers. The authors provide a helpful definition:

Teacher self-efficacy refers to the degree to which teachers believe they are able to feel efficacious to enact certain professional outcomes (p.193).

A key question arising from this definition is what these 'professional outcomes' that motivate teachers might be, and the response might depend on what teachers value, such as how they view good teaching or what individuals hope to achieve in their professional lives.

Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) (Dweck, 1986; Elliott and Dweck, 1988; Butler, 2007) provides a useful tool for considering teachers' self-beliefs about success and effectiveness in this research. AGT was originally developed as a tool for understanding the motivation of students and achievement goals for learning (Elliott and Dweck, 1988) but more recently, Butler (2007, 2012) has adapted and developed the tool to consider how such theories might be used to examine teachers' values and motivations. Her work is embedded in a view that teachers generally want to succeed at their job but they may differ in the ways they define success and in goals they strive to attain (Butler, 2012). In her earlier research into the goal orientations of Israeli teachers, Butler (2007) found that distinct goal orientations can be useful indicators of teachers' values and can inform how they behave. She later identifies four orientations in the teachers that correspond to previously identified goals for learning:

- Acquire and improve professional competence (mastery orientation)
- Prove superior teaching ability (ability-approach)

- Avoid failure and the demonstration of inferior teaching ability (ability-avoidance),
- Get through the day with little effort (work-avoidance)

(p.726)

These four orientations provide a useful lens for further work on motivation as it makes distinctions between intrinsic (mastery) and extrinsic (ability) motivations which are significant for teachers working in a culture of accountability and externally driven directives. Mastery goals have been associated with high levels of interest in teaching and low levels of burnout, whilst performance driven teachers tend to demonstrate low levels of job satisfaction (Hughes, 2012). An example of how this framework can be used is seen in the work of Retelsdorf and Gunther (2011) who drew on Butler's findings to examine whether similar goal orientations can be seen in teachers in Germany. They discovered that the orientations demonstrated by the teachers have an impact on their attitudes to their pupils' learning; teachers who are interested in their own learning and development (mastery) are likely to value their own students' progress and learning for understanding, while teachers who are motivated by demonstrating superior ability are more likely to value student performance and ability in comparison to others. The nature of teachers' attitudes and their behaviour towards students are therefore key in any study of teacher motivation. In later work, Butler (2012) identified that teachers' desire to attain positive and caring relationships with students is a significant motivation. Her study of teacher and student perspectives on how achievement goals affect practice emphasises the importance of these 'relational goals' (p.727), as students themselves show a great deal of awareness of teachers' motivations and how they affect their approaches to teaching and learning. Butler's findings also raise important questions about what aspects of teachers' professional environment might support or undermine teachers' relational and other achievement goals, recognising that teachers often face challenges to their personal values and goals. In light of the pressures of accountability and increasing workload in modern professional contexts, Eccles (2009) suggests that people are increasingly likely to assess their skills by comparing their performance with those of others, or compare the amount of time and effort it might take to succeed. These aspects might be in tension with the intrinsic motivations suggested by Butler, and are therefore important to consider in an environment where relative performance is monitored and time is limited. As Alexander (2008) warns:

Altruism alone will not sustain the members of the teaching profession. Indeed high expectations and high valuing of the profession can prove detrimental when...teachers' beliefs about their mission confront the realities...' (p.487).

Similarly, Kieschke and Schaarschmidt (2008) highlight the dangers for teachers who set themselves unreasonably high expectations:

If teachers carry out their duties too much and expect too much of themselves and their surroundings they run the risk of experiencing heightened stress and disappointments (p.430).

These challenges to teachers in realising their personal goals are also recognised by Watt and Richardson (2014) who identify a potential 'double-edged sword' where personal goals are left unfulfilled and can lead to disillusionment. They describe a, 'disjuncture between why teachers want to teach, and the work they are required to spend their time doing' (p.204), and propose that teacher education should be developed to equip teachers with coping strategies when such disjuncture arises. Following a study of Australian early-career teachers' goals, Hughes (2012) suggests that a better understanding of teachers' professional goals throughout their career phases might provide teacher educators with opportunities to examine and develop strategies to build capacity for resilience and continued motivation in the profession.

In summary, analysis of previous research on teacher motivation and particularly achievement goal theory has identified a useful link between teachers' values and motivations as it highlights the distinction between intrinsic personal values and competence-driven motivations which continually interact with each other in teachers' professional lives. Analysis of the work of Butler (2007; 2012) has identified key themes that are used as orienting concepts in the analysis of teachers' narratives in Chapter 4. These concepts are shown in Figure 2.2.



Figure 2.2: Being a teacher: orienting concepts

This section has also identified that teachers' attainment of personal goals and fulfilment of personal motivations are clearly challenged by external factors and organisational expectations. It raises questions around how teachers might develop and demonstrate a sense of agency to enable them to maintain a sense of personal purpose and motivation. The following section therefore examines teacher agency in further depth.

2.4 Teacher agency

2.4.1 Introduction

Previously in this chapter, I explored the complex relationships between teachers' identity, values and motivations and proposed that motivation and a positive sense of identity might be formed by enhancing teacher agency (Beijaard et al., 2000; Schmidt, 2000; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002; Bottery and Wright, 2000). The concept of agency however, is complex and is associated with many other terms such as the individualistic concepts of motivation, will, purposiveness, intentionality and freedom (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), as well as the view of agency as collective action which is reflected in concepts such as relational agency (Edwards, 2005). The focus in the chapter so far has tended towards an individualistic view of agency in terms of individual self-efficacy however, in order to understand the experience of teachers more fully, it is important to consider the broader perspectives of teachers' wider participation in the profession. As Fuchs (2001) suggests, there has been a tendency in social research to either focus on an overly individualised (micro) view of agency which emphasises the personal motivations of the individual, or the 'macro' view of agency which focuses on professional autonomy, with teachers working together as agents of change to influence policy. Fuchs stresses the importance of considering the inter-relationship between internal and external factors:

It is part of human nature and personhood to "have" agency. Agency requires consciousness, free will, and reflexivity. Persons can relate to themselves, to the

external world, and to other persons. Since they have consciousness, they are aware of who they are, of the reality of physical objects and things, and of their relationships with other persons. These internal and external relationships are symbolic and meaningful (2001, p.26).

Similarly, Bandura (2006) recognises the importance of relationships with others in developing agency. He highlights three different modes of agency: individual, proxy and collective and warns against a view that individual agency is necessarily in contention with social needs:

Everyday functioning requires an agentic blend of these forms of agency. In personal agency exercised individually, people bring their influence to bear on their own functioning and environmental events... Many of the things they seek are achievable only by working together through interdependent effort (p.165).

Bandura also acknowledges that people do not always have direct control over the conditions that affect their lives, so can also exercise agency through influencing others who might have the knowledge or resources to help them secure the outcomes they desire (proxy agency). With these perspectives in mind, this section examines the literature that considers both the micro and macro conceptions of agency, the relationship between the individual and the social environment and the varied ways in which teachers might demonstrate agentic behaviours in their professional lives.

2.4.2 Navigating the tensions between structure and agency

In this section, I explore how the relationship between agency and the potential constraints that might limit agentic behaviour can be conceptualised. I also consider the ways in which teachers might 'circumvent' or navigate such structures and constraints to enable them to maintain motivation and a positive sense of professional identity.

As Bottery (2006) warned, increasing marketisation in the field of education, as discussed in section 1.4, can lead to tensions for teachers. For example, he outlines that whilst teachers are required to work creatively to meet market demands, they are also under more directed control and scrutiny:

They are likely to experience a similar tension in terms of trust, as governments see the need to allow an enhanced autonomy and creativity, yet feel unwilling or unable

to abandon policies which result in low-trust cultures of targets, performativity and compliance (p.106).

In accordance with this view of a developing 'low-trust culture', much research in the 2000s warned that an increasing focus on standards and externally set targets of achievement are a threat to teacher agency (Goodson, 2003; Sachs, 2005; Ball, 2008; O'Connor, 2008), and can create 'technicist and instrumental forms of professionalism' (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002, p.354). This somewhat structuralist view places structure and agency as opposing forces, and the dominance of structures and accountability measures as a threat to teacher identity and professionalism. However, consideration should also be given to the notion that individuals are active agents as discussed in 2.2., and that teachers' subjectivities and agency can work to prevent complete compliance and enable individual action. As Giddens (1990 in Willmott, 1999) suggests, the possibility for individuals to 'do otherwise' (p.9), might enable teachers to respond to the performative environment in a range of ways. For example, whilst Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) convey a concern that increasing regulation and accountability is undermining teacher autonomy, Woods and Jeffrey (2002) claim that successful teachers are able to embrace the new form of entrepreneurial professionalism. Such an argument suggests that the relationship between the structures and individual agency and the ways in which this affects the identity of teachers is becoming increasingly complex and nuanced. As Day et al. (2006) hypothesise:

It is the combination therefore, of the variations in teachers' work and lives, in addition to the strategies adopted by teachers to deal with any arising tensions between them that determine the individual identities of each teacher and which in turn may have a direct or indirect, positive or negative impact on pupils (p.611).

Day et al. (2006) propose that agency can be viewed as teachers' ability to manage the tensions and contradictions in the various identities that they encounter. Figure 2.3 illustrates their hypothesis that teachers' ability to manage the tensions between structure and agency to maintain a positive sense of identity will have a positive effect on pupils, thus inferring that there is a desired path that teachers might follow if they are to remain motivated and confident in their role (my highlights).

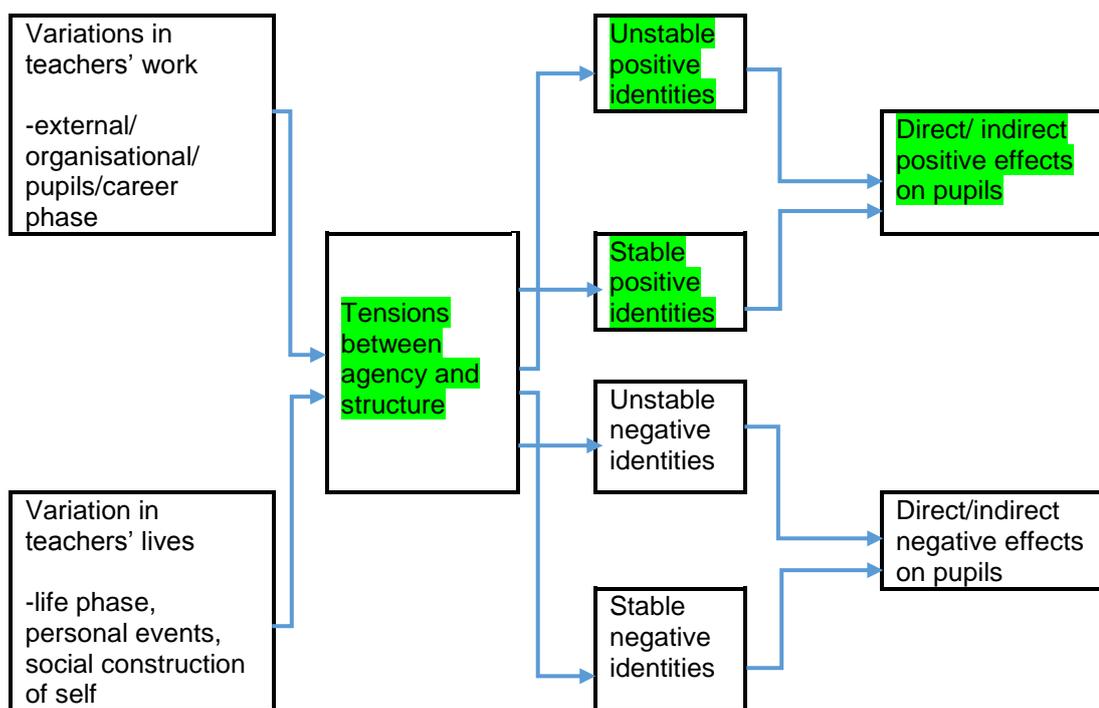


Figure 2.3: Relationships between tensions and effectiveness.

Adapted from Day et al. (2006, p.612)

This idea of 'variations' in teachers' work and lives suggests that it is this management of tensions and of the complex relationship between structure and agency that is central to the professional journey that teachers follow. These tensions relate to what Layder (1994) terms the 'macro-micro' issue which he describes as the different schools of theory that focus on either the micro 'personal and immediate aspects of social interaction in daily life' or the macro 'larger-scale more general features of society such as organisations, institutions and culture' (1994, p.1). The issue he poses centres on how these different aspects of social life relate to each other. As Willmott (1999) posits, theorising the relationship between structure and agency is the 'quintessential focus of sociological endeavour' (p.5), with successive theoretical developments placing dominance on either structure or on individual action. For example, Bourdieu's theories of cultural and social practice tend to focus on the social stratification and power held by groups rather than the action or agency of individuals (Nash, 1999; Burrige, 2014). Sociologists in recent decades suggest that divergent schools of thought such as Marxist structuralism, which places the individual as powerless against the social constructs and circumstances within which they live, and the humanist views of interpretivist sociologists who place emphasis on the agency of individuals, create a false dualism between structure

and agency that can be challenged (Giddens, 1984; 1991; Layder, 1994; Archer, 1982; 2000). This tendency to focus on either social structures or individual agency led to a pattern which Archer describes as 'slippage which has gathered momentum over time' (2010, p.225). Similarly, Layder (1994) challenges the view that these two aspects are an example of a 'philosophical dualism' (p.2), viewed as independent entities that are locked in a struggle with each other for dominance. Instead he argues that the struggle represents an example of sociological duality in which the two aspects of social life, 'mutually imply and influence each other' (p.2).

This emphasis on the inter-relationship between structure and agency forms the basis of a number of schools of thought which Layder describes as 'rejectors of dualism' (1994, p.57). For example, symbolic interactionists argue that such distinctions between structure and agency do not recognise humans as having own minds and motivations as argued by Mead (1934). Similarly, Giddens' theory of 'structuration' (1984, p.16) was derived from his criticism of traditional structural theories that do not recognise the complexities of social interactions and fail to conceptualise structure as being actively produced and reproduced by reflexive human agents (Turner, 1986). Structuration recognises human actors as elements that enable creation of structures by the reinforcement of established norms (Giddens, 1984), and sees structure as a set of rules and resources that can either restrict or facilitate action. As such, 'social structures, institutions and systems do not exist independently of the reasons, motivations and reflexive behaviour of actual people' (Layder, 1994, p.140). Such schools of thought recognise the importance of experience and being able to choose behaviour and action in relation to the situation. As Hays (1994) proposes:

Structures not only limit us, they also lend us our sense of self and the tools for creative and transformative action, and thereby make human freedom possible...Without structures there are no rules. Without rules, there is no grounding for, and no direction to, one's personality, and therefore no possibility for conscious, purposive action (p.61).

This view suggests that whilst rules and structures affect interaction, they also provide frameworks or what Hays describes as a 'sense of security' (1994, p.71). In this way, framing enables individuals to make sense of what they are doing and give direction and purpose.

Such a conception of structure and agency has significant implications for the nature of teacher professionalism in times of accountability and standardisation and for the extent to which managerialist measures guide or inhibit individual action. If, as Giddens (1984) suggests, individuals possess an innate ability to act in ways to meet their needs, the question is raised of *how* an intuitive individual is able to act with agency in an environment of regulation and control; Fuchs (2001) suggests that there are 'limits':

Persons make their microworlds but not their macroworlds. Actors do act, but they do so under circumstances not of their own choosing. Actors do define, and redefine, situations, but there are structural limits on what can be accomplished and changed in this way (p.24).

Fuchs' depiction suggests that agency is only possible at a micro level, as many of the larger controls such as policy and regulation are too structural and embedded to challenge. This sentiment is shared by Biesta (2009) who argues that the current discourse of what he calls, 'the educational measurement culture' (p.33) makes it difficult for teachers to question issues of educational content, purpose or direction. Thus, it would appear that for teachers, the relationship between structure and agency is one that needs continual negotiation and navigation, and that teachers' ability to negotiate successfully might depend upon a number of factors. Bottery's (2007) findings from a study of school leaders' perceptions of their own agency propose what these factors might be:

The ability to defy seemed to be borne of a number of different factors. One was an individual's personal values; another was their experience in the job; a third, allied to this, was the collection of evidence to back their judgement; and a final one was having a personality which dared to do such things (p.99).

Whilst structuration theory attempts to bridge a gap between sociologists who in the past have focused on either the 'macro', large scale structural issues on the one hand, or the 'micro' case studies of individual intuition on the other (Shilling, 1992, p.69), Giddens' work is not without its critics. For example, it has been argued that by conflating the concepts of structure and agency, he abandons the idea of a social reality that is separate from activities of individuals. He therefore underplays the strength of the systems that restrict action (Layder,

1994) and does not fully explore how agents and structures actually combine (Archer, 1982). Therefore, it is important that in this project the micro and macro perspectives and the individual and social dimensions of teachers' lives are not explored in isolation, but that the data are analysed with regard to the complex inter-relationships between them.

In this section, I have explored the complex relationship between structure and agency and the implications for teachers and schools. I have examined the ways in which this relationship has been conceptualised by sociologists such as Layder, Giddens and Archer who challenge the dualism between structure and agency and look to explain the more complex dynamics that affect social worlds. From the literature, I have identified key influencing factors in the relationship between structure and agency for teachers in the current climate: the accountability measures and the focus on targets and expectations which can constrain but also provide security for teachers, and the impact that the culture of regulation has on the relationship between the individual teacher and their organisation. These aspects are explored in greater depth in the following sections.

2.4.3 The tensions between internal and external accountabilities

Accountability is a central concept in the current education policy environment across Europe, The United States and some Asian nations (Mausethagen, 2013), as governments respond to economic competitiveness by measuring their positioning and progress in international league tables (Day, 2012). Czerniawski (2011) uses the term to describe the relationships in which one party is obliged to justify conduct to another and, 'the ways in which control, responsibility and answerability are formally embedded within such relationships' (p.433). However, he also acknowledges that accountability is a 'slippery concept' and that, whilst it is often bureaucratic and organisational in nature, it can also be individually constructed and influenced by a sense of moral responsibility and purpose.

Whilst, as Menter (2009) points out, few teachers would question the principle of accountability in terms of raising standards of education or reducing the attainment gap between groups of students, it is often the forms and ways that external accountability measures are implemented that raise issues for teachers' sense of professionalism. O'Connor (2008) suggests that it is the fact that the 'technical rationalist assumptions' (p.119) that underpin the current policy discourse are so removed from the daily work of teachers, that affects a teacher's sense of

professional identity and create what Ball (2003) describes as 'inauthentic practice' (p.87). For example, the pressures to meet externally imposed targets and demonstrate standardised competencies through performance management can be seen to have brought about a culture shift in teaching, away from a student-centred approach to learning and teaching (Mahony et al., 2004, O'Connor, 2008). Increasingly, individual working conditions, salaries and promotions are, 'being determined by teacher testing regimes, increased external evaluation of teacher practice, and/or by student 'scores' on standardised examinations' (Smaller, 2012, p.76). The potential impact of this on teachers was outlined by Bottery over a decade ago:

This kind of approach, linked to systems of targets and performativity, not only generates poor morale in those made so accountable, but also fails to be fully transparent, because it fails to understand, appreciate, value or encourage other aspects of professional practice which make educational practice successful (2006, p.108).

Whilst increasing accountability and performativity in the profession clearly causes challenges for teachers, it can be argued that accountability is a necessary element of being a responsible professional (Menter 2009, Mausethagen, 2013). As Mausethagen claims, 'conceptually, accountability is closely related to responsibility, trustworthiness and being answerable to one's actions' (2013, p.425). However, the question raised is to whom and for what teachers should be accountable. Biesta (2015) highlights the predicament of whether the measures in place actually assess what teachers consider valuable, or whether, 'bureaucratic accountability systems have created a situation in which we are valuing what is being measured' (p.83). Alexander (2008) recognises the challenge this can have on teacher motivation as the profession becomes driven by 'more stick than carrot' (p.485). This 'accountability dilemma' is illuminated in Gibson and Wallace's (2006) study of Science teachers in the United States. They found that, whilst teachers recognise the reality of being held to account by external agencies through standardised testing, they also identify a need for a different type of accountability, 'to individual students and their parents for building student understanding' (2006, p.54). Considering these different perspectives of internal and external accountabilities provides a useful way to investigate teachers' responses to accountability measures (Biesta, 2004; Mausethagen, 2013).

Mausethagen (2013) asserts that responsibility is central to teacher professionalism, but also recognises that a professional responsibility that ensures education is 'ethical and relational' (p.425) can be challenged by externally imposed accountability measures. Similarly, Kostogriz and Doeke (2013) argue that test-based accountability has an impact on the fundamental aspects of teaching that they view as, 'the relationships between teachers and their pupils and the ethical obligations that inhere within these relationships' (p.91). Such tensions are described by Biesta (2004) as 'problematic', as teachers have increasingly become 'merely the deliverers of centrally prescribed educational strategies' (p.249). However, more recently, Mausethagen argues that teacher responsibility can be more effectively conceptualised as 'internal accountability' (2013, p.425) that promotes a more informal and emotional sanctioning of daily interactions with students, and that can co-exist with external accountabilities, as the teachers in Gibson and Wallace's (2006) study suggest.

The co-existence of internal and external accountabilities and the tensions between them are a key aspect of teachers' navigation through their professional lives. Biesta (2004) and Kostogriz and Doeke (2013) use the term 'reclaim' to describe how teachers strive to maintain their own sense of practice that serves a wider public good. Burnard and White (2008) go so far as to claim that some teachers can thrive in such an environment as they demonstrate creative and inspiring teaching while balancing the requirements and regulations, and that interpreting directives for themselves and taking risks can be invigorating and inspiring. However, by managing the tensions and accepting that the external accountabilities exist without question, teachers can arguably legitimise and strengthen their existence. This dilemma is explored in Mausethagen's (2013) study in Norway into how and why certain policies might be legitimised or delegitimised. The research found that legitimisation is evident where teachers change their practice to meet targets when students' results are not deemed to be good, but also that newer teachers want changes in practice to be legitimised by scientific research evidence, with less resistance and discretionary power found in veteran teachers. Mausethagen highlights the contrasting findings from previous studies into the effects of external accountability on newly qualified teachers:

Studies have reported contrasting findings on whether newly educated teachers are characterized more by external accountability. While LaBoskey (2006) and Ng (2006)

found that newly educated teachers worry about the social aims of education under increased accountability, other studies found that younger teachers largely legitimized and approved external accountability to a greater extent than veteran teachers (Lasky 2005; Wilkins 2011) (2013, p.439).

The explanation for these discrepancies is not clear; it is possible that external accountability measures might act as the structures and rules that Hays (1994) suggest can drive purposeful action for teachers (see 2.4.2), and enable the entrepreneurial teacher as proposed by Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) to thrive (see 2.4.1).

In this section I have discussed the complex ways in which different forms of accountability can be perceived by teachers and how they might affect action. The dilemmas and tensions that can emerge for teachers as a result of competing accountabilities highlight a need to consider individual behaviour in relation to the institutions and organisations within which individuals work.

2.4.4 The relationship between the individual and the organisation

The distinction between internal and external accountabilities as discussed in the previous section has implications for the relationship between the individual teacher and their school and organisation. The organisation is an important aspect of teaching as individual needs and motivations are shaped, to some degree, by the needs of the school, whilst the professional development of individuals can be enabled by the organisational structures in which they work. However, the dominant needs of the organisation mean that teachers cannot work in a totally independent way. This complexity of the relationship can appear to create what Vanderstraeten (2007) describes as a paradox:

It is not difficult to multiply the number of complexities that confront teachers. The organizational infrastructure that enables professional work in education also constrains the possibilities for professional development in this system. The organization constitutes the 'raison d'être' of the profession, but also limits what is possible in education (p.631).

This paradox reflects a pressure that many teachers face; they often work and conform to meet the needs of the organisation which may be in conflict with what they see as their own

professional needs or those of their pupils. Smaller (2012) argues that over the last two decades there has been a shift from a collective approach of teachers seen as a professional entity driven by common principles to a focus on the performance of the individual teacher and their individual contribution to the needs of the school. This increasing focus on individual contribution to the organisation and its impact on relationships within schools was foreseen by Ball:

The activities of management drive performativity into the day to day practices of teachers and into the social relations between teachers.... We choose and judge our actions and they are judged by others on the basis of their contribution to organisational performance rather than deriving from any 'authentic' principles or values (1999, no page number).

The impact on social relations is also highlighted by Whitty (2000) who describes how organisations such as schools are becoming 'fragmented', as some members of the organisation are 'enthusiastically adopting the changing agenda of the state', whilst others resist (2000, p.285). For example, entrepreneurial teachers will see their contribution to the school becoming 'outstanding' as a source of motivation as it provides a clear outcome towards which to strive. As Vanderstraeten (2007) argues, teachers' career opportunities and sense of security might well depend on it:

Teachers can hardly turn away from the organizational basis of their relationship with clients—without harming themselves as professionals...The idealizations of the praxis...offer 'definitions of the situation' that provide comfort in uncertain circumstances (p.627).

Such tensions and dilemmas suggest that it is increasingly important to consider how schools and organisations manage to create order out of the disparate motivations of individuals (Layder, 1994). Close and Rayner's (2010) critique of how leadership and agency is viewed in the literature highlights some pertinent issues for teachers in terms of how they understand and are able to work within the complex context of educational organisations. The authors draw upon the work of Glatter (2006) who suggests that there is a need for more organisation-focused approaches to examining practice rather than a focus on individuals. As Menter

(2009) warns, a focus on individual performance tends to create pressure for teachers to be performers and be driven by targets and measurable outcomes and to focus on technical teaching skills rather than intellectual and creative thinking. Such pressures can lead to vulnerability (Kelchtermans, 2005) as teachers often face disappointment as they strive to meet challenging or unrealistic expectations (Kieschke and Schaarschmidt, 2008).

This discussion has highlighted the potential tensions between individual motivations and the needs of the organisation. Noordegraaf (2007) suggests that professionals such as teachers need to adapt to social change and the external pressures that have led to more organisational control. Whilst it is possible for teachers to become embedded within organisational contexts that limit individual action, these contexts do not necessarily eliminate professional control. To strengthen their place in an organisation, teachers need a capacity for working with others to limit individual vulnerability. As Vähäsantanen (2015) suggests, professional agency can be strengthened through the development of positive relationships within the workplace. Whilst teachers need to maintain their own sense of values and purpose, working completely autonomously is not possible or appropriate for schools which have targets and outcomes to achieve; teachers clearly have a responsibility to others and for the institution (Edwards, 2005). I have argued that strong organisational control can benefit at a social level but can inhibit the needs of the individual. This tension is central to the complex 'professional work' that teachers do (Vandestraeten, 2007, p.621) and has implications for their sense of agency and developing identity.

2.4.5 The varied nature of teacher agency

In order to examine the varied nature of teacher agency, it is important to acknowledge the different ways in which it can be conceptualised. As a result of his meta-study of teacher agency in Finland in times of change, Vähäsantanen (2015) proposed what he calls, 'an advanced conceptualization of professional agency' that involves a combination of different components of agency as a way of recognising the complexity of teacher agency in times of change (2015, p.2). From his findings, he offers three useful perspectives from which teacher agency can be considered. Firstly, he suggests that teacher agency can be understood as teachers' opportunities to influence their own work. The second perspective considers the choices and decisions that teachers make when faced with reforms or directives. The third

view is that agency is connected to a teacher's sense of identity and how they perceive themselves as actors within the profession. These inter-related perspectives are useful in the context of this study as they take account of the complex, evolving environment in which teachers work and make links to related concepts such as identity, values and motivation that have been explored earlier in this chapter. Therefore, I explore the nature of teacher agency using these broad perspectives as a framework:

Influencing one's own work

One of the ways in which Vähäsantanen (2015) considers agency is through the opportunities for teachers to engage in active participation and have influence on their own practice. This concurs with Emirbayer and Mische's (1998) definition: the ability of individuals to exert control over and give direction to one's life. They consider individuals to be reflexive, and therefore put emphasis on considering agency in temporal terms and the extent to which 'agentic processes give shape and direction to future possibilities' (1998, p.984). The significance of influencing one's own work is also highlighted by Bandura (2001) who argues that agency enables people to 'play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with changing times' (2001, p.2). An ability to 'play a part' to maintain a sense of identity is key for teachers who want to have control over their professional lives, and this is also implied in Wenger's (1998) view that identity is negotiated through active participation and practice. As Wenger observes, 'it is in this cascading interplay of participation and reification that our experience of life becomes one of identity' (1998, p.151). However, as previously suggested, a sense of active participation and self-efficacy can be challenging to achieve when teachers have to respond to an increasingly directed and standardised approach to their work. Lasky's (2005) research into a group of US secondary teachers' sense of agency reflects this challenge:

[Teachers'] capability to "make a difference"... was something they struggled with in a politicized reform context that brought new normative professional expectations and professional tools. Teacher agency was being redefined particularly in the areas of classroom instruction and accountability (p.913).

It is therefore pertinent to consider the ways in which agency might become 'redefined' in the current professional environment, as Lasky suggests, and what 'participation', as defined by

Wenger, might look like. Reflecting on this issue, Giroux (1988) warned against the de-skilling of teachers as they become 'obedient technicians' (p.4) and called for teachers to become 'intellectuals' who think critically and 'combine theory, imagination and techniques' (p.8). Whilst teachers might today still feel constrained by the structures within which they work, having become what Furlong (2008, p.734) calls the 'managed professional', it seems that having control over one's own professional development and engaging in the future possibilities in education might increase the agency that teachers feel they have in their own future development in the profession.

Contributing to the knowledge base of the profession is one way that teachers can participate. The work of Lawrence Stenhouse and Lee Shulman in the 1980s proposed a view of professional knowledge that goes beyond the technical strategies that can be observed, and places emphasis on the personal and intellectual basis of teaching. Later work by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1999) observes a change in the view of teacher learning that took place in the 1980s and 1990s from 'knowledge users not generators' (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1999, p.257), towards a new approach with emphasis on teachers as knowledge creators, an approach that requires an interrogation of practice while making links to wider social and political issues. This view of professional knowledge is widely argued as being central to meaningful teacher learning (Handscomb and MacBeath, 2003; Zeichner, 2003; Cordingley, 2009; Goodnough, 2011), and can help to define teachers' professional identity (Hargreaves, 1998a; Sachs, 1999; Bottery and Wright, 2000; Woods and Jeffrey, 2002).

A concern raised by Bottery and Wright (2000) at the beginning of the century, that teacher education promotes a technical view of teaching and neglects the wider issues of education, is even more pertinent more than a decade later with moves towards more school-based, in-service training and reduced higher education involvement (DfE, 2016a). This approach might appear to counter the vision of Hargreaves (1998b;1998c) who, at the end of the last century, was promoting a 'creative professionalism' for teachers, where researching into practice and disseminating good practice within the profession would help teachers to acquire a shared professional knowledge base and to be active in educational development:

To play their full part, teachers must help to shape the education system of the future rather than simply functioning within it. This is the vision of post-millennial teachers. (Hargreaves, 1998c, p.12)

One way for teachers to help shape the future is through engagement in practitioner enquiry (Poultney, 2017). Goodnough's (2011) study found that science teachers who engaged in action research projects not only enhanced their subject and pedagogical knowledge, but also developed 'different views of themselves as critical learners' (p.83). The teachers also gained new understandings of what it means to be a teacher and of their own goals and aspirations, thus becoming more of the critical intellectual of Giroux's vision. Such development in teachers' thinking resonates with Biesta and Tedder's (2007) view that agency does not exist in individuals but is an effect of their conditions, and that individuals' capacity for agency is achieved through active engagement and professional learning. Studies such as this highlight the importance of teachers' participation and engagement with learning that goes beyond the technical and directed aspects of teaching in the development of their sense of agency and reflect a trend towards enquiry-based professional development for teachers. For example, more recent research into teachers' professional development also emphasises the role of teacher engagement in research upon both school improvement (BERA, 2014; Poultney, 2017) and pupils' learning (Cordingley and Groll, 2014). The latest standards for teachers' CPD (DfE, 2016a) make reference to scholarship, evidenced-based practice and expert challenge, despite retaining a focus on measurable outcomes such as pupil attainment. The current Secretary of State for Education has recently highlighted the importance of retaining good teachers through opportunities that make them feel 'part of a profession' and a member of 'a body of experts' (Greening, 2017). Whilst the rhetoric of her speech also suggests a desire to move away from the dominating culture of accountability, it is not clear how this might be done or whether it will actually lead to CPD for teachers that engages them in research and enquiry into wider issues beyond what works in the classroom. Teachers' attitudes to their own professional learning is therefore a useful lens through which to examine their sense of agency and professional identity and it informed the selection of participants for the research, as discussed in Section 3.3.

Choices and decisions

It has been previously suggested that, as teachers' work becomes increasingly controlled by external bodies (Goodson, 2003; Ball, 2008), individual teachers' sense of agency and professional autonomy can be negatively affected (Biesta, 2004). In his study, Vähäsantanen (2015) found that many of the decisions about the curriculum, education and resources were made by leadership teams or administrators, and teachers themselves felt that they had limited opportunities to exert influence over or make choices within their own work. Livingstone and Antonelli (2010) describe the limitations of teacher decision-making opportunities:

Behind classroom doors, teachers have to make continual decisions about a very complex array of tasks.... Many of the decisions rest solely with teachers and need to be made on the spot with little time for consultation or reflection. In this respect there is considerable discretionary control in the daily activity of teachers. But... the relatively great autonomy of teachers over classroom space contrasts markedly with their lack of organisational decision-making power (p.40).

This view outlines how discretion and agency can be exercised at a micro classroom level, but not in informing organisational decisions or policy making. Lasky (2005) highlights that the locus of control for implementing change in US schools is becoming increasingly centralised and teachers see themselves as 'reform mediators rather than reform generators' (p.913). Priestley (2011) however, identifies an apparently contradictory discourse in Scotland that proposes that teachers have recently become, 'agents of change', and 'standard bearers' of how policies can be translated and adapted by agentic professionals (p.2). Such a view is underpinned by an assumption that teachers are agents of their own experience and have power to act in accordance with their own beliefs, values and motivations. Priestley and his collaborators suggest that curriculum reform, for example, requires teachers to implement changes in different ways, and whilst the opportunities for 'spaces for manoeuvre' vary from context to context, they are influenced by the 'beliefs, values and attributes that teachers mobilise in relation to particular situations' (Priestley, Edwards, Priestley and Miller, 2012, p.2). In this way, teachers undergo what Supovitz calls a process of 'iterative refraction' (2008, in Priestley et al., 2012, p.6) as they try to mediate policy and implement reforms in a way that

suits setting and context. In other words, centrally imposed policies can be challenged by professionals in different ways that reflect their skills, experience, values and attitudes:

Positive agency can also be about opposing change, especially when such change can be construed as ill-conceived and/or harmful. Agency is, thus, also about reflexive and purposeful human activity (Priestley, 2011, p.17).

This view suggests that, in order to demonstrate such agency, teachers need to have the opportunities to undertake meaningful engagement with innovations, and to respond in a positive and purposeful way. Resistance without this engagement runs the risk of creating negative agency, something that can destroy or distort what might be a worthwhile reform (Osborn, Croll, Broadfoot, Pollard, McNess and Triggs, 1997). In their study of how bilingual teachers implement policy in the United States, Palmer and Rangel (2011) describe this process of engagement as 'sense-making' and suggest that teachers are able to mediate new policies through a lens of their own beliefs and values. Despite the high-stakes accountability measure that the teachers faced, Palmer and Rangel report that the teachers found ways to balance pressures to 'teach to the test' (2011, p.623), with opportunities to meet students' individual needs and defend what they view as 'authentic learning' (2011, p.633). This concurs with Lasky's (2005) findings that, despite the vulnerability that results from accountability measures and directed reform, teachers found agency through their relationships with students and their ability to focus on the more 'human dimension of teaching' (p.913). However, being able to defend one's personal values of teaching is clearly a challenge. As Palmer and Rangel (2011) concede:

[The teachers] refused to be "soldiers" of the system and instead sought out pockets of agency by seeking ways to bring authentic teaching back into their classrooms. That said, their daily struggle with policy messages suggests just how strong the incentives built into the accountability system are (p.637).

It is these 'incentives' of the system, such as performance indicators and target-setting that can influence teachers' responses to the accountability measures, and informed Moore, Edwards, Halpin and George's (2002) enquiry into whether teachers in English schools are becoming more 'pragmatic' and less 'ideological' in their professional approach. Their study

identifies that pragmatism often exists as a coping strategy to help teachers reconcile tensions they face in their practice by balancing and reasoning decisions and policies as they are implemented. Moore et al. describe this as a 'contingent pragmatism' (2002, p.557); despite conforming to directives and being somewhat compliant, teachers see themselves as proactive in their pragmatism. This can therefore be seen as an example of agency as teachers find ways to 'critically shape their responses to problematic situations' (Biesta and Tedder, 2006, p.11) and maintain a sense of principled practice. However, Moore et al. (2002) raise a significant question: 'is pragmatism necessarily a good thing?' (p.564). The authors are concerned that teachers are 'buying into' a discourse of compliance to the detriment of potential collective opposition that challenges policy more directly. This concern is reflected in the work of Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) in Australia, and their view that the professional community has a role in supporting teachers in taking a more 'activist' approach to their work, that is to question directives and make choices and decisions based on professional values. The alternative is to take an 'entrepreneurial' approach in which teachers conform unquestioningly to the requirements of the performative culture which leaves, 'little requirement for trust and moral professional judgement' (2002, p.352). Whilst this approach might be seen to limit agency, Woods and Jeffrey (2002) claim that successful teachers are able to embrace the new form of entrepreneurial professionalism. It is possible for example to use accountability measures, or the 'incentives' as discussed above, to show one's competencies and skills and have them recognised as professional assets and to thus be rewarded by promotion or new roles.

The choices and decision that teachers make and the extent to which agentic behaviours might be possible are clearly influenced by the relationships they build within their schools. Edwards (2005) highlights the importance of relationships for action and introduces the term 'relational agency' (p.172) to explain an individual's capacity to work with others to implement action and change in an organisation. The concept aligns with a view that colleagues are able to use and build on individual expertise to enhance collective competence (Hakkarainen, Palonen, Paavola and Lehtinen, 2004), but focuses on the nature of the relationships that enable collective expertise to be utilised effectively. By focusing on the relationships rather than the collective action, relational agency maintains a focus on individual development. An important element is the capacity for individual teachers to recognise others as resources,

which is a particularly helpful concept to consider at a time when there is a focus on individual performance in schools which can lead to teachers taking an ability-approach (Butler, 2012) that encourages a need to prove superior practice. As Edwards (2005) suggests, being able to work with others and to negotiate problems and interpretations underpins an 'enhanced version of professionalism' (p.179) and is a useful lens through which to examine teachers' experiences and responses in challenging times.

The opportunities for teachers to make decisions and choices and the impact this has on agency have been illuminated as highly complex, as teachers are influenced by the incentives of the accountability structures that are prevalent in their daily lives. The literature suggests that many teachers actively engage in a balancing act of compliance, inquiry and activism and despite restrictions, continue to develop forms of teaching which are based on positive personal relationships and the needs of pupils. The extent to which teachers demonstrate entrepreneurial, pragmatic or activist tendencies is clearly affected by their relationships within the organisation, the extent to which they see themselves as actors in the profession and how they perceive themselves as a teacher.

Teachers as professional actors

The previous sections have highlighted the importance of being reflexive and of understanding one's own positioning within a profession to enable choices and decisions to be made in a way that aligns with personal beliefs and values. As Priestley (2011) suggests:

Agency can be defined in terms of the capacity of individuals to act reflexively within the possibilities bounded by their social and material environments to affect changes to their conditions or to reproduce them (p.16).

This raises some pertinent questions. Firstly, it is unclear how such a capacity to act in this way might develop and secondly, how this capacity might be affected by changing circumstances and contexts which teachers face throughout their professional lives (Day, Elliot and Kington, 2005; Sachs, 2005; Akkerman and Meijer, 2011). Vähäsantanen (2015) argues that an important influencing factor is the extent to which teachers perceive themselves as 'professional actors' (p.3) who are able to affect change and make decisions of their own. Through his study of one teacher over three years, Zembylas (2005, p.481) found that it is the

emotional capacity of teachers that has the potential force to empower, as it is through the creation of spaces of 'emotional freedom' that can enable teachers to act as they choose. It was evident in his study that teachers' positive perceptions of themselves and their capacity for such 'freedom' are influenced by the extent to which efforts are rewarded by feedback from children, parents or school leaders and through 'empathetic understanding and affective alliances' with pupils and colleagues (2005, p.479). Gaining positive feedback for one's actions is therefore an emotional need for many teachers. However, as discussed earlier, this might present itself in different ways. For example, teachers who see themselves as 'caring for and caring about students' (O'Connor, 2008) are likely to be motivated by the personal and emotional responses of their pupils, whereas teachers with a more managerial and performative outlook might respond more positively to more measurable recognition such as lesson grading or students' attainment.

Teachers' capacity for reflexivity seems significant in enabling them to carry out their role with purposeful action and to develop what Kelchtermans (2005) calls 'self-understanding' (p.1000). This concept refers to how teachers view themselves and how they make sense of their experiences and the impact it has on their perceived performance, that is, how well they are doing in their role as a teacher. This self-understanding demonstrates a metacognitive awareness of practice (Alsup, 2006) and aligns with what Archer (2012) describes as 'first-person awareness' (p.2), which develops through individuals' 'internal conversations' (p.9) and deliberations about chosen courses of action. These conceptualisations suggest some sort of inner conversation or dialogue and reflect Kelchtermans' (2005) view that self-understanding is only revealed in an act of 'telling' (p.1000) and align with Akkerman and Meijer's (2011) dialogical approach to identity development as discussed in section 2.2.

This section has identified the complex and varied nature of agency, from being able to influence one's own work and contribute to knowledge to being a reflexive actor and understanding one's positioning within the profession. The analysis of literature has led to a conceptualisation of agency that places it not as a fixed personal attribute but a discursive position that is available to teachers at different times (Lasky, 2005; Vähäsantanen, 2015) and achieved in certain conditions and contexts (Biesta and Tedder, 2007).

The critical review of literature in this chapter has highlighted that individuals live in a social world and are influenced in a range of ways by the structures and interactions with which they continually engage. One way to enable positive engagement is by understanding one's own agentic orientations by distancing oneself from actions, to reflect on and evaluate practice. Potential for agency therefore depends on how teachers use their knowledge and experience and the extent to which the structures placed upon teachers enable growth or set up conditions that restrict it. Therefore teachers need to be able to recognise and use their emotional responses to their work (Zembylas, 2003; 2005) and become active and creative individuals (Layder, 1994). Bandura (2001) provides a useful summary that reflects how teachers might navigate a complex environment in order to fulfil their own desires and respond to the challenges they face in their work:

Through agentic action, people devise ways of adapting flexibly to remarkably diverse geographic, climatic and social environments; they figure out ways to circumvent physical and environmental constraints, redesign and construct environments to their liking, create styles of behavior that enable them to realize desired outcomes... By these inventive means, people improve their odds in the fitness survival game (p.22).

Bandura's use of the terms 'adapting', 'circumvent' and 'survival' highlights the complexity, uncertainty and challenges that can characterise the teaching profession. It also indicates significant implications for the professionalism of teachers which is further discussed in the concluding section of the chapter.

2.5 Implications for teacher professionalism

In this chapter, I have explored the complex relationships between teachers' personal values and the external requirements and expectations that guide teachers' practice, and how they relate to the nature of teachers' professional identity. I have also examined the motivations of teachers and how these impact upon the complex relationship between individual agency and the structures within which teachers work. This analysis has led to the identification of key tensions that teachers navigate in their daily work: the tension between internal and external accountabilities and the relationship between the individual teacher and the organisation. In this final section, I aim to draw together key concepts to consider the implications for teacher professionalism in current times.

The complexities highlighted in this chapter challenge the traditional view of professionalism which emphasises the significance of key characteristics such as having a distinct set of skills, professional knowledge and code of conduct (Frowe, 2005; Power, 2008; Whitty, 2008). Noordegraaf (2007) refers to this as a 'pure' professionalism (p.765), characterised by the application of general, scientific and specialised knowledge in a routinised way typical of fields such as medicine and law but which is hard to attain in what he calls 'ambiguous public domains' such as education (p.768). He argues that such a complex and uncertain profession that is increasingly influenced by changing political priorities and resulting policy leads to 'professional pluralism' (Schön, 1993, p.17) and requires a more sociological view of professionalism which sees it as a 'shifting phenomenon' (Whitty, 2008, p.32). If, as has been suggested above, a teacher's identity is dynamic and contradictory (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011), it is pertinent to consider a less restricted conception of professionalism that is not defined by technical rationality (Schön, 1983) or organisational competency measures (Moore and Clarke, 2016), and which is appropriate for teachers in current times. However, Leaton Gray and Whitty (2010) argue that professionalism should not be affected by policy or environment, but should be something that remains stable to enable individuals to respond to change:

The question is whether it will be possible for teacher professionalism to be adequately redefined, so that it is underpinned by a more stable sense of identity and one that is less driven by policy, which may be transient in nature (2010, p.20).

In an attempt to address this dilemma, Evans (2008) distinguishes between a professionalism that is 'prescribed' and one that is 'enacted' (p.29). A prescribed professionalism consists of the more fixed codes and standards of the profession, whereas the enacted version of this is an amalgam of multiple 'professionalities' that include attitudes, values, ideologies and approaches (p.28). Whilst teacher training and development have a tendency to focus on the former, it can be argued that to enable teachers to develop a strong sense of agency, more emphasis might need to be put on the latter.

However, a challenge to the profession is apparent. A focus on a professionalism that is perceived and enacted by individuals rather than demanded or requested by the profession can lead to considerable risk to the organisation (Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002), and

has implications for the extent which there is professional trust given to those within it. This dilemma exemplifies the continual dualism or paradox between performativity and the call for an enhanced professionalisation of teachers (Hoyle and Wallace, 2009) which reduces managerialism and increases trust as promoted by former Secretary of State, Estelle Morris more than a decade ago (Morris, 2001). As Frowe (2005) states:

One cannot simultaneously insist that professionals are trusted whilst imposing an extensive series of prescriptions designed to fully regulate how they will behave (p.51).

The question this tension raises is how teacher professionalism might be enhanced in such an environment. In line with Evans' (2008) view, Vähäsantanen (2015) suggests that professional agency can be manifested in teachers' ways of working. This might be weak at organisation level but stronger over classroom and pedagogical issues, upon which teachers have more individual control. Similarly, Mausethagen (2013) suggests professionalism is shown through negotiation as individuals' internal and external accountabilities co-exist (see 2.4.3). Such a focus on deliberation and negotiation in teachers' work might develop a new type of professionalism and new norms. Such potential norms for professionalism are described by Menter (2009):

Teachers will need skills of enquiry and evaluation, skills of analysis, synthesis and action. They will need to be able to contribute significantly to the development of education policy and practice, through networks of professional discourse, research and development (p.226).

Similarly, Power (2008) promotes the emergence of the 'imaginative professionalism' (p.144) as a way to confront the contemporary challenges of the profession. She draws upon the work of Wright Mills (1959) to suggest that a sociological imagination in which individuals have an understanding of how their individual lives connect with what is going on in the wider world can enable individuals to make creative and articulate responses to their environment. In this way, teachers can avoid the potential dominance of more negative perspectives which can undermine the power of the individual. For example, Power (2008) describes the 'distressed professional' (p.146) who focuses on their everyday failings and frustrations which can lead

to burn-out, or the 'oppressed professional' (p.150) which takes a Foucauldian perspective of individuals beset by forces outside their control. However, critics of such conceptualisations of enhanced professionalism might suggest that they tend to 'over-romanticise earlier epochs of professional autonomy or to hold idealised notions of the kind of professionalism that might be achieved without the imposition of state demands' (Power, 2008, p.152).

In order to address this tension between professional autonomy and external demands, Bottery (2006) calls for 'the development of an extended, proactive and reflexive accountability' (p.108) where educators understand forms of accountability more fully to be able to contribute more fully to the environment in which they practice. Similarly, Leander and Osborne (2008) propose a notion of 'complex positioning' whereby teachers work in complex ways to negotiate multiple relationships and contexts and have to modify and accommodate actions, creating what they call 'hybrid' positions (p.44). As Noordegraaf (2007, p.780) suggests, professionalism 'does not need to be purified' and that 'hybridised' versions may emerge that are reflexive and responsive to the changing relationships between individuals and organisations. Such positioning and reflexivity would seem to require an active and creative approach to practice as proposed by Layder (1994) and Bandura (2001) and the negotiation and dialogue as suggested by Kelchtermans (2005), Akkerman and Meijer (2011) and Archer (2012).

Such a complex conceptualisation of professionalism also has implications for the training and development of teachers. As Bottery (2006) suggests, education professionals need to become more aware of the factors beyond their institutions which impact upon their practice:

Such professionalism would recognize that longer term courses and programmes were essential to the broadening of horizons, and that any tied to an institution's requirements, nevertheless placed those requirements within this larger ecological picture (p.106).

In addition, if professional development is to be a process through which individual professionalism can be advanced (Evans, 2008), attention needs to be given to how teachers are supported in negotiation, collaboration and dialogical approaches to identity development. Opportunities for teachers to collaborate and come together to examine and contest ideas

might promote an enhanced view of professionalism (Jones, 2003; Edwards, 2005) and enable teachers to find a 'dialogical space' (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011, p.312) in which they can question themselves, synthesise different views and perspectives and negotiate their actions in a way that maintains a positive sense of identity.

2.6 Concluding comments

Through a critical examination of the literature in this chapter, I have explored the nature of professional identity and the interrelationship between psychological and sociological perspectives. I have made distinctions between the values and beliefs that inform personal goals and motivate teachers as they enter the profession and those that drive teachers through their professional lives to enable them to fulfil these personal goals. The areas of literature explored in this chapter have all highlighted the significance of the complex interrelationship between structure and agency in this project. It has become clear that examining the lives of teachers as both individual and social phenomena, and from both macro and micro perspectives, is crucial in revealing the nature of teachers' professional journeys.

In line with adaptive theory I have identified the orienting concepts from the literature to guide initial explorations of the teachers' narratives. Firstly, I have emphasised the relationship between internal accountabilities which are grounded in teachers' personal values and beliefs and the external accountability measures that currently dominate their practice. The literature has made me aware that the discourse of the directed professional weighed down by accountability measures can, to some extent, be countered by a view that the structures that accountability brings can support teachers' work and provide frameworks for their professional development. I have also highlighted potential tensions between teachers' individual professional needs and motivations and the collective expectations of the organisation in which they work. These tensions are illustrated as vertical intersections in my conceptual model of teachers' professional journeys shown in Figure 2.4.

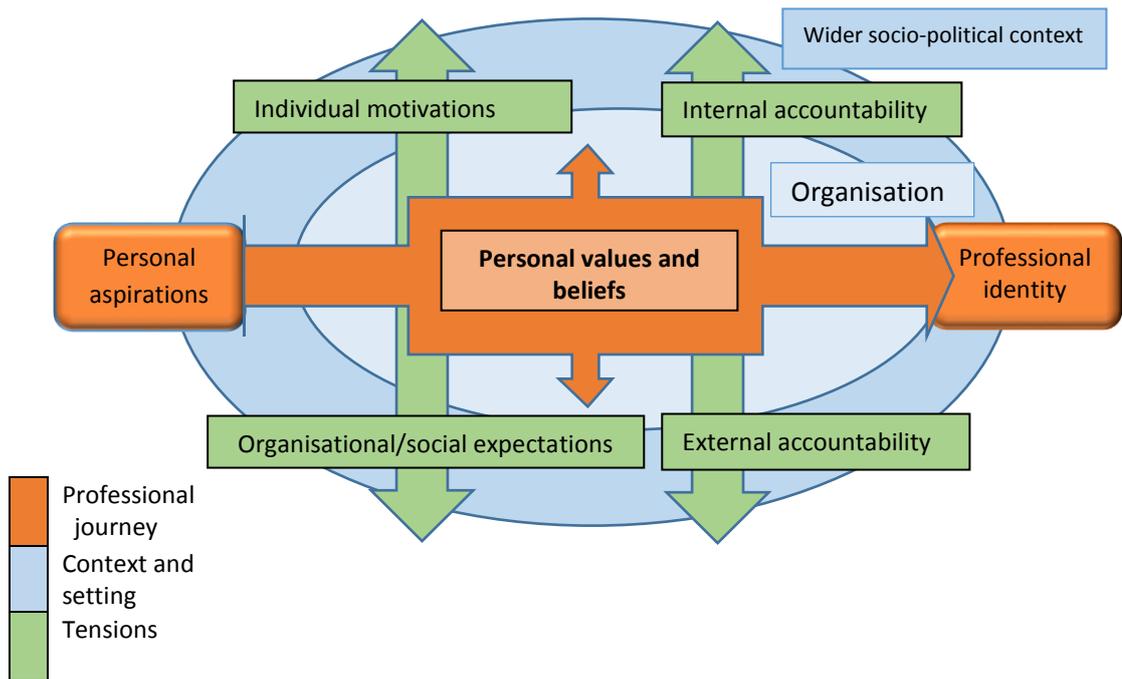


Figure 2.4: Conceptual model of the teacher's professional journeys

This model summarises the key concepts drawn from the literature and emphasises the complex relationship between teachers' values, identity and emerging professionalism in current times. It illustrates my conceptualisation of the layers of the social world of teachers that are to be addressed in this study: the elements of the individual (self); the situated activity and organisational setting; and the wider context (Layder, 1993). As Menter (2009) suggests, teaching can be seen as:

A complex, multi-layered and multifaceted occupation where responsiveness and flexibility, the ability to make informed judgements and to apply imagination, are all essential requirements' (p.22).

Following this exploration of the literature, the research focuses on how teachers perceive the complexity of the profession and how the judgements and imaginations as highlighted by Menter (2009) are realised. Chapter 3 outlines my approach to researching teachers' perceptions and the ways in which they navigate this multi-faceted journey.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I locate the research in philosophical and theoretical terms and discuss the ways in which I designed the project to explore teachers' experience. I explain my rationale for using adaptive theory to guide my methodology and how I generated data through teachers' reflective logs and in-depth narrative interviews over the course of a year, in order to address the following research questions:

1. How do teachers reflect on personal values when talking about their professional journeys?
2. How do teachers navigate potential tensions between their personal values and external influences on the profession?
3. What are the implications for understanding teachers' professional identity and for their professional development?

The analogy of teachers' journeys which underpins this project aligns with my own experience of designing the research. As a novice researcher engaging in an EdD, I have faced dilemmas, uncharted territories and challenges throughout the process. Not unlike my own professional journey as a teacher and teacher educator, I have had to make choices and venture into new areas of learning as I developed my research design. In this chapter I explain this journey of discovery and decision-making, to justify how I generated and analysed the data, and how I considered my own positionality and influence upon the research process as the project evolved.

The research is underpinned by an epistemological assumption that knowledge about what it is to be a teacher can be usefully gained from teachers' own interpretations of their experience. The growing emphasis on reflective practice in recent decades (Schön, 1983; Elbaz, 1988; Moon, 2004) has strengthened the focus on teachers' perspectives and the articulation of their personal experience (Nias, 1989; Bell, 2002; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Goodson, 2003; Day, 2004; Bullough, 2008). In addition, the project attempts to make links between the personal experiences of individuals and the more enduring social contexts within which they work, to discover possible causal processes that might inform how teachers respond and behave. The research design is therefore informed by both constructivist and post-positivist

perspectives. The former emphasises the socially constructed nature of the teachers' experience, whilst the latter suggests that there is some degree of reality or structure assumed to exist in the teachers' world independently of the social interaction within it, but which is difficult to apprehend due to the human intellectual mechanisms that act upon it (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

This acknowledgement of a compatible interrelationship between constructivism and post-positivism aligns with a realist approach to social research, as outlined by Guba and Lincoln (1994), Huberman and Miles (1985) and Layder (1990, 1998). Realists are committed to developing explanatory models of social contexts by maintaining a scientific attitude, whilst acknowledging the importance of social actors (Carter and New, 2004), and recognising that that causal processes operate within a context (Maxwell, 2012). In contrast to positivist approaches, realism does not strive to find universal laws or cause and effect relations, but looks for underlying causal tendencies (Bhaskar, 1978), which can be useful in exploring how and why actors might behave in certain ways. As Layder (1998) suggests, a realist approach enables the researcher to gain an understanding of experience through interpretive methods, whilst drawing upon theory and conceptual ideas to look for causal explanations. Carter and New (2004) emphasise the practical value of such an approach:

Once we understand the material setting and the cultural meaning of a social practice, we can hope to understand peoples' options in relation to it and their reasons for acting in the ways that they do (p.3).

Such an approach accepts the view that individuals' beliefs and intentions have causal consequences (Maxwell, 2012), and can therefore provide a useful lens through which to view the current landscape of the profession. It is my aim that, by taking a realist perspective in this project, I can offer explanations for how and why teachers respond in certain ways, thus 'increasing the visibility and usability of teachers' perspectives' (Goodson, 2003, p.55). To do this, I explored teachers' experience through a series of in-depth interviews across an academic year, using an adaptive approach as promoted by Layder (1998) to connect events, experiences and extant knowledge in a meaningful way and offer insights into the world of teaching (Hinchmann and Hinchmann, 1997 in Gill and Goodson, 2011).

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Adaptive Theory

The interpretivist and subjective nature of exploring teachers' lived experience in relation to the wider, more objective structures within which they work presents challenges to selecting an appropriate methodological approach. One of the key aims of this project is to offer some explanation to how and why teachers respond and behave in certain ways. However a significant challenge is the potential for over-emphasis on the micro features of individual experience through a small number of individual accounts. As Carlsson (2004) warns, if the focus is solely on individuals' perceptions, researchers might miss the importance of external influence or the interplay between structural and interactional elements, an aspect that is key to this research project. Carter and New (2004) make a similar observation:

Social explanation always involves the meeting point of structure and agency, and the co-acting of psychological, cultural and social structures that people encounter, use and embody; structures which position them, motivate them, circumscribe their options and their capacity to respond (p.11).

The debates around the inter-relationship between structure and agency as discussed in 2.4.2, have informed the design of this research. Whilst I was initially influenced by the Giddens' (1984) structuration theory which suggests that structure and agency are so inter-related that they cannot be separated, I found that such conflation could limit the consideration given to each. Whilst Giddens emphasises the 'rationalization of conduct' (1984, p.6) that leads individuals to adapt to routines and social norms that are created around them, this seems to underplay the impact of individuals' emotions and intentions, themes that are central to this project. Archer (1995) argues that Giddens' conflated view of structure and agency precludes 'examination of their interplay, of the effects of one upon the other' (p.14). It is my view that Layder's (1993) more realist and relational perspective addresses this issue by highlighting the inter-connected layers of social reality - the individual, setting and context - and the opportunity to give each consideration at different stages in an adaptive process.

The appeal therefore of Layder's (1998) adaptive theory is that it focuses upon the subjective view of social interactions whilst appreciating that such activity takes place in a wider social context and is influenced by existing theoretical and philosophical ideas. Whilst Layder draws

from a grounded approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) whereby theory can be built from emergent empirical data, he also acknowledges that research design and data analysis are influenced by existing concepts, thus emphasising the compatibility of philosophical ideas and empirical evidence. He shares with realists a commitment to the idea of an independent material world but argues that knowledge of this world is impossible without the use of conceptual ideas and theoretical discourses (Layder, 1998). Layder uses the term 'theory' in realist terms as a 'means of describing the relations between the unobservable causal mechanisms (or structures) and their effects on social life' (1990, p.13). In designing my own research, I felt that such an approach enabled me to remain open to new insights that emerge from teachers' narratives, whilst acknowledging existing theory and conceptual ideas. It allowed me to devise orienting concepts from extant theory, as discussed in Chapter 2, to guide the data analysis. In this way, the individual teachers' perceptions and experiences could be considered in light of wider, structural influences (Layder, 1993). Layder describes the approach as:

Utilising elements of prior theory (both general and substantive) in conjunction with theory that emerges from data collection and analysis. It is the interchange and dialogue between prior theory (models, concepts and conceptual clusterings) and emergent theory that forms the dynamic of adaptive theory (1998, p.27).

However, whilst Layder's approach offers an appealing flexibility and openness, the relative newness and the multi-faceted nature of the approach can also appear daunting to a novice researcher given limited precedence of its use and no explicit rules or boundaries to guide or contain the research design. Rather than providing a step-by-step guide to conducting the research, Layder offers his ideas as 'resources' to complement other methodologies (1993, p.13). I therefore drew upon ideas from the field of narrative inquiry to support my design (see 3.3) and devised my own structure through which I could navigate my own research journey. The key stages I identified to guide my project are shown in Figure 3.1.

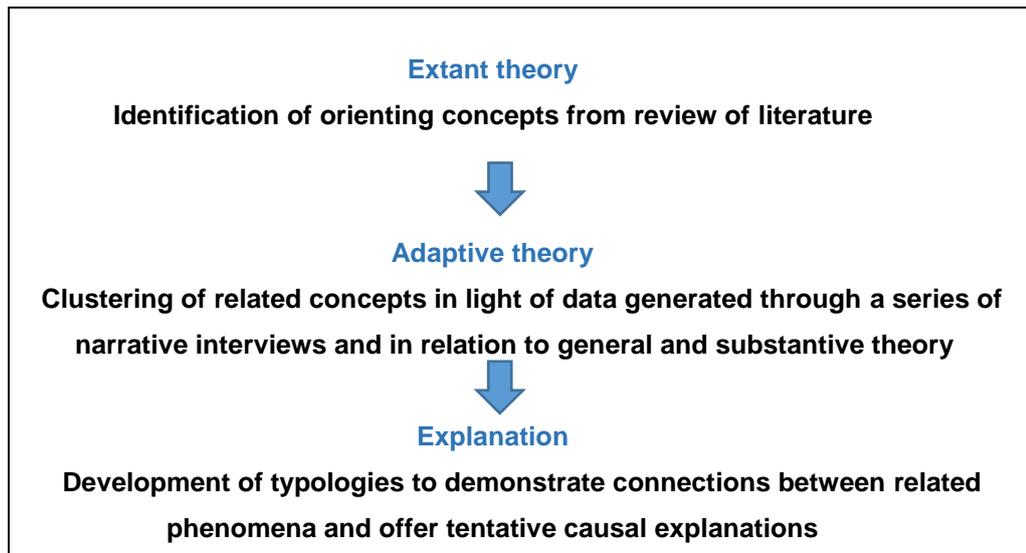
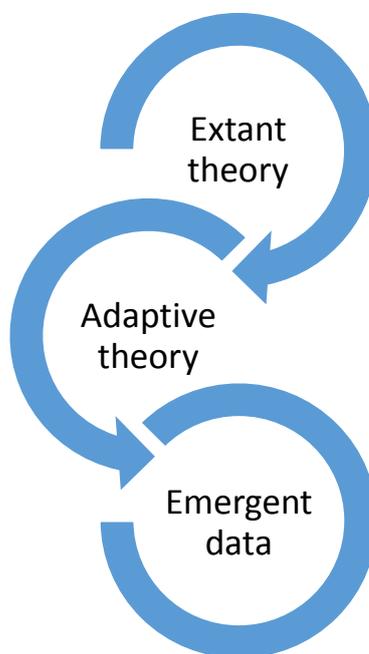


Figure 3.1: The adaptive theory process (adapted from Layder, 1998, p.159)

The complex, multi-layered nature of adaptive theory mirrors the uncertainty and complexity of teachers' experiences and my own journey through the research project. As I started to plan the research, it became clear that drawing upon Layder's approach would not create such a linear process as is implied in Figure 3.1. A significant feature of adaptive theory in relation to this project, is that the extant theory can be drawn from multi-faceted perspectives and disciplines at different phases of the process. However, this is also a challenge. Whilst the approach enabled me to draw upon key concepts and ideas from a range of sociological and psychological literature, I was mindful that such use of eclectic ideas might lead to potential 'contamination' or threat to the purity of disciplines from which it draws (Layder, 1990, p.1). I therefore needed to engage in a continual process of reading across disciplines, analysing central concepts in relation to the data and other related research, and recording my developing thinking in my reflective research journal. The extracts from my journal in Appendix 1 and Appendix 7 illustrate my ideas and reflections at various points of the research journey. Through this reflexive, inductive process, I was able to identify new insights and questions from the outcomes of the research not only in its inception stage but throughout the research process. As Layder (2013) states:

With the adaptive approach, instead of discrete stages, social research is understood as a continuously unfolding process (p.12).

The process therefore became one of continuous cycling between theoretical aspects and empirical findings, with each cycle resulting in new explorations and discoveries as shown in Figure 3.2.



*Figure 3.2: The relations between extant theory, emergent data and adaptive theory
(adapted from Layder, 1998, p.167)*

This constant movement between emergent data and extant theory helped to prevent privilege being given to either extant theory, my own preconceptions or the teachers' voices and highlighted the important of not applying broad theory too rigidly (Van Gramberg, 2006) and be open to new ideas and ways of thinking about teachers' professional journeys.

3.2.2 Researcher positioning

A central consideration in the design and execution of this project is my role as researcher and the impact of my own views and perspective. I recognise that I am a central to the process and both influence and actively construct the generation and interpretation of the data (Finlay, 2002). As Lasky (2005) suggests, such an approach requires the researcher to engage in a process of self-reflection, to give considerable thought to their own experience and to demonstrate an awareness of their own impact on the research at each stage (Goldstein, 2016). My own perspective, as a former school teacher and current lecturer in education, is therefore an important consideration in the generation, analysis and interpretation of the data.

I am aware that I have personal opinions about policy and practice within the profession, and that the biases and assumptions that I hold cannot be completely set aside, but rather are embedded and essential to the interpretive process. The research project is therefore underpinned by an awareness of my own positioning within it. Whilst I have attempted to emphasise this reflexivity throughout the project, it is important to outline a number of more specific procedures that I planned to carefully self-monitor the impact of my own biases and personal experiences (Berger, 2013).

The main tool was to maintain a research journal throughout the project design, data generation and analysis phases to record my own reflections and interpretations. The purpose of this was to make my own perspectives explicit during the process and to raise my own awareness of this aspect. The journal was structured around key elements of the research process: notes of initial assumptions I had about the area of focus; initial plans and thoughts about how the project was set up and how participants were recruited; the literature that was explored to identify orienting conceptual themes; my overall impressions as data were generated and the tentative themes that emerged. The continual reflection and note taking enabled me to question my own analysis at each stage and rehearse arguments as new data were gained and insights emerged (Layder, 2013).

Another important consideration was how I could engage the participants themselves in the process of generating meaning from the data. By conducting the interviews over the course of a year, I was able to create space between them to introduce a degree of reciprocity with the participants (Galletta, 2013). I invited each teacher to reflect on their responses and return to their comments for elaboration or clarification. This is discussed in greater depth in section 3.3 where I outline the process of data generation in more detail.

Throughout this project, the coding of data with supporting notes constituted a written record to clarify my emerging ideas and to demonstrate the derivation of any evidence from the initial research questions to the conclusions of the study (Van Gramberg, 2006). The aim was to strengthen the 'confirmability' of the study (Miles, Huberman and Soldana, 2014, p.317) by ensuring that any findings or theories generated were traceable to the data. I was also mindful of Goldstein's (2016) warning that too much reflexivity and focus on my own views might detract the focus from the teachers' experience. Finlay (2002, p.212) similarly describes the

need to negotiate a path of reflexivity to avoid it becoming a 'swamp' of excessive self-analysis at the expense of focusing on the participants. Whilst being aware of my own views and beliefs, I needed to be careful not to let my own position become unduly privileged. To address this, I limited my journal entries to those that I felt were purposeful and meaningful. I also read over them regularly to edit and remove notes that were no longer relevant or seemed too introspective. Extracts of early entries are shown in Appendix 1, and extracts of reflections at the later analytical stage are shown in Appendix 7.

Another strategy I used to challenge my emerging ideas was to check their resonance with the experiences of relevant others. I found it useful to take opportunities to discuss the work in progress with 'critical others' (Wood, 1993 in Webster and Mertova, 2007, p.100). In addition to discussing my ideas with my supervisors, I presented my work at conferences, workshops and in more informal settings with professional colleagues and peers.

3.3 Data generation

3.3.1 Exploring teachers' experience

In section 2.2, I highlighted the place of narrative as a means of articulating personal experience and, as Polkinghorne (1991) and Beijaard et al. (2004) emphasise, its value in making sense of complex lives and understanding social worlds. In designing this research project, I was guided by Gubrium and Holstein's (2009) view that narratives can act as a conduit to domains of the inner lives and the social worlds of teachers that might otherwise remain hidden.

Whilst the concept of narrative has become increasingly visible in social science research over recent decades (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach and Zilber, 1998; Riessman, 2008), it is clear from the literature that the term 'narrative' carries many meanings and is used in many ways across many disciplines (Webster and Mertova, 2007; Riessman, 2008) and that there is no single approach to generating and analysing narratives (Squire et al., 2008; Punch, 2009). For example, Squire, Andrews and Tamboukou (2008) emphasise the theoretical divisions in the approach, highlighting the difference between research that is focused on individuals recounting particular events and that which explores whole life histories. Riessman (2008) similarly distinguishes ends of a continuum of applications from a discrete unit of discourse that draws on a response to a single question, to an entire life story that draws upon broad

types of data from interviews, observations and documents. This lack of clarity or definition of the approach has led to some criticism of the way that some analysis of narratives is undertaken. For example, Atkinson and Delamont (2006) emphasise the need for researchers to remain critical of what narratives can and cannot reveal; and avoid the assumption that the 'voices speak for themselves' (p.166). Therefore, it is important to highlight the boundaries to this research project of which I am aware. Most significantly, my primary means of data collection was interviewing: I did not observe the teachers in their practice or gain other perspectives from those with whom they work or the pupils they teach. As such, the data came from only the teachers' representation of themselves. The project is therefore based upon a respect for people's versions of reality (Clandinin, 2013), and a belief that their perceptions are vital in gaining an authentic understanding of the profession. I also recognise that data gained in this way are 'situated' (Riessman, 2008, p.185), that is, products of the time, place and context in which they are generated. This does not negate the value of the data, as these contextual factors are important themes within the research. However, it was important that I remained mindful and sensitive to the impact of the context throughout the research process.

With these limitations in mind, I took the approach of viewing the narratives as accounts of experience that reflect a particular version of events which may be influenced by the priorities and values of the individual (Newby, 2010). I also understand narratives to be potential 'performative' acts (Atkinson and Delamont, 2006, p.167) in that they do not necessarily produce unmediated representations of reality. However, I do believe that the analysis of individuals' interpretation of their experience does provide meaningful insights into the complex lives of teachers.

I chose to generate teachers' narratives of their professional experience through a series of research interviews (Riessman, 2008) and participants' reflections on key events through their personal logs. Drawing upon teachers' narratives in this way enabled me to explore the factors that influence how teachers think about the work that they do (Cortazzi, 1993). It also enabled me to get, 'closer to teachers' practice' (Goodson, 2003, p.21) and give a uniquely rich and subtle understanding of their lived experience (Punch, 2009). The interviews were designed to be open and unstructured to develop a conversation with the teachers about the meanings of their experience (van Manen, 1990). The logs provide reflections on teachers' motivations

and challenges which reveal how teachers view the profession and respond to social, political and contextual influences. In accordance with the adaptive approach, the research moves between the individual cases and the generation of conceptual inferences about the wider social phenomenon of teacher experience and professional identity.

Throughout the process, I remained mindful of the potential challenges of the use of in-depth interviews in research. For example, Webster and Mertova (2007) warn that, because there will potentially be large amounts of data, the researcher can be led into an endless burrowing process that can limit or narrow the view of the data. I therefore kept my group of participants small to enable a deeper analysis of data and to encourage a 'broadening approach' (Webster and Mertova 2007, p.115) that goes beyond the surface of the narrative (Riessman, 2008). Such an approach clearly challenges the desire in any research for generalisability. However, the purpose of this project is not to claim that the six teachers' narratives represent the experience of every teacher, but to provide insights into the complex professional lives of individuals that will inspire wider resonance.

3.3.2 Ethical considerations

Ethics approval was sought in accordance with the regulations and requirements of the programme and guidelines issued by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) before any aspect of the research was conducted. My research was also guided by the advice of Josselson (2007) who asserts that, because of the fluid nature of the research, it is difficult to offer a set of rules to ensure ethical behaviour, so suggests a need for an 'ethical attitude' throughout the process (p.537). I tried to maintain such an attitude at each stage of the research, from selection and recruitment of participants to the final stages of writing up my findings. Detail about the process of recruitment, including selection criteria of the participants, is outlined in 3.3.4 below.

The personal nature of the data to be collected from participants meant that there were ethical issues to consider throughout the research. I was aware that these considerations and issues might shift and change the considerable commitment that I required from the teachers, particularly as I wanted them to be involved at each stage of the process, engaging in discussions and email correspondence between interviews. This enabled the teachers I interviewed to become active contributors to the research process Finlay (2002). The

participants were teachers who were already known to me and this posed both advantages and disadvantages. A key consideration was that the longitudinal, in-depth research that I was undertaking meant that establishing a strong relationship between myself and each participant was paramount (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). Having an established relationship with the potential participants meant that I was able to contact them individually and directly to discuss my intentions and aims of the research. I could meet each one to provide them with information about the process and the extent of their involvement. All potential participants were also given an information sheet outlining the aims and objectives of the study (Appendix 2) and were given an appropriate length of time to respond via email to express an interest or to decline. All six teachers responded quickly after our discussions with a positive expression of interest. A disadvantage of this relationship might be that they found it difficult to refuse the invitation, but I feel confident that I was open and honest with them, and that I was able to gauge their genuine enthusiasm to be involved.

Before the data generation commenced, the teachers were sent a consent form to be signed (Appendix 3), and it was agreed that if any changes were to be made to the research design or to the focus of enquiry, this would need to be made explicit to each participant and they would have option to withdraw consent (Burgess, 2005). I also felt it was important for the teachers to discuss their involvement in the research with a senior leader in their school. Due to the situated nature of the teachers' experience, and the fact that interviews might take place on school premises, the information sheet was also sent to the headteachers and the consent form required their signature.

I was aware that the teachers 'cannot give prior consent to participate in an open-ended relationship that is yet to be established' (Josselson, 2007, p.545), and that I needed to be mindful of the impact of the research process upon them that may emerge. The flexible nature of the project raises questions around how long the initial consent remains valid (Layder, 2013). Therefore, I made a note in my research journal of the need to monitor the participants' engagement with the research. I wanted to note any sign of reluctance, avoidance or general lack of interest so that I might remind the participants that they were under no obligation to continue their involvement (Burgess, 2005). This also reminded me to make certain that the explicit initial contract I made with the participants was upheld, and that I reviewed it with the

participants as appropriate. Establishing trust and rapport between myself and each participant was therefore important in order to enable ongoing negotiation throughout the duration of the research.

Despite having an existing relationship with the teachers, I discovered that developing rapport with participant is not without its challenges. As Birch and Miller (2012) warn, the ideal relationship is hard to realise. It was important that I maintained a balance between building rapport and imposing a close research relationship on the participants. Similarly, Duncombe and Jessop (2012, p.108) warn of the dangers of 'faking friendship' and suggest that a certain degree of social distance should be maintained. They draw on the work of Kvale (1992, in Duncombe and Jessop, 2012) to warn that too much rapport 'can run the risk of breaching the interviewees' right not to know or reflect upon their own innermost thoughts' (p.112). I was careful to remain respectful of the fact that the teachers may not want to reveal themselves in their totality (Miller and Glassner, 2011), so I had to remain aware of when it was appropriate to probe and when I needed to allow the participants themselves to lead the discussion. Piloting the interview was therefore a vital stage of the design process.

3.3.3 Conducting the pilot interview

As a novice researcher, it was important that I trialled my data collection process to identify and address any unforeseen issues that might arise. As Punch (2009) claims, 'the quality of the preparation will influence the quality of the data' (p.151), so I organised a meeting with a teacher who met my selection criteria (see 3.3.4) to pilot my interview schedule. In preparation for the pilot interview, I asked her to prepare a log of her journey of becoming a teacher and reflection on her current role, to form a basis of the discussion. I started the interview by asking her to share the log, and I soon realised that I had been too vague in my guidance. The teacher enthusiastically described her experience and the narrative became something of a personal life story, which was interesting and enlightening, but did not seem to get to the key issues that helped me to address my research questions. I therefore adapted my approach and decided to provide key questions that focused on specific incidents for the logs.

I found that piloting the interview was crucial in helping me to refine the process. I had initially worried that my questioning might not be sufficiently penetrating (Newby, 2010), but what I found, in fact, was that I did not need to use many questions or prompts. In order to regain the

focus from the description of events, I asked the teacher, ‘what do you like about your current job?’ and later, ‘what are the challenges that you face?’ and these open questions enabled her to speak freely and openly and to reveal the inner thoughts and perceptions of experience that I needed.

Following the pilot interview, I devised a plan for the data generation process, including recruitment, interviews and methods of analysis. The process of data generation is summarised in Table 1.

| Research questions | Research Activity | Orienting concepts | Data generated |
|--|--|--|--|
| <i>How do teachers reflect on personal values when talking about their professional lives?</i> | Reflective log 1 How I came into teaching | | 1 Examples of how teachers articulate values and beliefs |
| | Interview 1 Tell me about your reflections on why and how you came into teaching Tell me about your current role | Beliefs and values Motivation Agency | |
| <i>How do teachers navigate potential tensions between their personal and professional values and external influences in the profession?</i> | Reflective log 2 Key incidents that illustrate what I like about my job | | Examples of how values are shown in practice 2. Examples of how teachers make connections to the social, cultural and political contexts in which they work |
| | Interview 2 Tell me about the key incidents that you identified and why Tell me more about the positive aspects of your work | Beliefs and values Structure and agency Internal v external accountabilities | |
| <i>How do teachers' narratives of their practice inform our understanding of teachers' professional identity?</i> | Reflective Log 3 Key incidents that illustrate the challenges I face | | 3. Examples of how teachers manage challenges and navigate their professional lives |
| | Interview 3 What were your thoughts as you read your transcript? Tell me about the key incident that you identified and why What are your hopes for the future? What are the challenges? How might you overcome them? What advice would you give to someone who is considering entering the profession? What can you tell me about your experience as a participant in this research project? | Internal v external accountabilities Individual v organisational expectations | |
| <i>How might this understanding enable teacher educators to support teachers' professional development?</i> | | | |

Table 1: The data generation process

My reflections on the pilot interview confirmed that I would be able to address my research questions through in-depth responses from a selection of teachers. It was not appropriate to look to gain a representative sample, but to seek those who could provide useful insights that would enable me to address my research aims. The following sections outline the operationalisation of the research process, from the selection of the participants to the generation and analysis of the data.

3.3.4 Selecting and recruiting the six participants

I am aware that my choice of approach places emphasis on my own direct influence upon the research. By making decisions about who participates and the questions I pose, it is clear that I am actively shaping my research (Emmel, 2013), and this will have implications for the claims made later in the process. As Rapley emphasises, sampling 'really matters' (2013, p.49) and therefore participants should be chosen for good, analytical reasons. Due to the small-scale, interpretivist nature of this research project as discussed above, I felt it was important to engage in a purposive and strategic rather than random approach to the selection of participants. Strategic selection of participants is often used to 'get at what it is that researchers want to know' (Emmel, 2013, p.46) and I wanted to ensure that my participants would be able to provide authentic and convincing insights into the lives of a particular group of teachers. As Polkinghorne (2005) advocates:

The goal of qualitative research is enriching the understanding of an experience, it needs to select fertile exemplars of the experience to study. Such selections are purposeful and sought out; the selection should not be left to chance (p.140).

The challenge for me was in deciding what constitutes an 'exemplar' of the experience in my research. To do this, I looked back at the purpose of the research to use what Bryman (2012) describes as a theoretical approach: I drew on the key themes that underpin my research focus, as discussed in Chapter 2. For example, I selected teachers who are in or are entering the 8-15 year professional life phase and who had demonstrated a positive motivation in their work. This professional phase was identified in the Sammons et al.'s (2007) project as one in which teachers are at risk of demotivation and face significant challenge to their commitment and enthusiasm. I wanted to gain insights into the experience of those in this phase who

appear able to overcome these potential challenges. Similarly, I selected teachers who demonstrate active engagement in their own professional learning, as this has been highlighted as a key factor in teacher agency and commitment (Hargreaves, 1998c; Biesta and Tedder, 2007; Goodnough, 2011; Cordingley and Groll, 2014).

Birch and Miller (2012) argue that use of multiple in-depth interviews constructs a specific type of research relationship, as participants are being asked to share personal and often private experiences over a period of time. They emphasise that experiences will only be revealed within a relationship of trust, therefore it is important to connect positively with the participants. Similarly, Newby, (2010) advises that a skilled researcher and interviewer needs to be knowledgeable about the issue. I was able to develop trust between myself and the participants through a degree of shared experience: my own professional background can be seen to be advantageous to this research project as it provides me with some understanding of the participants' world (Miller and Glassner, 2011). Such connection can enable greater trust and transparency between researcher and participant and therefore can support the aim of generating authentic accounts from the interviewees (Silverman, 2014). However, I am also aware that my experience is not the same as the participants', as I trained as a teacher and taught in schools nearly two decades previously, in a different era of education policy.

In summary, my aim was to find teachers who would be prepared to commit their time to being a participant and would provide a rich and insightful perspective for the purposes of this research (Newby, 2010). Whilst I was not looking for a representative sample, it was important that the participants had common experiences that aligned with research aims (Cresswell, 2007). Therefore, I identified teachers for selection using the following criteria:

- The teachers have indicated an interest in the research aims.
- The teachers have identified themselves as being motivated in their work.
- The teachers have demonstrated an interest in their own personal and professional development by engaging in Masters' level study.
- The teachers have indicated a willingness to share their experiences.

A number of teachers with whom I had developed positive professional relationships had shown an interest in my area of research. I had supervised some of the teachers in their Masters dissertations and I had shared my research interests with them on a number of occasions. These conversations often developed into rich discussions and it became clear that the teachers had a great deal that they wanted to share with me. I decided to initially approach six who had expressed particular enthusiasm for the opportunity to be involved. These six expressed a keenness to discuss their professional lives and appeared to recognise the potential benefits to their own personal growth of engaging in research and reflection. The fact that I knew the teachers in a professional capacity also posed a challenge. I considered whether they would be honest and open about their experiences, particularly as I knew the context of their professional lives. However, I felt that the advantages of having an established relationship outweighed the possibilities of restricting their responses. I made a note in my journal to remind me to record any examples of where I felt that the teachers were not being open in their responses due to this relationship. No entries identifying this issue were made.

I had identified a further two teachers who would be contacted if any of the initial six changed their mind or could not participate for any reason. This number allowed for up to three withdrawals over the course of the research period, as my aim was to have at least five narratives for final analysis. All six teachers who initially expressed interest remained committed participants for the duration of the research. The six participants are listed in Table 2.

| Pseudonym | Phase | Specialism/ Current role | Higher qualification | Years in teaching |
|------------------|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| Stan | Secondary | Geography Head of Humanities | Masters in Teaching and Learning | 10 (4 schools) |
| Tess | Secondary | Design and Technology Head of Department | Masters in Teaching and Learning | 8 years (2 schools) |
| Rupa | Primary | Key Stage 1 Key Stage Leader | MA Education | 10 (3 schools) |
| Jessie | Primary | Key Stage 2 Class teacher and PE coordinator | MA Education | 10 (2 schools) |
| Patricia | Primary | Key Stage 1 Class teacher and Music specialist | MA Education | 7 (3 schools) |
| Ash | Secondary | Maths Associate Assistant Head Leader of Intervention | Masters in Teaching and Learning | 15 years in UK (2 UK schools) |

Table 2: Overview of the participants

3.3.5 Reflective logs

As part of the data generation process, I invited the respondents to keep a reflective log of key events or incidents they perceive as being significant to their professional experience (Jasper, 2005). The purpose of the log was for participants to reflect, in their own time, on significant experiences that might illuminate their personal values towards their work and their responses to external influences. The aim was to enable participants to express a deeper sense of meaning in what they do through critical reflection before each interview (Gardner, 2009) and to enable connections to be made between seemingly disparate events (Jasper, 2005).

Following my reflections on the pilot (see 3.3.2), I tried to ensure that the log entries aligned closely with the research focus of each interview. Each participant received an information sheet outlining the pre-interview task (see Appendix 4). I requested that the respondents complete between 3 and 5 entries in their log as a basis for further discussion in the interviews.

Through follow-up questioning and discussion during the interviews, it was my aim to enable deeper reflection that would, 'transform a situation in which there is experienced . . . conflict [or] disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent. . .' (Dewey 1933, p.100). By keeping a log of actual events, I hoped that the teachers' responses in the interview would be more closely related to their experiences and actions outside the interview (Hammersley, 2008 in Silverman, 2013). My aim was that, through engagement in critical reflection in this way, the teachers' assumptions about their experiences might be challenged and new understanding about their professional lives might be created (Ng and Tan, 2009).

I was also aware that personal written accounts may not present completely reliable records of 'what went on' or 'what actually happened' (Layder, 2013, p.89). However, it is the participants' own perspective and personal responses that I was interested in, rather than an accurate version of events. As Gill and Goodson (2011) argue, the focus is not about revealing the 'truth' about experience, but how the writing and telling 'enables them to interpret the social world and their agency within it' (p.160).

The participants were not required to submit their logs to me for analysis, but to use them as a focus for their responses in the interview. By not asking to read the logs, I hoped that teachers would feel able to record their ideas openly and honestly, thus reducing the potential for 'personal gloss' and a desire to present themselves in a certain way (Layder, 2013, p.88).

3.3.6 The interviews

The semi-structured interviews were designed to provide teachers' narratives about personal perceptions of the profession and to encourage reflection (Webster and Mertova, 2007). My aim was that the openness of the interviews and the rapport that had been developed between myself and the participants would lead to a relaxed, discursive encounter, where I acted as a facilitator enabling teachers to speak freely and to develop coherent and meaningful accounts (Riessman, 2008).

My initial intention was to conduct unstructured interviews whereby a conversation evolves from the participants' log entries. However, my reflections on the pilot made me realise that there needed to be an element of focused questioning to ensure it remained close to guidelines of the study and more than a 'friendly chat' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003, p.86).

Layder (2013, p.82) suggests the term, 'directed interviews' to emphasise this need to ensure that the interview is focused and is shaped by the topics and issues raised by the researcher. Therefore a schedule was devised to maintain a focus on the research questions whilst keeping it open-ended and in the form of prompts rather than direct questions (see schedule in Appendix 5).

Each participant met with me at an agreed time, in a meeting room either in their own school or at my place of work which had been booked specifically for the purpose. The interviews flowed freely and, as I found in the pilot, there was little need for additional prompts or questions to encourage the teachers to share their experiences. I felt it was important not to intervene unnecessarily or 'fracture' the stories being told (Miller and Glassner, 2011, p.134). The interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. Each interviewee responded differently, yet each interview yielded rich and illuminating data. The relationship I had built with each teacher became important as could take note of the non-verbal communications that can be lost in interview transcripts and recordings. For example, facial expressions and body language often indicated emotions such as frustration or excitement that might not be have been revealed through the spoken words alone. Such observations were noted in my research journal directly after the interviews and became useful at the analysis stage as I was able to see consistencies and patterns in the teachers' emotional responses over time (Layder, 2013).

The interviews were voice-recorded with the participants' permission and were later transcribed verbatim. As Connelly and Clandinin's (1990) conception of narrative inquiry suggests, I felt that collaboration between the researcher and the participant is the best way of ensuring that the true voice of the teacher is heard. Therefore, the transcripts were returned to the respondent for their comment and reflection between each interview. By actively involving the participants in my study, I also hoped to add further authenticity to their narrative accounts as they had opportunities to reflect upon and clarify or delete comments that they had made (Cresswell and Miller, 2000). The participants always returned an email saying there were no changes or additional comments to be made, however they did provide useful insights at the beginning of the following interview by sharing their thoughts on reading the transcripts (see Chapter 4).

3.4 Methods of analysis

The research literature indicates that there are numerous ways of analysing narrative data (Squire et al., 2008). As Newby (2010) recognises, there is a continuum along which analysis can be placed, from a tightly focused framework to a looser and more open approach. Adaptive theory does not require that the researcher necessarily follows one set process but can draw upon different methodologies and approaches. In line with adaptive theory, I selected a flexible approach whereby meaning is constructed through interpretation in relation to extant theory, using iterative thematic analysis as suggested by Fraser (2004 in Newby, 2010). I recorded my responses in a research journal as they emerged, so that analysis was both informed by extant theory and grounded in the data. As described by Hunter (2009), the writing process and the analysis of the interview data became entwined as I experimented with ways to present the data.

Mauthner and Doucet (2003) emphasise the importance of the researcher remaining reflexive when carrying out qualitative analysis as meanings are 'made' by the researcher rather than 'found' (p.414). I am therefore aware that the methods of data generation and analysis that I selected are subjective and informed by my own positioning and carry the assumptions I brought to the research process. With this in mind, I remained mindful of my own personal responses to the teachers' narratives, particularly where their experiences resonated with my own as a former teacher and therefore provoked emotional responses that might influence interpretations. I designed systematic methods of analysis that enabled consistency and the consideration of different perspectives to ensure that I remained open-minded and alert to 'unconscious editing' (Valentine, 2007 in Berger 2013, p.3) that might be caused by my own sensitivities.

My approach to analysis was influenced by the realist principle of drawing upon both general ideas from theory and the subjective experiences of individuals. To do this I looked across the data sets to identify emerging themes and concepts, but also looked in depth at the particular and specific features of each individual teacher's narrative (Polkinghorne, 1995). By moving between the two approaches, I sought to look closely at individual narratives, go outwards to consider themes and then go back to individual interviews to see the uniqueness of how themes are expressed, in a process which Connelly and Clandinin (1990) describe as

'broadening and burrowing' (p.11). In accordance with adaptive theory, I was able to look for generalised patterns across narratives which could lead to tentative causal explanations or principles and help me to make 'connections among disparate stories and experiences' (Bullough, 2008, p.13). Further detail about the stages of analysis is provided in the following sections.

3.4.1 Areas of focus

To ensure that the analysis was in line with my purpose and served to address the key questions that I initially posed, my analysis drew on specific elements of the narratives as detailed in Table 3.

| Areas of focus for analysis | Elements of teachers' narratives to be explored |
|---|---|
| Values and beliefs, view of professional context Interview 1 | Significant experiences. Memories that illustrate how they conceptualise values. Language, emotion, reflection. |
| Tensions and responses Interviews 2 and 3 | Significant experiences. Memories that illustrate how they conceptualise tensions. Experiences that show how agency is used. Narrative style, reflexivity and how these relate to their values, professional identity. |

Table 3: Elements of narratives for analysis

My initial aim was to gradually move from the particular to the abstract (Rapley, 2011), that is from the detail and the specifics within individual teachers' stories to more general theoretical concepts that can be drawn from them. In fact, what I found was that I was continually moving between the two and that I needed to consider the data in different ways. For each area of focus I identified the orienting concepts drawn from the literature review (Layder, 1998), the purpose of which was to provide a starting point and provide guidance for building analysis.

The analysis of each area of focus was organised into distinct stages to produce insights into the professional lives of teachers. The aim of the analysis was to organise and synthesise the elements of the interview data into a 'coherent developmental account' (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.15) that can explain how the teachers conceptualise their professional lives.

3.4.2 Stages of analysis

I devised a set of analytical grids to record the analysis process. I produced two grids for each participant, one for each area of focus. An extract of a completed grid for Tess (Focus 2: tensions and responses) can be seen in Appendix 6. The grids became working documents that evolved throughout the research process. For each area of focus there were six stages of analysis, this process is summarised in Table 4.

| Areas of focus for analysis | Stages of analysis |
|--|---|
| Values and beliefs, view of professional context | Reduction of transcripts, creation of field notes and memos (column 1 of grid) Pen Portrait of each teacher |
| Tensions and responses | Descriptive thematic coding (column 2 of grid) Grouping themes drawing upon orienting concepts (column 3 of grid) Creation of teachers' narratives to identify conceptual clusters (column 4 of grid) Creation of conceptual clusters, theorising, explaining (column 5 of grid) |

Table 4: Stages of analysis

Stage 1

The first stage was to create a 'clean' transcript (Elliott, 2005, p.52) of each interview, removing pauses, repetitions, irrelevancies so that I could focus on exactly what the participants were saying. The recordings were transcribed by an independent transcriber within one week of the interview and I created the clean version as soon as the transcripts were received. As I did so, I read and re-read the transcripts, listening to the recordings to become familiar with, what Kim (2015) describes as 'oral histories' to gain an initial understanding of their conceptualisations of experience. I wanted to understand how teachers make sense of their past and, as Kim describes, find out:

...how their past individual or collective lived experiences are connected to the social context, how their past is connected to the present and future, and how they use their past experience to interpret their lives and the world around them' (p.135).

The reduced and tidied version of the transcript was printed off so that I could make handwritten notes and highlights. It was then electronically copied into column 1 of the analytical grid (Appendix 6). I also made additional notes in my research journal of initial thoughts and responses that I had as I read and listened to the interviews (see Appendix 7).

Stage 2

The second stage was to create a pen portrait of each teacher to provide a brief holistic description of each participant. The purpose is to share a sense of each individual and their background and context. The portraits serve as a reminder that each participant is unique, and as a way of minimising the risk of stereotyping and to ensure that attention remains focused on the diversity of the group being studied (Golsteijn and Wright, 2013).

The portraits were structured so that some comparison could be made across the participants, as I wanted to share commonalities between the teachers as well as their unique attributes and experiences. Each portrait therefore includes the following information: the teacher's current role and responsibilities; their own education and past experience and their attitudes to teaching, learning and education. These aspects were identified from field notes following the first interviews and were highlighted as the core themes explored by each teacher. However, I also tried to maintain the individual features and voice of each teacher, so I did not feel the need to structure the portraits too exactly.

I was mindful of Sandelowski's (2000) view that no description is free of interpretation as 'descriptions always depend on the perceptions, inclinations, sensitivities, and sensibilities of the describer' (p.335), so I used the teachers' own words and terminology where possible, to reduce the impact on my interpretations or risks of misrepresentation. As exemplified by Clandinin and Connolly (2000), I attempted to remain true to the data whilst re-storying participants' narratives.

The six pen portraits can be seen at the start of Chapter 4.

Stage 3

Whilst initial analysis of the interview transcripts was guided by concepts drawn from the literature (Layder, 1994), I was mindful of the dangers of trying to interpret the data too quickly and the importance of allowing comparisons, themes and categories to emerge from the data as they were analysed. Therefore, I focused on highlighting significant sections of the transcripts, making notes of initial codes in the margins using words and phrases taken directly from the narratives (in-vivo coding). At this stage, coding was tentative and open and these notes formed the descriptive codes that are shown in Column 2 of the analytical grid (Appendix 6).

Stage 4

The fourth stage was to make comparisons of the descriptive codes across the interviews, making links to the substantive theory identified through the orienting concepts derived from the literature review (Layder, 1998). These orienting concepts acted as 'building blocks' and a way of classifying the 'small slices of social reality' (1998, p.159) that emerged from the data.

The aim at this stage was to use the orienting concepts to provide a framework for further coding and analysis across the interviews. For example, when coding Interview 1, I was able to identify initial themes such as personal achievement, status, security (Schwartz, 1992, 1994) as teachers talked about their reasons for entering the profession. I was also able to distinguish these aspirational values from those that linked more directly to the teachers' attitudes to education, teaching and learning (Watt and Richardson, 2014). The orienting concepts for each of the focus areas are shown in Figures 3.3 and 3.4, and the analysis is recorded in column 3 of the analytical grid (Appendix 6).

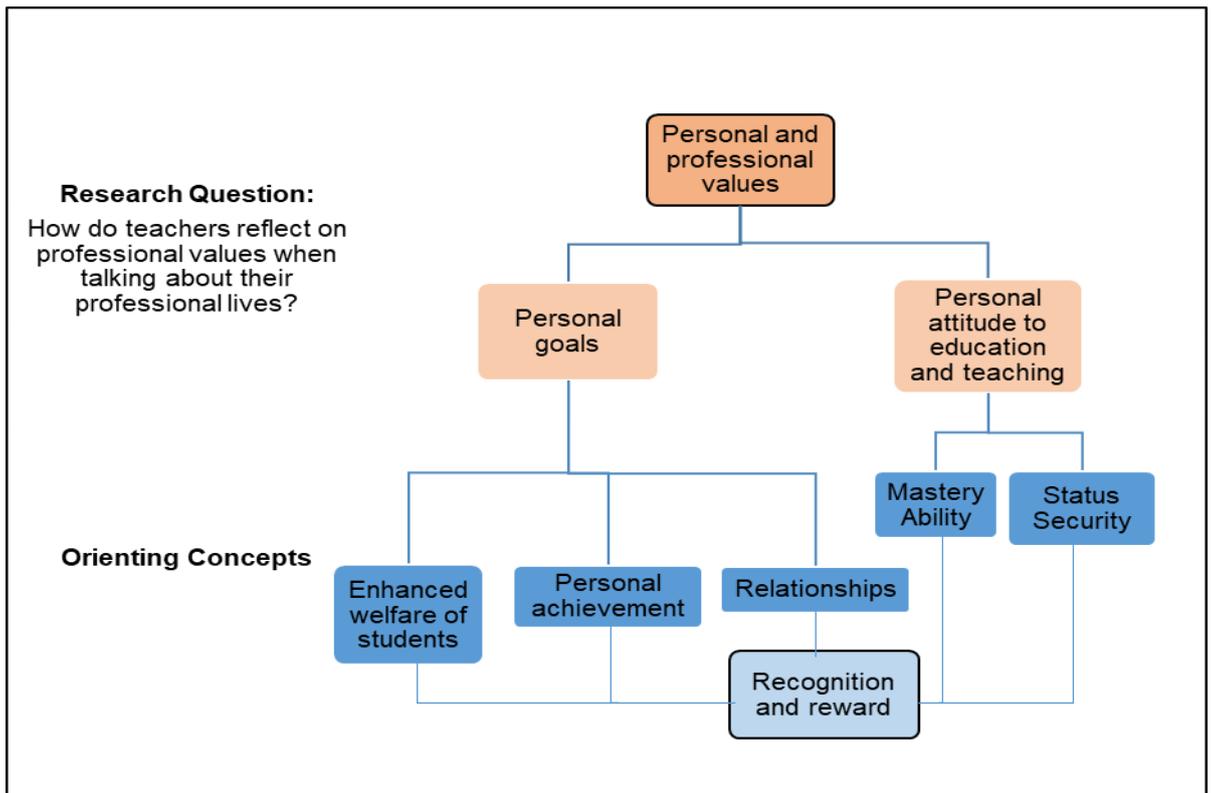


Figure 3.3: Teachers' reflections on personal and professional values: orienting concepts

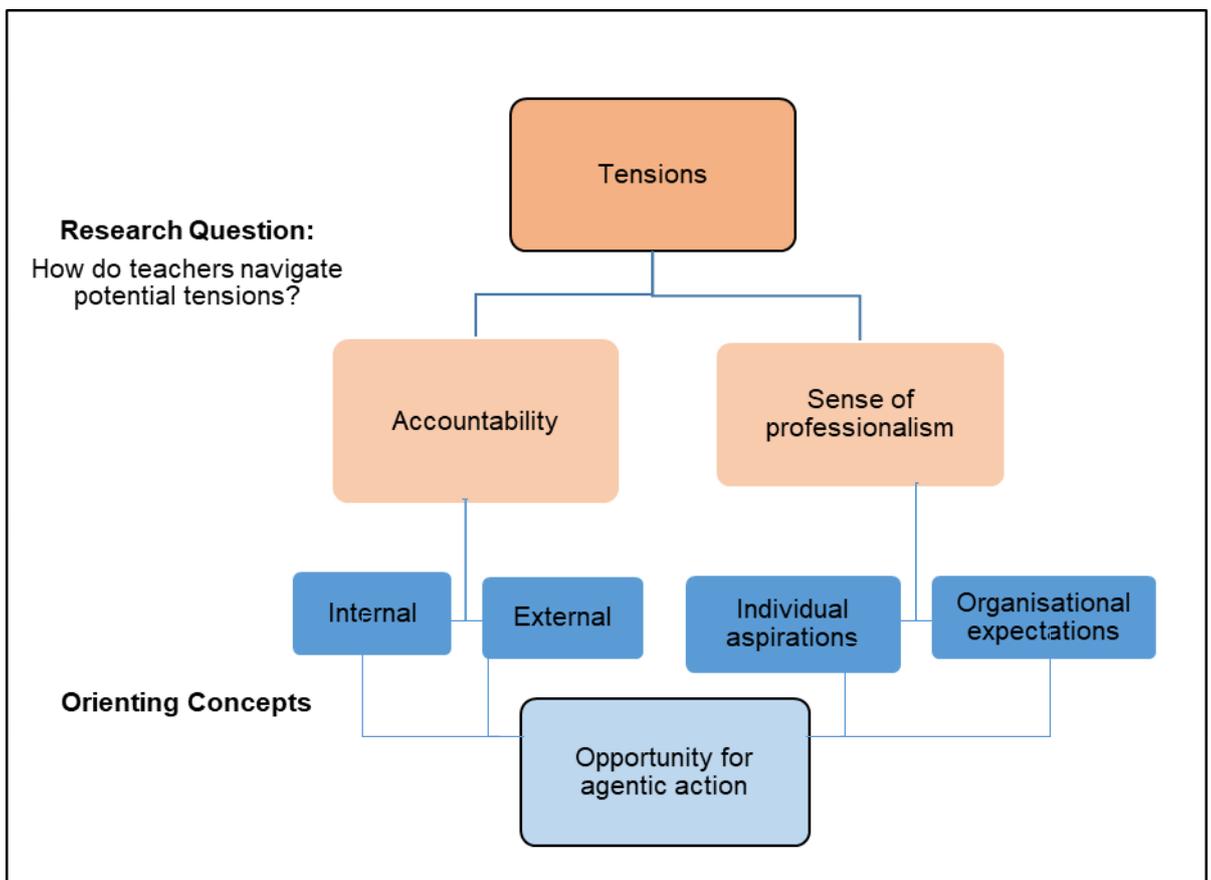


Figure 3.4: Teachers' reflections on tensions and responses: orienting concepts

Stage 5

The fifth stage was to use the orienting concepts to return to the individual narratives to ensure that I maintained a sense of the narrative whole of each teacher's interview. By this point, I had become extremely familiar with each teachers' narrative. As Goldstein (2016) observes:

Each participant's name came to evoke a particular set of feelings, images, memories, associations, phrases...during the long months of analysis and writing and to this day (2016, p.7).

I went through a process of further reduction, drawing out examples within each interview transcript that illustrate how teachers talk about their experience in relation to their personal aspirations, their attitudes to their professional role and their responses to the tensions that they face. My aim was to develop a storied account of the teachers' experience (Polkinghorne, 1995) so that I could look for coherence, inconsistencies and patterns through the interviews. These narratives became re-told, third person accounts, however I tried to check against *ad hoc* interpretation by using teachers' precise words and being mindful of the context in which the statements were made (Reissman, 2008). I followed the advice of Layder (1998, p.159) who suggests developing 'middle range' theory that integrates initial orienting concepts and findings into fairly broad and loose clusters. I continually made notes and memos in my research journal, asking questions of the data to explore how they explain the research data in relation to both extant and emerging theory (see Appendix 1 and Appendix 7). The clusters that emerged related to theories of internal and external accountabilities as identified in the literature review (Menter, 2009; Czerniawski, 2011; Mausethagen, 2013). Key ideas emerged around how the teachers perceive themselves as teachers in relation to both individual and social expectations (Whitty, 2000; Noordegraaf, 2007; Vanderstraeten, 2007). The final cluster centred on how the teachers demonstrate agency in their professional lives.

These narratives of teachers' responses are shown in Column 4 of the analytical grid (Appendix 6). The analysis and findings from these five stages are discussed in Chapter 4.

Stage 6

During this final stage of analysis, the process of coding and analysis continued as I scrutinised the research data further. The clusters that had emerged at Stage 5 were then used to develop what Layder calls 'typologies' (1998, p.161) as a way of making theoretical meaning of the data in relation to my research aims:

Building and using typologies helps to generate and stimulate theoretical thinking by encouraging the researcher to make comparisons between phenomena which are similar as well as different from the one under scrutiny (1998, p.162).

The typologies were devised by referring back to the research focus and the key questions posed at the start of the research project. I was looking for ways of explaining the ways in which teachers respond to tensions in their work. The emerging typologies focused on concepts such as the dialogical nature of teacher identity (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011) and the ways in which teachers are enabled to demonstrate agency in their practice.

Column 5 of the analytical grid was used to record these typologies (Appendix 6). The analysis and findings from this final stage of analysis are discussed in Chapter 5.

3.5 Concluding comments

In this chapter I have discussed the philosophical and theoretical dimensions of research design and explained and justified the ways in which I chose to generate the data. I outlined my choice of using Layder's adaptive theory to inform my methodology in order to take account of both the individual and structural perspectives of teachers' experience and explained how I generated the data through semi-structured interviews and teachers' reflective logs. I have considered the boundaries and limitations of the research and explored my own positioning within the project. These considerations have informed my analysis of the data and presentation of the findings which are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the analysis and findings of the data that I generated from three in-depth interviews with the six teachers. There were six stages of analysis, aligning with the iterative and flexible nature of adaptive theory which underpins the research. In the following sections I present the findings from the first five stages of analysis, starting with six pen-portraits that provide a contextualising introduction to the participants. This is followed by a synthesis of how the teachers articulate their beliefs and values and I finally discuss what the data reveals about how tensions between structure and agency are navigated.

4.2 An introduction to the six teachers

The following pen-portraits of the six participants provide an introduction to each teacher and a contextualisation for the key concepts and themes that will be explored in greater depth in later chapters.

Rupa

Rupa has been teaching for ten years and is in her third school. She is a Reception class teacher in a Primary School in the South of England and has an additional salary increment for enhancing Teaching and Learning.

As a child Rupa enjoyed school and was positively influenced by the teachers she had at primary school. She describes them as being, 'very driven' and 'bringing a lot of themselves in to the role' and this experience encouraged her to consider becoming a teacher in the future.

Rupa describes herself as 'not academic'. She reflects back on having to re-sit a GCSE which discouraged her from going into teaching directly from school. She studied Leisure and Sports Science with a view to becoming a PE teacher in the future. She got as far as applying for a PGCE course but decided that she wanted to work in industry for a while and gained experience as a trainer and coach. She reapplied for a Primary PGCE programme when she was planning to get married.

Rupa describes herself as proud of being a teacher but works long hours and does not always feel rewarded. She is concerned that she no longer has incremental pay increases yet has increasing outgoings. However, she values having leadership responsibilities that enable her to influence policy and practice. She actively engages in CPD opportunities as she wants to continue progressing in her career. Rupa has completed a MA in Education. During the data collection period she took a new job in a different primary school to become Key Stage Leader.

Patricia

Patricia is a Key Stage 2 teacher in a Primary School in the South of England. She has been teaching for seven years and is currently in her third school.

Patricia grew up in Australia in the 1970s with parents who had migrated from Chile. Her father was a University academic and her mother was a school teacher and she remembers spending time in staff rooms, surrounded by teachers who she describes as 'politically active'.

Whilst still at primary school she was identified as musically gifted so went to a Conservatoire to study music. The learning environment and expectations of the teachers had a significant influence on her; she appreciated the opportunities she had in the school but the pressure from her teachers and their expectation that she would become a professional musician made her feel that they were 'moulding' her into a career to which she was not fully committed.

Patricia continued to study in Australia and when she got married she moved to England and decided to pursue a career in teaching. She started as a secretary in a school which led her to teach music in the school. The school leaders saw that she was enthusiastic and encouraged her to train as a class teacher. Her first post as a qualified teacher in a different school was challenging as she viewed all the teachers as being, 'neurotic and unhappy' and in great contrast to the teachers she had in mind from her childhood.

She now describes herself as 'confused'. She enjoys teaching and gains great joy from working with children. She is proud of being a teacher but is concerned that the pressures of accountability and targets mean that teachers never feel they are good enough.

Patricia reflects back on her own teachers and compares them to her experience now of what she sees as the highly regulated and managerial state of education. However, she also recognises that she might be looking back in an idealistic, nostalgic way and whilst she recognises the need for some accountability she would like to see teachers being more questioning and critical of policy.

Patricia recently completed an MA in Education and is currently studying towards a Doctorate in Education (EdD).

Jessie

Jessie is a Key Stage 2 teacher in a Primary School in the South of England. She has been teaching for ten years and is in her second school.

Jessie describes her journey into teaching as a 'long life story'. She reflects on her childhood, growing up in a deprived area where, 'some of the children were drugs runners and stuff like that' and this experience influenced her decisions to work with children in the future. She left school aged 16 to become a horse-riding instructor and went on to manage training centres but developed asthma due to the dust created in indoor riding schools. The decision to change career was also influenced by a separation from a partner, a desire for new challenges and a need to secure a future with a home and pension. She was also encouraged by members of her family, such as her grandfather who encouraged her to be inquisitive and want to learn, and her mother who inspired her by gaining qualifications in later life to become a teacher.

Jessie returned to study to gain the qualifications she needed to become a teacher. She completed an Access Course at a local college and then gained a BEd qualification at a local University. She drew upon what she had learnt at the horse-riding centres; the importance of having high expectations and belief in what

individuals can achieve. Her motivation for becoming a teacher came from both her determination to do something that she was proud of as she 'wanted to be a bit more respected by people having a proper job', and her desire to make a difference to children's lives.

Jessie is concerned about the pressure that assessment targets and Ofsted can put on children. She is also concerned that the regulation and accountability in schools is making teachers compliant and unquestioning about policy and practice.

Jessie spends a lot of her time on extra-curricular activities, particularly sports clubs, as she is passionate about providing a breadth of experience and opportunity to the children she works with. She describes herself as having strong values that underpin all aspects of her practice. She regularly attends professional development courses and recently completed an MA in Education.

Tess

Tess is a Design and Technology teacher and Head of Department in a large secondary school. She has been teaching for eight years and is in her second school.

Tess enjoyed her own school education and reflects on the motivation she gained from praise and positive feedback from her teachers. This led her to consider teaching as a career from a young age. As she progressed through secondary school her favourite subjects were Art and Maths and careers advice led her into Architecture. She loved the creativity of the degree course but found that her first work placement involved sitting in an office working to others' designs. Tess knew that she wanted to change her career but was unsure what she wanted to do next.

She took two years out of her degree course and describes herself as having a phase of anxiety as she decided what she wanted to do. She was planning to get married and wanted a secure future. She had always thought about teaching but was unsure if it was the right path, but she was encouraged by her family. Tess's grandparents and father immigrated into the UK with a view to improve life chances and opportunities for the family. She was brought up in a culture where teaching was

regarded as a 'noble profession' so she was encouraged to return to her studies and train as a teacher.

Tess enjoys the creativity and diversity in her job as a teacher and describes with passion the pleasure she gets from the pupils' enthusiasm and achievement. She is currently leading a department and talks confidently about what she would like the department to achieve and her vision of building a team of teachers who have a 'strong sense of who we are'. She views the success of the department and the teachers in terms of how they motivate and engage pupils in a subject that she is passionate about.

She is aware of the pressures to meet grade targets and believes that focusing on the pupils' interests and encouraging them to be proud of their achievements is the way to achieve this.

Tess recently completed a Masters in Teaching and Learning.

Stan

Stan is a Geography teacher and Head of Humanities in a comprehensive school that, according to its latest Ofsted inspection, requires improvement. He has been teaching for ten years and is in his fourth school.

Stan enjoyed his own school education and reflects on the teachers that had an impact on him. His family had expectations that he would go into what was seen as a 'profession'. He gained high grades at school and his first thought was to go into medicine.

He studied Science at University and became interested in the environmental aspects that led him into Geography and outdoor education. Following graduation he started working in outdoor education in a Field Study Centre, something he describes as a, 'fill-in gap whilst I coped with not being at University any more', rather than as a 'proper job'. He found that he enjoyed working with young people and started to think about teaching as a career, but wasn't sure that he had the 'skills or the confidence or the ability to work with young people'.

Stan joined a school as a graduate trainee and qualified as a Geography teacher; a subject that he is passionate about. He describes himself as 'reflective' and aware of his own strengths and weaknesses and sees this as an important part of being a teacher. He is aware of the importance of enabling his students to achieve target grades, but he measures his own effectiveness through the feedback and response he gets from his pupils in his lessons.

He shows a lot of commitment to his own development and learning. He talks about how teaching enables him to always be learning new things and he recently completed a Masters in Teaching and Learning.

Ash

Ash has been teaching in England for 15 years. He is a Maths teacher in an all-girls secondary school in the South of England and has responsibility for Intervention which requires working with all teachers to identify students who may require additional support to meet target grades and to plan appropriate intervention strategies. He also has a one-year temporary contract as Associate Assistant Headteacher. He moved from his previous position of Maths teacher in a mixed school in Hertfordshire during the data collection period.

Ash started his teaching career in his home country of St Lucia, West Indies where he taught for 18 years and became headteacher of a primary school. Since his move to England he has worked in three schools to re-establish his career and wants to become a headteacher again.

Ash enjoyed school in St Lucia from an early age. He describes himself as a 'more able' pupil. He was also taller than his peers and could write very neatly and so was encouraged by his Maths teacher to write on the board and demonstrate his knowledge to the class. He enjoyed the response he received from his peers and the encouragement from his teacher.

Ash was influenced by his own teachers from his primary and secondary education in St Lucia. By drawing upon the skills he observed in them, he developed a sense of what he saw as effective teaching and learning.

He is proud of his approach to teaching and learning. He talks about wanting to 'deliver outstanding lessons' and learn about 'best practice' and is always looking to improve his teaching by reading education journals and attending courses. He recognises the importance of exam results and target setting and the role of Ofsted and sees these measures as a way of recognising the pupils' and teachers' achievements and as necessary tools to improve pupils' experience and learning.

Ash recently completed a Masters in Teaching and Learning.

4.3 Teachers' beliefs and values

In this section, I address the first of my research questions by exploring the ways teachers reflect on professional values when talking about their work. Earlier, I defined values as what individuals deem to be important and suggest they can be seen as 'instrumental in guiding behaviour and are implicated in action and decision making' (Watt and Richardson, 2014, p.191). The following account aims to illustrate how the teachers articulate their values and beliefs about teaching and therefore draws upon data from the interviews that illuminate what teachers deem significant in their professional role and the ways in which these influence how they approach their work. The analysis is guided by the orienting concepts identified in Chapter 2, and this chapter concludes with the identification of conceptual clusters that are used to inform the theory development discussed later in Chapter 5.

4.3.1 Stories of becoming a teacher

Prior to the first interview, I asked the teachers to reflect on how and why they came into the teaching profession. The aim was to gain an insight into their motivations and the values that underpinned these motivations. During the interviews, the teachers talked in detail from notes made in their reflective logs, revealing their aspirations (what they want to achieve in their personal and professional lives) and the purpose and motivations that had led them to their current position. Each account is unique, but all the narratives describe a biographical journey that started from the teachers' own experience of education and includes a range of personal

challenges, dilemmas and achievements. The narratives combine incidents, characters and events into unified accounts (Polkinghorne, 1995) about how their careers in teaching have developed. The analysis draws upon the orienting concepts identified in the literature.

Reflecting on Jarvis-Selinger et al.'s (2010) analysis of commitment and identity as discussed in Chapter 2, I was interested in the events that led to the teachers entering the profession and how these might relate to their conceptualisation of their work. As I listened to the teachers' accounts, common events and key influencing factors emerged. Just as Jarvis-Selinger et al. (2010) found, positive early experiences of teaching others and their own educational experiences led to a deep-rooted sense of wanting to be a teacher. For example, Ash, Jessie and Tess each recounted how they had taught their peers from an early age and enjoyed the positive feedback they received as they explained ideas and concepts to other children:

I really enjoyed engaging with my class and sharing different perspectives on how mathematical problems could be solved... I developed a very strong sense of determination and confidence I was convinced that I was capable of becoming a teacher. (Ash 1)

As soon as I learned how to do my group work, then I was teaching the other children ...I quite like doing it, I just wanted to do teaching. (Jessie 1)

I enjoyed the aspect of feeling like people making progress, whether it was reading and writing or Maths, really I think somewhere in there was a seed from a young age. (Tess 1)

The impact of having positive early experiences of teaching is also revealed in Stan and Rupa's narratives and their reflections upon their experience of working with young people. For example, Stan worked in activity centres for children when he left school and he describes his frustration in working with children for such limited lengths of time and his desire to see longer term development in those with whom he worked:

I enjoyed the Field Study part of it, but I'd only have those kids for two days and get to know them well and set them up with results and information and then they would

go; I'd never seen the end product really from them. I'd sort of assume they did quite well, I'd assume they'd carried on doing things, but never got to see where it went... I wanted to get to a point, having students for longer, having students that you could have a longer experience, more of an impact with. (Stan 1)

Similarly, Rupa's early experience as a Guide leader and sports coach made her aware of her interest in working with young people and her ability to influence their development:

I found that I naturally am into kind of coaching and guiding ... I always led, so I was always coaching and involved in that; I was always supporting through Guides or...sport coaching, being a Guide leader; I was always a leader from Rainbows, Brownies, right through. (Rupa 1)

Patricia also expressed an early desire to enter teaching as she talks about influential teachers, members of her own family who were teachers themselves and later recognition that she had the skills to teach music in a local school:

The Head Teacher saw that I was interested and she watched me doing the group music and all the things that I was doing and she said, well, have you ever thought about doing this? (Patricia 1)

These examples are illustrative of how the teachers were motivated at an early age by their own skills and achievements as well as the development and enhanced welfare of others. This early experience of teaching in a range of contexts clearly influenced their positive decisions to enter the profession. As Flores and Day suggest, this intrinsic motivation based upon a 'desire to teach and work with children' (2006, p.224) is an important foundation for the development of a positive professional identity. This also aligns with Jarvis-Selinger et al.'s (2010) findings that teachers' joy of an early teaching experience led to a positive commitment to the profession.

The fact that all the teachers made a positive decision to become teachers rather than it being a 'fall-back' or a more practical, pragmatic choice emerged through the interviews as they each talked about the challenges they faced in fulfilling their aspirations. The narratives reveal that all six teachers entered or considered entering alternative careers before training to teach,

and this was often in response to the expectations of those around them. For example, Tess was influenced by her father who had migrated to Britain as a young man to enable his family to be educated and enter what he saw as a 'profession':

It's what you do when you, you know...immigrate to this country, he wanted me to be a Doctor or an Architect or a Lawyer. (Tess 1)

Tess was determined to make her father proud and started a degree in architecture. She shared a story of her anxiety as she deliberated with her decision to change from a career in architecture to teaching:

I took a couple of years out of my course after I did my placement because I wasn't sure...I fell into a phase of sort of anxiety... The insecurity of not knowing, and that was really the hardest time of my life when you're not really sure what you're doing. (Tess 1)

Patricia tells a similarly emotional story that she refers to as 'a really interesting moment'. She describes how she felt when she met an old primary school friend at her University enrolment day where Patricia was enrolling onto a music programme. Her friend told her she was registering on a teacher training degree:

She said, oh I'm going to do a BEd; I'm going to be a primary school teacher. And d'you know, I felt like someone had punched me. I felt a pang of jealousy like you couldn't believe...

I'd had the benefit of this marvellous (allegedly) experience; I was there saying, oh I'm doing a BA...don't really know what I'm going to do, what about music? I was just so, so jealous. I just...I wanted it, I wanted to be in that position...she was happy with that, she was content, and I wasn't with what I was doing. (Patricia 1)

These responses shown by Tess and Patricia illuminate the emotional pull that teaching seemed to have on these teachers, whilst they faced demands from other influences in their lives. For example, Patricia felt pressured by the expectations of her family and school tutors that she would become a soloist stating, 'it was so deeply ingrained...I'd bought into it hook, line and sinker'. A similar sense of pressure is apparent in Stan's narrative as he recounts

how the expectations of others nearly prevented him from pursuing teaching. He attained well at school and there was an expectation from his family and teachers that he would go into either medicine or law. He talks about the dilemma he faced when he was offered a place to study medicine:

when I first got my A-Level grades, the first thought and initial direction from sort of home was to go into medicine and stuff, which is what my elder brother did, and I did...I did apply to do medicine and got offered a place up in Leeds to do it ...I remember being in the hall at the time, having the bit of paper saying it was a place, and the deadline ... and the weeks went and the days went, I'm like, I don't know, I don't know, I don't know, and if I'm saying I don't know what to do, that can't be the right career. (Stan 1)

Rupa and Jessie's accounts of their journeys into teaching focus more on the academic challenges they faced and their determination to achieve and prove to themselves and others that they could become teachers. As Rupa recounts, 'rather than take this path, a straight path, I've had to kind of go all the way round'. In her interviews she reflects on the advice she was given at school and how she was not encouraged to go to University:

Well I failed my GCSEs...so I had to re-sit and then I didn't have enough qualifications to do A Levels; I had to do a BTEC... and then I had advice from one of the careers advisers and he said, to be honest with you, you can leave now, start working in industry and your peers now who leave Uni in three years' time will start at the same level you will be at in three years' time. (Rupa 1)

This advice led Rupa to work in the leisure industry and for companies, 'where they ...used to milk you; they'd just get so much out of you, yet there was no reward'. When she met her future husband and was planning to get married, she decided that she wanted a career she would value and that would give her future family security. It was personal determination that led her to return to studies and retrain as a teacher, despite the financial challenge she and her fiancé faced at the time. Jessie faced similar challenges:

I left school at sixteen, you don't really think you're very clever, but I was doing A Levels before I left, so I must've been all right, but you don't really think you're that clever. (Jessie 1)

Having left school aged sixteen, she started working with horses, another passion that she held. It was a few years later when she split up with a partner and had to support herself that she started to consider returning to studies with a view to becoming a teacher:

I wanted to prove that I, you know, didn't need him, I could get a job and a house and all that sort of stuff and that I wasn't stupid, 'cos people who work with horses are often viewed as, oh well, they do that 'cos they can't do anything else...After I went into school I thought, well I can do this and I wanna prove to everybody. (Jessie1)

They were very proud. Very proud parents, because they're not from academic families; they're proper London, working class, old school, you know, grafters. (Rupa 1)

The teachers' stories reveal that there was a common thread of positive action and decision making that led them into teaching, despite challenges that they each faced. All six teachers talked at some point about their memories of school, influential role models and their experiences as students and learners. A strong feature of these stories is the interrelationship between their own development and aspirations and their desire to see development in others, as suggested by Eccles (2009). I was interested to explore this relationship further, therefore I analysed the transcripts again to find out more about why they felt teaching was a positive career choice.

A common feature of each of the participants' narrative was their positive view of the profession. At times, there was a sense of idealism about the world of teaching. For example, Stan reflects that maybe he has an 'old-fashioned idea of teaching', seeing it as being a role model in the community and one who can change lives for the better. Jessie and Rupa articulate similar ideals:

I wanted to, like, make a difference to people's lives; it's a bit, like, idealistic but I wanted to like make a difference to their education so they could get out of their bad lives that they had. (Jessie 1)

Teachers are professional people who are role models in society, that's how they should be looked upon, having a massive influence on the way people make decisions and learn about life. (Rupa 1)

The teachers also appear reminiscent of times past, as they reflect on their own education as a time when teachers had more freedom and autonomy:

They brought a lot of themselves into the role and I think we kind of can't do that these days...bringing that little bit of personality, you, into the class, I don't know whether it was easier to do that then. They weren't governed so hard maybe...there wasn't so many hoops. (Rupa 1)

All the data, the league tables, the accountability, the... and I wonder how some of the teachers that I remembered fondly, how they would manage this world, because they seem to me to be from a whole other time. (Patricia 1)

Despite their perceptions of a different educational environment in current times, the teachers portray a sense that teaching is a desirable and respected career. For example, Ash describes himself as 'very proud of the profession I've chosen to go into', and Jessie and Stan both talk about having a 'proper job' with professional status and career prospects:

I saw teaching as a proper job; it had a career, it had things that would go places. (Stan 1)

I suppose I wanted to be a bit more respected by people having a proper job, like, but I don't know if it's happened or not. (Jessie 1)

Teaching's quite a transferable skill...the qualification is then recognised in different places, you can take that and move on with it fairly easily... so going into teaching does have that freedom; once you're in you're not stuck in a very sort of small niche; it's quite wide. (Stan 1)

The accounts reveal the sense of pride and purpose that they associate with their profession, reflecting their central beliefs that have been formed by their personal experience of education and learning (Collinson, 2012). Their view that teaching will offer positive career prospects and professional security appears to be finely balanced with a sense of altruism and moral purpose. For example, whilst both Stan and Jessie talk about the prospects that teaching can offer, they also emphasise a desire to teach in a certain type of school. They enjoy working with less privileged families so that they can provide opportunities to the children such as camping, sport, outdoor pursuits, as well as helping them to gain the best qualifications that they can.

I think that's what drew me to this school, so I could be more, like, have more the hope that I had at the beginning, 'cos I felt like I wasn't really making much of a difference at the old school. (Jessie 2)

This idea of 'making a difference' emerges throughout the accounts. However, as Jessie's reflection suggests, initial hopes and aspirations are not always realised. Her reference to the 'hope I had at the beginning' illustrates the significance of these initial values and how teachers can become more conscious of these values if they become challenged (Yerrick et al., 1997).

This initial analysis of teachers' accounts of entering the profession has enabled me to integrate initial orienting concepts into more broad clusters (Layder, 1998): the value of education; the impact on others and the impact on self. The emergence of these clusters illustrates the ways in which the six teachers' accounts reflect the personal beliefs, goals and aspirations they had when they entered the profession. Each of them can recall the time that they made a positive decision to become a teacher and made a conscious effort to fulfil this aspiration despite others' expectations or their perception of themselves. This led me to wonder whether such purposeful action illustrates the self-efficacy and ability to enact one's values that Eccles (2009) highlights as being so important for ongoing motivation in the profession. As I reflected on the teachers' narratives I noted that the accounts have some elements of romanticism and idealism, and that there have been times in the teachers' careers that these have not been realised. The following section therefore analyses the extent to which

their values and aspirations illuminated in their reasons for entering the profession are reflected or challenged in their conceptualisation of their current professional role.

4.3.2 Stories of being a teacher

The second interview with the participants focused on the key incidents or examples that illustrate positive aspects of the teachers' work. The aim was to illuminate what the teachers deem as significant and therefore value in their professional role, and how they talk about their current work and lives. I also wanted to explore the extent to which the nature of the examples they chose to share aligned with their reflections from the first interview. Analysis of the interview transcripts revealed the teachers' personal values and motivations about their current role and how they relate these to the external performativity measures that influence their practice.

In line with their earlier accounts of entering what they viewed as a respected and rewarding career, all six teachers continued to talk positively about the profession. For example, Tess, Stan and Jessie spoke about a sense of belonging to a community and of professional pride. Tess refers to teaching as a 'noble' profession and describes how she has managed to maintain her sense of values:

My values about why I'm in this profession...are still the same, because they're so strong, they don't tend to change, I do have a strong drive for improvement. (Tess 2)

However, Stan's account is characterised by his uncertainty and deliberations about what is most important about his work. For example, when asked to give an example of a positive aspect of his work, he responded with a question:

Should I put down what Ofsted tell me? (Stan 2)

Then, as an afterthought, he said 'it is part of your performance management' as though he felt he should be referring to these managerial aspects rather than his personal motivations. He emphasises in his account that the immediate feedback he gains from pupils means more to him than feedback from an observer. However, he did add that positive feedback from observations can give him 'a warm feeling inside'. Rupa and Ash appear similarly pragmatic about meeting targets and demonstrating their competence, yet they also deliberate between

different aspects of their work that they value. For example, Ash focuses his narrative on his own career development, his moral obligation to students and a strong sense of loyalty to school. He refers to financial reward and finding ways to 'set me on the path to leadership' and 'get a house' but also emphasises the value he places on the pupils themselves:

The most important thing is getting the students to enjoy learning... I want the students to want to be in my lesson. (Ash 2)

Rupa talks about performance management as a positive indicator of how well she is doing in her job and as a way of feeling valued and appreciated:

I need to make something of my job...that is important to me...I want to make sure that I am successful in meeting those targets...To see it in paper...it was just lovely...knowing you've mastered it. (Rupa 2)

Rupa's use of terms such as 'successful' and 'mastered' indicates that she recognises and accepts the value of observation feedback to her own personal and professional development. She also sees the importance of measuring performance against Ofsted criteria, stating that 'it is the teacher's job'. However, she later suggests that this does not necessarily reflect the true nature of a teacher's work adding, 'but it is a bit fake too'. She clarifies this by suggesting that the school's purpose is not only focused on getting an 'outstanding' grade from Ofsted, but also that 'we care about the children', as though the two aspects do not necessarily correlate. This is indicative of the various ways in which all six teachers seem to be balancing their own benchmarks of good practice and values about education with external measures of performance, reflecting the kind of accountability dilemma as identified by Gibson and Wallace (2006). Jessie reveals how this dilemma might be addressed:

You have to remind yourself, like we are here for the children, you know, we're not here just to better ourselves which is a problem. (Jessie 2)

A common personal benchmark for good practice that emerges from the narratives is the positive relationships that can be built between colleagues, pupils and the wider community. For example, Stan states in his first interview. 'I never thought relationships would have been

such an important part of my career' (Stan 1). This emphasis on relationships and being part of a cohesive team is also evident in Jessie's description of being a teacher:

I don't see it as just my role; I see it as my part in the big community. (Jessie 2)

Rupa also emphasises the importance of being part of a close team of colleagues who share the same values and passions:

I'm very lucky because the girls that I work with all have a lot of respect for each other, we communicate well ...I suppose they're very passionate too. It's nice to be able to work with colleagues who give as much. (Rupa 2)

This is an example of the ways in which the teachers talk about the need for mutual respect and collegiality and indicate the importance of working with others (Edwards, 2005). Stan, Rupa and Jessie's accounts indicate how collegiality can lead to individual and communal development through shared understanding and a collective competence (Hakkarainen et al., 2004). However, despite this emphasis on the importance of collegiality, the narratives reveal a number of challenges that can emerge. For example, Tess talks about the difficulties that result from high levels of staff turnover and having to lead a continually changing team within her department. There is also evidence of potential tension between the individual teachers and the leadership priorities within the schools. For example, as a middle leader, Stan deliberates about his own priorities in relation to those of the senior leaders and recognises potential disparity:

What do management and the leadership team see as important and what do I see as important and... where the...sort of the clash is? (Stan 2)

Despite this potential discord between the values of individuals and teams and the priorities for the school, the teachers do appear to understand why such disparity might exist. They recognise the importance of performance measures and target setting to schools and school leaders and therefore value working collegially to meet them. Therefore, whilst such measures might cause individual agency to be diminished (Vanderstraeten, 2007), the organisation can also enable a collective agency to guide their work (Bandura, 2006). However, the accounts also suggest that whilst such collegiality and collective agency is

revealed at a micro level within peer groups such as class teachers or middle leaders, it is less visible across 'macroworlds' of hierarchical structure such as between class teachers and senior leaders (Fuchs, 2001). Where such collegiality across power groups does exist, it seems to be grounded in a sense of trust that is afforded to the teachers. For example, Tess values the 'autonomy and freedom' she is given to develop her role as a middle leader and to make changes in her department. Similarly, Rupa emphasises the value of working for a supportive headteacher who 'never says no' and likes to 'see what I do with an idea' (Rupa 2).

Another common feature of the teachers' ongoing commitment to the profession is the value they place on opportunities to engage in continuous learning and development. For example, Stan and Jessie each reflect upon their enjoyment of learning and enhancing professional knowledge:

I like learning new aspects of things and actually doing Geography especially, I think because it's something that's quite current and changing and keeping up to date in it, there's always something new going on to learn about. And it's a job that allows you to learn more as you go along all the time. (Stan 1)

I didn't wanna just become a teacher and then that's it forever, so even now, if there's a course coming up then I'll go on it. (Jessie 2)

Tess values going to a conference and hearing other teachers talk about fresh ideas and 'innovative approaches', mentioning how motivating it can be to hear 'other teachers talking about the same sorts of things' (Tess 2). It is also pertinent that all six teachers have engaged in sustained professional development through Masters level study:

I became a Senior Lead Practitioner, and I followed the Masters in Teaching and Learning, which all did a wealth of good for me in terms of helping me grow and develop my craft as a Mathematician, as a Maths teacher. (Ash 1)

Having done the MA, I quite like keeping my knowledge up to date and reading up on these things, whereas I found when I finished the MA, I wanted to keep that knowledge going. (Rupa 2)

In addition, Patricia is currently studying for a professional doctorate and both Rupa and Tess are considering undertaking doctoral study in the future. The teachers all reflect on their practice and development in a way that enables them to take responsibility for their own progress and development. This is illustrated by Tess's reflection upon a lesson that does not go so well, asking, 'what can I do better today... what do I need to do differently?' (Tess 2).

The stories the teachers choose to tell about the positive aspects of their work reflect the value that they place on wider educational opportunities and helping children to get the best out of their education. For example, Jessie talks about how she likes 'making a difference' by providing enrichment activities such as sport and drama, and the pleasure she gains from 'seeing their faces when they've done something' (Jessie 2). Similarly, Rupa talked at length about a trip to a farm:

Where we are a lot of the children do not have that experience...see what is around where they live... hear the birds, see the wildlife. (Rupa 2)

The teachers seem to take a similar pleasure from seeing the positive impact they can have upon their colleagues. For example, Stan talks about the pleasure he gains from observing less experienced teachers and helping them to become more confident. Similarly, Tess talks with pride about the teachers who have developed as part of her department. Rupa talks at length about being a mentor for trainees, and Ash emphasises his desire to share good practice and to support colleagues.

To summarise, the participants' journeys into teaching centre on making a difference to people's lives through pupils' learning and development and by promoting a sense of social equity through educational opportunity and experience. The teachers perceive their own success in terms of what they can achieve for others, particularly their pupils and colleagues. Whilst they have individual responsibilities and aspirations, they also emphasise the importance of being student-centred and show genuine care for their schools and communities. The teachers see others' development as something they can be proud of and are motivated by what they have achieved in their professional role, whether that is responsibility, status or their own sense of good teaching.

A significant revelation from this analysis is the way in which the teachers are able to discriminate between the aspects of practice they see as important and those that are directed and used as measures of their performance. They seem to demonstrate a responsibility which can be conceptualized as their 'internal accountability in terms of informal, relational and emotional sanctioning, and attending to the more democratic aspect of being accountable to students, parents and the wider public' (Mausethagen, 2013, p.425). They are clearly committed to doing a good job, but this is measured by their own definition of good teaching and learning and their actions are driven by what they believe is right, not 'because it looks good' (Jessie 2), 'ticks boxes' (Patricia 2), or is 'for Ofsted' (Stan 2).

This analysis of teachers' perceptions of their role suggests that personal values are important and influence the way they think and talk about their work. All the teachers seem very aware of their beliefs and values and are reflective of their own strengths and limitations. They all talk about the different ways they look to improve their practice through continuous learning and development. There is evidence that acknowledging personal values has helped them to maintain a sense of self-direction and purpose through their career. There is a common thread of independent thought and action-choosing (Schwarz, 1992; 1994) in each of the narratives.

The values illuminated in this section centre upon two conceptual clusters (Layder, 1998). The first is the intrinsic group of values that focus on teachers' sense of moral purpose, personal agency and opportunities to develop themselves and others. The second cluster focuses on the extrinsic reward that they gain from their work; the positive feedback from a range of sources such as Ofsted and performance management measures. The challenges that the teachers face in negotiating the intrinsic and extrinsic values within their work are evident, and their perceptions of the tensions they face appear to be complex and nuanced. The findings discussed in this section raise questions about how teachers can fulfil their personal goals and act according to their values, and the factors that might support and challenge them. The next stage of the research was to explore these tensions in greater depth. In accordance with the emerging conceptual clusters, the following section focuses on the tensions between teachers' internal and external accountabilities and the relationship between the individual and the organisation, to explore how teachers navigate these in their daily lives.

4.4 Teachers' uncertain journeys: exploring tensions between structure and agency

In this section I address the second of my research questions by analysing the six teachers' accounts to illustrate how tensions between structure and agency are articulated in teachers' narratives and how these tensions are exemplified in teachers' practice. Firstly, I examine the narratives to illuminate how teachers conceptualise practice in terms of internal and external accountability, and how their own values and notions of being a 'good teacher' or responsible professional, as discussed in 4.1, might be in tension with external accountability measures and judgements. I then identify the tensions that exist between individual and social expectations, that is, how teachers' personal sense of professionalism and opportunity might be in tension with the needs and expectations of the school and wider education context. Finally, I draw upon the narratives to examine how different types of agency are demonstrated by the teachers and the extent to which the structures within which they work enable or restrict 'agentic' behaviours.

4.4.1 The co-existence of internal and external accountabilities

The concept of accountability emerges as a key theme in the teachers' narratives; this centrality within their accounts reflects the prominence of accountability measures in current education policy and the pressures to improve education performance (Mausethagen, 2013). The narratives highlight how the teachers' daily practice is guided by the external accountability mechanisms and evidenced in the performative language that they use. For example, the term 'target' is used an average of nine times by each teacher in the interviews, Stan and Patricia mention 'Ofsted' over 15 times each, Jessie mentions pupil 'progress' over 90 times and all teachers mention the drive for schools and/or teaching to be 'outstanding' at least once over the course of the interviews. It would appear that the teachers have accepted and internalised the language of accountability that is prevalent in schools and is part of their professional discourse. However, further analysis of how this language is used and the responses the teachers make to these measures illuminates the many forms by which accountability is perceived (Menter, 2009).

As I listened to the teachers talking and read their transcripts, my initial responses and notes in my research journal reflected teachers' perceptions of accountability measures and to

whom they felt accountable. An early memo in my research journal at the initial stage of analysis reads:

Being accountable seems to be an important part of teachers' sense of identity/professionalism, particularly true of Ash, Rupa and Tess – needs further analysis. Meeting the targets of the school and being able to contribute to this success is clearly something they value and gives a sense of professional pride (Research Journal: April 2015).

The embedded nature of school accountability is illustrated in the way Ash, Rupa and Tess talk about the focus on target setting in their schools:

My success is their success; their success is my success and our success is school success, because we...once the Head Teacher gets 70%, she will be over the moon, because last year we were at 63% five A-star to C grades including English and Maths, and this year we want 70. (Ash 2)

we're all working from the same ...off the same School Development Plan and our targets are set around the same objectives ... obviously I want to make sure I'm successful in reaching those targets. (Rupa 2)

people have recognised that we started off the year with three out of five of our GCSEs being in the top five per cent of schools. We beat our outstanding targets; there was a definite sense of last year, the drive and the ambition to surpass targets was collective. (Tess 2)

Such accounts reflect the reification of meeting targets as a way of demonstrating success and professional competence. Listening to their accounts, I noticed the way that they used 'we' as they talked about their schools and colleagues and what the school is aiming to achieve. This suggests a sense of loyalty to their organisation, as the language they use reflects feelings of responsibility to accountability measures placed upon the schools. The teachers clearly understand and respond to a system that values aspects of schooling that can be measured and are therefore of importance to school leaders and stakeholders. It is important to recognise that Tess, Rupa, Stan and Ash are all in leadership roles, and a key

part of these roles is to ensure school targets are met. Stan, as head of department articulates this responsibility very clearly:

...for my Head of Humanities head on point of view, yeah, it's very important we have to get this many per cent of the kids getting A to Cs or they have to make this much progress this year; that's really important. (Stan 2)

Ash, as a leader of intervention - a role that is focused on raising attainment for particular groups of pupils - seems to suggest that working towards school targets demonstrates doing the job 'properly' and that certain approaches to practice are 'necessary':

I am responsible for tracking, monitoring and providing opportunities for intervention across the entire school... this is my role...ensuring that we get the school from good to outstanding and implementing what is necessary to help make that happen in a way that's practical and achievable...all we have to do is just to keep doing our jobs properly and give those students the results that they are entitled to, and we will be at 70%...because my students are very ambitious by nature. (Ash 2)

Another illuminating observation is Ash's use of the word, 'entitled' and reference to the pupils' personal ambitions. It is unsurprising that all the teachers want the pupils and the schools to do well. This clearly links to their values identified in 4.1, which indicate their desire to see the pupils achieve and attain the best that they can. The questions that arose from this early analysis focused on how teachers see this being achieved and what doing their job 'properly' might mean. An example of a potential tension is illustrated by Stan's deliberations about what he values about his students and their achievements:

Are results a positive aspect of what I do? Do I get excited by the results the students get? It is a positive aspect, obviously it's good to see the grades that they get, but it's so removed from when you see the students; seeing their name on a spreadsheet, on a list, so and so student got an A; so and so student got a C: is good and is a positive thing, but it's so detached from the biggest aspect of teaching, of that relationship with the student... I know it's an important part of the job and really it is what the job boils down to, you get the students good grades, but all the work really is up to the doing

the exam. So seeing students get good grades is very nice, but wouldn't necessarily make my top thing about being a teacher. (Stan 2)

Stan's account suggests that, for him, the drive for pupils to gain the grades is not just about getting the school to 'outstanding' in the next inspection, but about the learning and development that teachers observe in their daily practice. Unlike Ash and Tess's accounts, Stan is critical of the depersonalisation of grade sheets and targets and emphasises the importance of aspects of learning that cannot easily be measured. This view is echoed by Patricia as she describes the recording of progress in her primary classroom as being for an 'other being' (Interview 2) and, in contrast, recalls with pleasure the moment that a child spoke for the first time in an assembly:

Those are the positive moments...OK, it might not be huge leaps in terms of moving up a level or one third or two thirds of a level, but it's actually a really big moment in that child's life. (Patricia 2)

These accounts reveal the coexistence of external and internal accountability in the teachers' work. Whilst teachers appear committed to meeting the targets for pupil attainment, or at least they internalised this expectation of their work, part of the motivation is in the fact that they do so for their own personal reasons that reflect their values and beliefs about education. At the same time it seems that teachers perceive the school systems of monitoring to be necessary to provide guidance and structure to enable school development and improved attainment. This is clearly articulated by Ash who reflects on his experience when he arrived at his new place of work to find such explicit monitoring not in place:

It's a very traditional school...they have not had one planning walk for the year yet...no lessons are being monitored and there is no accountability...they've been here for a long time so everyone just does what they have done for the last five, ten years or so, and they just get on with what they do, which in a way is a good thing, but there is no formal accountability and so if we do good one year but we don't do well the following year, that's OK, hopefully next year we might do well, that's the kind of culture. (Ash 2)

Similarly, Rupa shares her view of the ways in which the Ofsted criteria provide a guide to being a good teacher:

Reading up on the information, all the Ofsted criteria ...Some of the terminology could be accused of being, really? Are you really expecting that out of some of the children? But I think that's the teacher's job; if you want to get the best out of them then yes, definitely you have to fall into some remit. Otherwise you won't have a guide, you know, you can't be a master of something if you haven't. (Rupa 2)

There is an indication in these accounts that within their professional practice there is a need for guidance that can be followed. As Hays (1994, p.61) suggests, there needs to be 'rules' as they provide direction and enable 'purposive action'. If teachers conform and succeed in following the 'remit' to which Rupa refers, they can demonstrate clearly defined professional standards. In this way, the rules or structures can be seen to be empowering. However, further analysis of the narratives suggests that confident and reflective teachers are able to see beyond these measures to establish their own criteria for good practice. This reflective approach is exemplified in Stan's account of his own development. He describes his early experience as a teacher when he focused on the technical aspects of teaching that were recognised in the feedback he received from senior leaders, and how this has now changed and he is able to self-evaluate based on his own view of good practice:

I can do the right things and get nice feedback. But that's not the same as a class I see every day, or getting the feedback from them about how a lesson's going or what they think about my subject... it is a positive aspect but it's not huge and there are some people who really value the feedback from SLT or Ofsted and that's really important to them but maybe, again, I know I'm quite good at self-evaluating and I'm quite honest about myself and I'm also I don't mind telling myself I've done something well, and that means a lot to me more maybe than someone outside visiting for an hour. (Stan 3)

Whilst he uses the term 'right things' to describe what he sees as expected practice by Ofsted, Stan suggests that this is not his view of what is important. He has become much less focused than he used to be on observation feedback as he does not think that this provides a true

picture of how he sees himself as a teacher. Stan's account demonstrates a shift from focusing on external to internal accountability. His account also suggests that this is not an attitude shared by all his colleagues. Patricia presents a similar view:

Some people buy it a lot more... I remember hearing something about, oh, that school doesn't have an Ofsted report or it hasn't come out yet, and I think I said something like, oh well, who cares? What's the problem? Oh, but then how are parents going to know if it's a good school or not? How is everyone going to know if it's a good school or not? Some people are really defined by what that architecture requires of you... the observations, their performance management and how it's very important and all these meetings that you have about pupil progress.... I don't feel like that.
(Patricia 3)

Another example of the teachers questioning external expectations is illustrated as Tess recounts the discussions that have taken place at her school about approaches to marking. She describes how many of her colleagues are spending time writing in students' books so that inspectors can see consistent marking and will consider this to be a mark of a 'good' school, whilst she questions the practice and shows confidence in her own approach to providing feedback to her pupils:

Because we're a school that requires improvement and needs to go into 'good', there is definitely an element of, we've got to be 'good', you know, we've got to be 'good', we've got to be 'good', so everything was like, you've got to produce this, you've got to produce that. And I said, well at the end of the day, when they come here they'll be talking to the students and they'll want to see progress happening... your marking should not be there so that a child can read it two weeks later and not...it's depersonalised, it's not interesting. It should be fresh, it should be innovative; I talk to my students round the class and they make notes when I talk and that's how we do marking, you know, and just trying out different things. (Tess 2)

The fact that Tess questions the marking policy in this way reflects her ability and confidence to develop her own rationale for whether or not to conform to the expectations and routines of the organisation. This confidence is also reflected in Jessie's commitment to personalise

pupils' learning to ensure understanding whilst being pressurised to push pupils to work on the next attainment level in order to meet targets:

I don't see the point of just teaching something if there's so many gaps underneath it, so I've had to personalise the learning a lot more so that actually it can hit the gaps; like going back, trying to plug the gaps and then moving forward, 'cos some of them have got like aspects of like Year 2 and 3 but they haven't got the Year 1 bit ... (Jessie 2)

Jessie also alludes to the fact that some of her colleagues are more inclined to conform and focus on those things that are observable and easily monitored:

[other teachers] come out looking better because their work's all up to date, their classroom's all beautiful and decorated, their books are always up to date, so when they come round to be like observed or monitored, theirs is all 'perfect'. There's no measurable thing to say how much help you've put into the helping other people or the actual community of the school; there's nothing measurable but there is measurable if their books are marked, if their walls are lovely, so they do things that are measurable. (Jessie 2)

These examples from the teachers' narratives suggest that a tension between what the teachers describe as being 'seen' or measurable and what the teachers themselves view to be good practice which is happening despite these measures. Patricia's frustrations are captured in her description of the atmosphere in her school at the time of an imminent inspection:

[It] has created a culture of hysteria and panic and it is undermining good things that are happening through the day in everybody's work. I'm yet to see a slacking teacher; I've not seen that in either school. I've seen tired, pressured and, in some cases, desperate teachers; desperate in the sense that they feel like they can't get through it all and that they're going to be criticised no matter what.

I feel that my professionalism is constantly undermined, I had that wonderful moment with the children which no one saw, or I had that breakthrough with the whole class,

which if Ofsted had seen it, would have questioned my practice about this, but for once, they were all completely engaged... Those things are irrelevant because they don't get seen. (Patricia 2)

The language she uses not only illustrates the strength of feeling and emotional response that such measures can evoke, but also indicates the importance of having a clear sense of internal accountability on one's sense of identity. This view is echoed by Jessie:

I can go home and safely say that I've done the best for my kids, so if they haven't learned, it's not my fault because I tried as best I can, we've tried everything, so some children are not able to take in much, are they, especially like I've got severe special needs, but I have done everything in my power to make them be able to learn and give them the best learning opportunity that I can give them. Other people might be able to do a better job, but I can sort of look in a mirror and say I've done the best job, but I don't think, if I cut corners, I don't think I'd be happy with myself. (Jessie 2)

Whilst there is a recognition that external structures and accountability measures are necessary, the tension emerges when their view of how pupils will achieve does not align with the expectations and the day to day practice in schools. For example, as Jessie and Patricia talk about the strategies and routines that leaders in the schools put in place to enable these targets to be achieved, there is a distinct change in tone and language from the use of 'us' and 'we' to less collegiate use of 'me', 'my' and 'them'. The following example illustrates Patricia's resistance to prescribed techniques and strategies that do not suit what she knows about her own pupils and their learning:

The methods with which we have to show accountability to the authorities, those bits I can swallow because I think yes, all right, I understand about that. But the timetabling...how my work is marked, how the day needs to be ordered, how I give them information, how I order my plans, files and classroom. It's all of that. All of it is completely directed and I find that a bit mad. (Patricia 2)

Patricia and Jessie strongly indicate a desire to be able to use discretion and their own professional judgement. This view is echoed by Tess and Stan who often question the directives that are passed down for them to implement with their teams:

My team need to be happy and teaching good lessons, and so when I have to cut back on all the other things, unfortunately I'm a bit of a rebel in that way in SLT where I just say, I'm not doing it that way, doing it this way, because that's just more efficient use of my time. (Tess 2)

What management and the leadership team see as important and what do I see as important and where the...sort of the clash is...it's massively important to the Academy; the leadership team especially. It's their jobs effectively. (Stan 2)

For each of the teachers, internal accountability appears to focus on pupils' learning and personal development and the recognition and appreciation demonstrated by the pupils and parents. Ash, Tess and Rupa talk about pupil attainment and grades because they know it is important to the individuals and their families. For example, whilst Ash's commitment to the school improvement strategies and performance targets is clear, he also places a great deal of value on the response he gets from pupils and parents. During the interviews he shared with pride the feedback he received at a parents' meeting and a letter that he received from a student who had recently joined his class:

The feedback I got from parents was absolutely overwhelming... my name was the only name mentioned in the feedback, indicating how inspirational I was and also indicating how much I came across as caring for the students of this school and it is just something that keeps coming up. (Ash 2)

...for the recorder, it says, "I'm writing this letter to tell you how inspirational you are" and that's exactly what I've just said. "Not only to the classes you teach but also many others. What you do is incredible. You go out of your way to help the less fortunate. I was touched when you said about how you took and still are taking your students to less fortunate parts of the world to share inspiration and goodwill. I can see you are passionate about helping others. I as well as many others you have taught am proud to call you my teacher." (Ash 3)

This pride in feedback from pupils illustrates the importance of building relationships that was revealed in 4.2. Patricia also emphasises the value of positive relationships with pupils and how this enables her to keep the external pressures that she faces in perspective:

How I managed to deal with some of the...what seemed to be the irrational and unrealistic demands of every place really; it's to try and focus on that little nugget which is what's going on between me and the children and that despite pressures from alleged expert bodies, actually the business of teaching hasn't altered that much in many centuries. (Patricia 2)

Stan also reflects on the impact he has had on his pupils' enjoyment of Geography. He sees this as a personal achievement as it has not been a popular subject for a number of years in his school:

I can sit and reflect... not only have they got the grades they want to get to, but I've shared the enjoyment of my subject with them enough that they then picked up on that and they want to take that further ...I'm really, really proud of having the A Level class in the first place, because it's not something they've been here for a few years, and now...we've got the Year 13s and we've got the Year 12s studying, and they're enjoying it, and they're doing well and then they want to carry on with it further. (Stan 2)

These accounts of informal interactions with pupils and personal passions within the curriculum indicate that the teachers place a great deal of value on the aspects of their work that are not easily measured or recognised, despite the dominance of accountability measures in their schools. Stan's account is indicative of the sense of pride that all the teachers take in seeing pupils take an interest in their learning. In the following account, Jessie reflects the lengths that teachers are prepared to undertake to enhance children's learning, through extra-curricular activities:

In the summer we managed to get funding and we've taken the children in Year 4, 5 and 6 for six weeks to Wodson to try different sports ... It's worth me going a couple of days in the summer holidays and putting the bids in and everything because they actually appreciated it...so you make the effort ...parents are really proud of them, then it's worth doing it, and they remember things like that. They won't remember their maths lesson or their literacy lesson, will they? (Jessie 2)

In conclusion, the teachers' narratives illuminate the embedded nature of school and individual targets in their daily practice. They reveal that the discourse in which teachers use of terms such as 'deliver', 'tracking' 'monitoring', 'targets' 'best practice' has become an embedded part of their value structure. Despite the use of language which could be described as performative and standards-focused, the accounts suggest that teacher professionalism can be supported by the structures and measures that enable individuals to demonstrate that they are doing a good job and that they are meeting or exceeding expected levels of performance.

However, most of the teachers discuss the need to meet pupil and school targets in a way that aligns with what they see as being important; their personal drive to build positive relationships with pupils and promote an interest in their learning and future prospects. As Biesta (2004) highlights, teachers recognise that they should be accountable to the public, but current policy 'creates a system focused on accountability to regulators and the like' (p.240). However, the teachers I talked to do not necessarily view these as being in tension. As discussed in 4.1, teachers place significant value on the success and achievement of their pupils; they see this as part of their professional role, and to some extent it is the progress of their students that provides them with a sense of professionalism.

An illuminating finding that has emerged is that the way the teachers talk about accountability is not focused purely on the technical and managerial aspects of their work, but also on what they view as their own responsible action (Biesta, 2004). For example, the accounts reflect Day and Gu's (2007) claim that teachers have an emotional investment in their work, they care about their pupils' learning and achievements, and this leads to a sense of duty and loyalty to the schools in which they work. The teachers' narratives reveal that the internal and external accountabilities that teachers face can co-exist (Mausethagen, 2013) as the individuals show signs of both legitimising external accountability measures, as they use structures to guide practice to meet targets, but also de-legitimising (Smaller, 2012) where they use the terms of performativity negatively when they do not quite fit with their personal values. It seems that, for teachers such as Patricia, Stan and Jessie, professional purpose and aims sometimes transgress the focus on test results, but they understand why test results are important. This suggests that many teachers can be in constant negotiation between the internal and external accountabilities that guide their work. The next section explores how a

co-existence of internal and external accountability affects the way the individual teachers operate within the organisation and reveals the possible tensions that arise.

4.4.2 Individual teachers and the organisation

The co-existence of internal and external accountabilities as discussed in the previous section is a reflection of the fact that individual teachers' practice is linked to the aims and targets of the schools in which they work. Analysis of the six accounts indicates that the teachers have a commitment and loyalty to their schools whilst maintaining a clear sense of their own values. The accounts reveal examples of teachers constantly moving between these two accountabilities. Whilst there is evidence of internalisation and a degree of acceptance of external structures and directives, the analysis also reveals examples of teachers taking opportunities to question approaches and routines that do not fit with these values in order to meet what they see as the needs of their pupils. As Vandestraeten (2007) posits, 'the organization constitutes the *raison d'être* of the profession but also limits what is possible in education' (p.631), suggesting that the organisational infrastructure can both enable and limit opportunities for professional integrity. This section explores how this relationship between individual and organisation is articulated by the teachers.

The strong sense of personal responsibility to school improvement that emerges from the teachers' narratives reflects the growing emphasis on the performance and competence of individuals to ensure that school targets are met (Smaller, 2012; Mahony et al., 2004; Menter, 2009). The internalisation and acceptance of accountability measures and performance targets is revealed in the teachers' accounts and, for some teachers, appraisal systems and competence criteria provide a benchmark for their professional expertise. For example, Rupa reflects on her appraisal meetings with a sense of pride:

When I meet with my Head, it's quite clear that I've worked hard to impress her or to get the best attainment that I can...I was observed to be outstanding, which when you're sitting there and someone's saying to you at the end of a very long academic year, you know, you've mastered it. (Rupa 2)

However, this positive view of individual contribution to the common good of the school sits in contrast to Patricia's view that there is too much pressure on individuals, illustrated in her account following negative feedback on a lesson observation from the headteacher:

[The headteacher said] 'if Ofsted came in they'd see that it was adequate they'd damn the whole school' and I just looked at her and said, 'd'you know? I don't think I can do this. I'll be honest with you, I just...I'm taking in everything you're saying but I just don't think I could...'I just kept saying, 'I don't think I can do this', because I at that moment felt ...this is too haaaard, I've really stuffed up, I'm going to be the cause of the downfall of this school, this is awful. (Patricia 2)

These two accounts reveal the powerful impact of organisational systems such as lesson grading and appraisal on the teachers' sense of self-efficacy. The high stakes for both individuals and the organisation make individualistic approaches difficult, as a failure to meet the expected targets can lead to a perceived risk to the school and a sense of vulnerability for the individual. In her final interview Patricia articulated this tension:

I've had a lot of criticism in various contexts, and you just learn to accept, well this is for greater good, I have to change this because this is important and I'm usually fine with that, but all of a sudden, it's starting to really impact and making me think, can I do this? I don't know if I can, so...and it is all around this professionalism, because the good moments are there and I can see them and they make a big difference; it's what's happening with the other grown-ups and the culture that is generated, the discourse that's bouncing around that is the problem and that creates this sense of lack of ability and thinking, I just, I don't want to...I can't. (Patricia 3)

Patricia's view that criticism of individual practice is 'for the common good' is also reflected in Stan's reflection on the pressures that individuals have placed on them by the school to meet targets:

You hear teachers saying that you're all the time being told that you're not good enough...there is that pressure to hit the progress targets and to explain why we don't, and the challenge when students aren't hitting that thing, to get students to make enough progress that the government feel the students should be making... I think's

going to be really difficult for them to make. But that's not allowed to be the answer. There's always got to be, 'well what can you do to help those students make progress?' But there might be some times that I cannot do anything... (Stan 3)

Both Stan and Patricia portray the pressure and the undermining of confidence that many teachers face as their individual practice and the attainment of their pupils are scrutinised, and the sense of frustration and vulnerability to which such scrutiny can lead. Their accounts emphasise the personal nature of these pressures through consistent use of 'I' which reflects the individual responsibility that they face in meeting the common goals of the organisation. Whilst earlier analysis revealed that teachers often hold a collective responsibility towards the aims of the school as a whole, illustrated through the use of 'we' (see 4.3.1), they see themselves very much as individual contributors.

The responsibility for results I feel now is hugely on the teacher; the balance of who's responsible for getting good results, is it the student or is it the teacher? My experience of school was, it's all about the student: how well you worked, how hard you did and how much revision you did. But as a teacher and a leader now, it feels that it's almost more your responsibility than the students to get a good result and it's maybe again the type of school we're in; it's almost unusual for the student to care more than you do. (Stan 3)

This increasing pressure upon individual teachers within the organisation runs the risk of restricting the transformative potential of leaders such as Stan (Glatter, 2006 in Close and Raynor, 2010). For example, whilst the assessment and monitoring of individual practice might be viewed as a means of promoting good practice, the focus on personal responsibility can lead to department leaders such as Tess, Ash and Stan putting routines and structures in place that can restrict creativity. Tess emphasises the importance of providing teachers with clear policy guidance and systems that will avoid placing individuals in vulnerable situations that might impact on the 'performance' of a department:

Part of my performance management appraisal where we had targets for the year, and the beginning of last year, I had to think about, well what do I want to focus on, and the thing...one of the things, aspects was about creating that vision and use of

communication to make sure that everybody is on the same wavelength and we're all moving towards the common goal. (Tess 2)

Tess's account suggests that the pressures to meet targets create a potential for a reduced sense of professional trust in the teachers. This is emphasised as she highlights the challenge she faces when new members of staff join her team:

There's huge challenge because we have four new members of staff...so the possible potential for instability, it's already showing, and the challenges now of ... not having meeting time regularly because of new situations, could possibly, you know, damage that future potential. What we've started, sort of the structure is all there, but it's so difficult when people don't know the systems and procedures in the school; you're really starting again. (Tess 2)

This view that individualism can lead to instability is also revealed in Jessie's narrative. Jessie describes how the current system of performance management encourages competition between teachers as they are concerned about their own targets and security and therefore can become less collegiate and supportive of each other:

[Other teachers think] 'I'm not going to help you because that's not going to further my career or make me look good, so I'm not going to help you 'cos I don't get anything out of it'

Everyone's like...on the step to get up to the next step, whether they tread on your head or not, it doesn't matter, 'cos they're going up that way, whereas the other school was a bit more about, oh you're having a bad day; what's the matter? Do you want a cup of tea? You know, sod my work, it can go over there and wait because you're more important, whereas here, your class could burn down, but other people would go past you because it's their planning time. (Jessie 2)

This description of 'other' teachers is in contrast to the attitudes revealed in the teachers' own accounts. For example, Jessie and Stan emphasise their commitment to supporting colleagues as they describe their experience of mentoring successful new teachers:

I don't see why we can't share what we know and help somebody else...I thought that was quite good, that I could support somebody and then now she's still teaching, she's fine. (Jessie 2)

Seeing someone like S next door get better and better all the time, from where she was in September to where she is now, that's a really, really positive aspect of my role...you realise that other people do think you're a good teacher or do realise that you have experience that you can share and is useful to them. So the experiences of other people is now much more important to me than before and probably of equal importance maybe as my own experiences of teaching. (Stan 2)

The teachers' accounts imply that the pressures of performativity that they face can be alleviated by supportive relationships and collegiality within the schools, and that consistent practice derived through standardised routines and structures can create a sense of security and control for the leaders and a source of confidence for teachers. For example, Patricia's account of a discussion with the Special Needs Coordinator illustrates how the system enabled her to show her knowledge and understanding of supporting pupils and for her competence to be acknowledged by a colleague:

She assumed because I'd been in a private school that I didn't know what an IEP was and I didn't understand any of this, so she'd written it for me and then I showed her what I'd come up with, and she seemed very surprised, she said, oh you really know the children. Yes?...but it felt good to be able to say, not in a kind of cheeky way, but in a very confident, this is what I've done, this is what I've observed. I disagree with this and I disagree with that but I agree with this; here's why...I thought well, that's good that you're seeing that actually I can do this and I do know this, and that was a good moment because it was a breakthrough with a colleague. (Patricia 2)

However, for individual teachers this focus on systems, procedures and managerial expectations can also be difficult to navigate. As Biesta (2004) warns, the incentives of the culture of accountability can elicit behaviour that suits the system rather than encourage professional and responsible behaviour. For example, Patricia's account of the pressure to meet organisational expectations paints a stark picture:

Such is the fear, such is the paranoia that if people don't adopt these ways, then they feel that they're for the chop and it's their responsibility ...one observation can break you, and it can break you in face of other people so knowing that you've had a bad observation, other people will deal with you differently, and all of a sudden you'll be someone who needs helping... we're all in the darkness, it's like we're all doing this blindfolded and trying to find our way through something. (Patricia 2)

Patricia's description of being 'in the darkness' is illustrative of a resentment of the managerial culture being revealed in a number of the accounts; the tension between individual and social priorities also appears to be affecting decisions to take on leadership positions. For example, Stan and Jessie are both concerned that taking promotions into further leadership roles will take them away from the classroom and the aspects of their work that they value. Stan questions whether taking a more senior position will mean he has to 'change how I think about teaching' (Stan 3), and Jessie is concerned that promotion causes teachers to, 'become like a manager and you lose sight of why you're here'. She emphasises the fact that it is a choice that teachers have to make:

It's just like...do you want to be a manager or a teacher? It's quite simple really.
(Jessie 2)

Jessie's experience of subject co-ordinators in her school has shown her how teachers can lose sight of their personal values and purpose. She views her role as a class teacher as a clear choice against being part of the management structure. However, she also alludes to the idea that being a leader might enable her to change wider practice in a way that is more in line with her values:

I did have some sort of an idea of being a Deputy and a Head someday, but the more I see, the more I maybe don't, so...but I sort of want to do it my way, so maybe I have to. (Jessie 1)

In conclusion, the accounts reveal that a tension exists between the teachers' individual practice and the collective needs and targets of the organisation. Some teachers describe how an emphasis on performance and targets in schools puts pressures on individuals and can in turn encourage leaders to put increasing structures in place to reduce inconsistencies

in practice and therefore minimise perceived risk to the organisation. In this way, structures can also provide security for those teachers who might otherwise feel vulnerable through such a focus on the individual. However, such scrutiny and control appear to erode the sense of professional trust that experienced teachers should enjoy. The analysis also reveals the potential for competition between teachers that can result from performance management measures, and how this [feeling of having to compete?] can be alleviated by teachers who are able to develop supportive relationships and collegiality within the school.

All six teachers reveal an awareness of the complexity of their relationship with the organisation. The way in which they constantly move between an emphasis on the use of 'I' and 'we' as they discuss their experiences, intimates that ongoing negotiation is required to reconcile the individual with the collective motivations that they encounter in their daily practice.

4.4.3 Examples of teacher agency

The analysis of teachers' perceptions of accountability and their relationship with the organisations in which they work, as discussed in 4.3.1 and 4.3.2, has illuminated the challenges teachers face and the highly problematic nature of the current system of accountability in terms of teachers' professional practice and their opportunities for agency. This section aims to explore in greater depth how the opportunity for individual agency is perceived by the teachers and the different ways in which agentic behaviours are demonstrated in their practice.

Agency has earlier been defined as the power to act in accordance with one's own beliefs and values, and section 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 have highlighted the importance for teachers to take some control of their own experience and development through intentional action. As Day et al. (2006) suggest, the ability to make professional judgment is central to many teachers' sense of professional satisfaction and accomplishment. My analysis of the six teachers' narratives reveals that their opportunity for agency or professional judgement requires ongoing negotiation, and that agency itself is demonstrated in diverse ways.

A key theme that has emerged from the data is that of professional trust, and the degree to which this allows for or constrains a certain degree of autonomy and a space for discretion

(Taylor, 2007). For example, Tess talks about 'freedom' and 'autonomy' which she enjoys as a result of leading a successful department in her school.

The one thing that I love about being in this position in the school is the autonomy of being allowed to create change and having the freedom to be creative and innovative... having the freedom to think about where we're at now and how we'd like to move forward, I really enjoy that. (Tess 2)

It is interesting to note that Tess's autonomy is enabled by the fact that she is, 'in this position in the school' and that fact that she is 'allowed' to be creative. The position to which she refers is being the leader of what is seen as a successful department where pupils are gaining good grades and meeting or exceeding targets. As Tess herself outlines, she is seen as successful and therefore awarded greater autonomy and treated differently from other heads of department in her school:

That was already a strength in our department, so we did things differently and we were allowed to innovate and be creative and almost do a piece of action research ...I can sense that level of differentiation, being allowed to...have more ownership and autonomy of departments. (Tess 2)

The importance of 'position' is also revealed in Stan's account as he describes how he feels about being promoted to a head of department. He sees this promotion as an acknowledgement of his abilities and an indication of others' trust in him. This then provides him with a sense of agency and confidence to use professional discretion to make choices:

It's the confidence that comes with having this position, therefore I now want to be good at a job and other people must know that I'm good at this job or else they wouldn't give it to me, so I'm now in a position where I can make that choice of this is going to happen and that's not going to happen.

Recently I've been making choices; actually I'm not going to spend the next hour on that because teachers can take responsibility; I'll talk to them after the lesson about how the lesson was and I'll actually spend the hour focussing on developing something for the department, so it is having that confidence to choose things; I

haven't this year got everything right but reflecting on it and going forwards from now I'm like, I actually need to make different decisions about how I spend my time. (Stan 3)

Ash describes a similar sense of agency that comes from the confidence that the headteacher shows in him due to his consistently highly-graded lesson observations. He has a very clear view of what he wants to achieve in the school, and a strong determination and confidence that earns the trust of school leaders. Such trust enables Ash to devise his own approaches to teaching and learning and influence the practice of his colleagues, and the agency to position himself within the school in a way that makes him feel fulfilled:

The headteacher clearly enjoys that level of confidence [in me] in terms of being able to walk into a classroom at any time and not be let down. (Ash 1)

I have positioned myself to take on a role at a school that needs to be outstanding...I'm beginning to feel a lot more fulfilled in terms of my abilities, what I always wanted to do, the impact I always wanted to have. (Ash 2)

In this way, trust appears to derive from the acknowledgement that the teacher is already doing a good job and can then provide opportunities for autonomy and agency. Trust, it seems, comes with conditions and is not given to all. As Whitty (2000) acknowledges, the focus on accountability measures leads to 'some members of the profession being given more autonomy and scope for flexibility than others' (2000, p.285), and only once they have demonstrated that they meet externally required standards. Stan shows an awareness of this differentiation:

It's there... you've got another department where you give them all the trust and it didn't work and it's all talk and no action and nothing's really happening in the department. (Stan 3)

However, the lack of trust awarded to some does not necessarily lead to a loss of agency. Whilst, for some teachers, the perceived erosion of trust in professional abilities can lead to reduced sense of autonomy, a different type of agency can emerge. For example, in the

following account, Patricia describes how she needs to conform and adapt to meet the external expectations and become, what she calls 'acceptable':

You are moulded by where you are. That's very much how it is so I feel that I've had to change so much in order to be acceptable and I think if you are a person who is able to do that: great, you'll be fine because even though you might see it as ridiculous, you'll be able to do it, but I think if you don't understand that, it becomes quite difficult ...it's about being sensitive to what's going on around you and perhaps seeing it as not as such a big deal as it might first appear. (Patricia 3)

The requirement for her to adapt and be 'moulded' does suggest restricted autonomy but she demonstrates a strong sense of agency through her understanding and awareness of the conditions under which her practice is directed. Whilst there is a degree of acceptance revealed in her account, Patricia also illuminates the importance of being aware of the tensions and challenges so that they might be put in perspective. She talks in strong terms about the impact of accountability and her reluctance to conform, yet appears to place herself slightly removed from the structures, talking about her colleagues as 'people', as if she is looking on from the outside:

It makes me angry, it makes me want to lash out and just grab people and say, for heaven's sake, you know, this...who are these people, why are we listening to this. Only the other night on that documentary, Ofsted were slammed and you know, I was cheering in front of the screen going, there you go! It is a political game. Wake up and see it. But it's almost like people have swallowed the mantras and are regurgitating that. It's like joining a cult. Yeah, that's what it is. It's being the reluctant member that's joined the cult.

It's almost like I have to adopt a different tone of voice and be a different person, but that's the only way I'll be able to do it, and it's very tricky because it's...it really isn't what I feel at all...to keep positive I have to keep some level of sanity, even if it means that I'm playing and imagining that I'm on some kind of satirical show...What I do with the children wouldn't change. (Patricia 2)

As discussed in 4.3.2, Patricia is able to make a very clear distinction between the managerial accountability measures and her classroom practice. In the following account, she talks in terms of 'grown-ups' and 'other stuff' to emphasise how she sees the divide between the organisational structures and expectations and her work with the children. She focuses on the detail of lessons and interactions with pupils and colleagues to illustrate what she values and what gives her a sense of agency:

The children are the one thing that did keep the sanity there and their needs at that...the immediacy of their needs is what matters more than any of this other stuff, and that's what keeps me on my toes really because none of this other stuff really matters ...I overcome the depression by reminding myself that every day, I can instil my own love of learning and enthusiasm for the world beyond grown-ups in the small people I spend most of my life with. (Patricia 3)

Such examples of agency may not involve promoting change in conditions or practice but can be seen as significant in terms of individual sense-making and positioning and what Vähäsantanen (2015) describes as having a perception of oneself as a professional actor. The importance of personal positioning to promote agency is also revealed in Jessie's account. Whilst she is wary and often critical of external directives and initiatives, she demonstrates a strong sense of agency through questioning and resistance:

I don't think you should just believe everything you're told and do... I don't believe anything I'm told until I find out for myself...So this initiative we're taking on, what's it going to do? ...I like to be explained things, I like to know the whole picture so I know where we all fit it. And sometimes you only get a bit of the picture then if they only tell you half, I have to ask for the rest.

I take their ideas on, if I have to do it I will do it; I won't say no, I'm not doing your basic skills teaching or whatever; I would do it but I will do it after half term when I've thought about how it can be put in the curriculum to make best effect. (Jessie 3)

Whilst Jessie's responses might be construed as negative, she is displaying what Priestley describes as 'positive agency' (2011, p.17) through her opposition to directives with which she has issue. It can also be seen as defiant and even brave (Bottery, 2006) as she is able to

prioritise her values as she questions directives, where others might see this as risky. Jessie's need to know 'the whole picture' and to understand how new initiatives might be best implemented or adapted is illustrative of all six teachers' commitment to their own professional understanding and their interest in the wider issues of education. Rupa talks of attending training courses because she wants to gain 'something to base my understanding on' (Rupa 2). Jessie and Ash also reflect this view that teaching provides continual learning opportunities that can be energising:

I think it's really interesting because you're learning all the time. It's just the constant learning; you're learning things about teaching and children but also learning things about the actual curriculum as well, so like the whole thing's just learning all the time... if there's a course coming up then I'll go on it. (Jessie 3)

My teaching has evolved; it has never stopped and I try to keep in touch with the latest...I don't want to say the latest trends, but the latest schools of thought on how to deliver outstanding lessons...I've always tried to keep in touch with best practice. (Ash 1)

Whilst such professional learning enables the teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in relation to their day-to-day practice, the teachers' agency is seen in their capacity to act reflexively and engage with the wider contexts of their work. For example, Rupa explains how she has developed her own opinions about her practice through professional development activities and has become aware of her own views about wider educational issues (Bottery and Wright, 2000). Further study through a Masters programme has promoted her intellectual curiosity (Day and Gu, 2007) and enabled her to become more critically aware of issues that affect her practice:

I was doing my MA where you had to kind of reflect on it critically, analyse what I'm doing and what influences that...I want to have something to base my understanding on, to compare...it's getting to the stage where I'm starting to disagree with some of the decisions that our Head has made, and it could be because I did the study

I've now got my own opinions on the role and how I'm affected by so many other elements and the Government's impact and my personal life impact and how I see myself as a teacher in society. (Rupa 2)

Definitely doing my study, my most recent study, it changes you I think, I want to have an impact, I want to practise what I've read; I need that extra bit all the time, the teaching's just not enough so that I guess, you know, from my own mind I want to do these things and carry on doing the research and see how this is going to have an impact. (Rupa 3)

Rupa's use of the phrase, 'I need that extra bit' is illustrative of the importance that the teachers place on considering issues and practice beyond the technical classroom skills and outside their immediate context. For example, Patricia's positivity about teaching suddenly becomes evident as she talks about her experience of enrolling in an EdD programme:

It felt really positive in the context of the EdD class in the cohort... The fact that there were no other primary school teachers which was intimidating, surprising and yet when I thought about it, probably not, but being able to discuss my context and to talk about how things work and why I'd become interested in the scrap-booking project, that was really positive because they were positive, they were interested, they were engaged with my idea in a way that...my colleagues wouldn't be... even as I talk about it, I can feel myself smiling, it's like a cloud lifting.

The point is that they were interested by what I had to say and I was interested in everything they had to say and actually it was not the put-upon tired, drained, Ofsted-resenting teacher, it was...I'm a primary teacher and this is my interest about education and I'm being taken seriously and this isn't being just...yeah...and no it has nothing to do with Ofsted, nothing at all, and it's still being taken seriously. (Patricia 2)

Patricia's sense of agency is revealed in the way she describes her intellectual interest in education and the opportunity the EdD provides to share her professional knowledge with others in a way that is valued and 'taken seriously' at a time when she feels that her professional voice at school has become constrained. She is presenting herself in an alternative way from the resentful teacher and is able to create a different identity as an

'interested' educationalist. Her account suggests that active engagement and participation in educational discussions and debates can help teachers to feel that they have something to contribute in an otherwise restrictive professional environment and can enable them to critically shape their responses to the challenges they face (Biesta and Tedder, 2006).

Tess presents a similar commitment to self-development and engagement with the wider education community as she endeavours to keep her subject knowledge current and to keep up with latest technological developments and practice in other schools:

I need time to go and develop knowledge because I am teaching a subject that is rapidly changing, and so you have to keep up with the times... if I don't feel like I'm developing myself or learning, then I can see that's where I would be a bit miserable... the fact that I think there's still room for improvement, so keep going, and so I just try and take each challenge, I realise this year's going to be a big challenge, so let's just see how it goes and at the end I can say, I did it and I moved forward. (Tess 2)

The importance of having control over one's own learning and development emerged as a strong theme across the narratives. The teachers are highly reflective and evaluative about their own practice and, as suggested by Emirbayer and Mische (1998), have the confidence to drive their own professional development and exert control over how their future careers might evolve. For example, Stan describes himself as 'quite good at self-evaluating' and 'honest about myself - I don't mind telling myself I've done something well' (Stan 3). He is aware of current standing in the school, describing it as 'the job I wanted...not in a rush to get any higher' (Stan 3), and reflects on how this strong position might be difficult to establish again elsewhere.

The importance of being an active participant in one's own professional career development is also reflected in other accounts. For example, Ash and Rupa describe how they have actively created career pathways for themselves that might lead to further opportunities:

I like to feel valued at least by the Head of the school because when I feel valued, that is what inspires me and motivates me to keep doing and to keep doing and to keep doing to help the school achieve its target. And that's part of my weakness because

that's what I'm...that's what feeds my loyalty...I feel that I'm at a school where, with time, I'm sure I will eventually get onto the Senior Leadership Team. (Ash 3)

[Support from the headteacher] has now set me up on the path to management and leadership and that's going to offer lots of opportunities now, it's going to offer lots more life opportunities... and then I was thinking maybe coming...trying to apply for a University role and I'd like to do a doctorate of some kind. Maybe not, you know, maybe in the next ten years or so. (Rupa 2)

These accounts reveal a type of 'proxy agency' (Bandura, 2001, p.13), in that Ash and Rupa value the support and recognition of leaders who have influence and power to enable them to achieve their goals.

Whilst the teachers are all self-aware and concerned about their personal development, they also reveal a degree of relational agency (Edwards, 2005) through their capacity to work with others to enhance wider competence and engage with both individual and collective motivations as discussed in section 4.3.2. Examples of how teachers value the positive and supportive relationships they build in schools are evident in all the accounts. For example, Ash describes the positive outcomes seen from working closely with his colleagues, as they learn from each other through 'distributed expertise' (Edwards, 2005, p.172):

we are working as a team by co-chairing meetings every Tuesday from 8am to 8.30am with the Heads of Maths and English regarding raising attendance and intervention, and I must say, we are working very well together and we bounce off each other so well... that's a culture I am trying to promote here; it's a new culture, but it is beginning to take shape in a very positive way. (Ash 2)

In some cases, the pressure on individual performance appears to lead to the teachers finding ways of working together. One example is Jessie's description of her need to 'rant' and she seeks out colleagues who she feels understand her and share similar values and motivations. Similarly, Rupa describes how the workload can cause pressures on individuals and lead to the development of stronger teams:

We get on, definitely...We share the workload too...and the other thing we do which is good is we now team plan, so one week I might plan for a couple of the lessons in the week and the next week another teacher'll do it, so we get to share our practice and ideas and see how we do things. (Rupa 2)

Whilst Patricia also recognises the need to work with others, she is aware of both the challenges of a collegiate approach. Whilst she does not always agree with common policy or procedure, she shows a somewhat reluctant acceptance and acknowledgement of the need to conform for the benefit of others and of the school as a whole:

And so I just had to adapt, because I had to get on with everybody and work with people, even if I didn't agree with them or didn't respect the sorts of things that they were saying or thinking... [There is] stuff that does make it quite hard to work as a team, so I understand that you need to start adopting some of that team-speak; yes, we're working together as a team, we're all reaching the same goals, dah-di-dah-di-dah, and it can be a bit Brady Bunch nauseating but I see what happens when you don't have that. (Patricia 2)

Patricia's account suggests that there can be a tension in collegiality when values or attitudes differ and reveals a need to adapt and negotiate. She describes herself as taking on a role and carrying out a 'performance' in the school's social environment; she meets the requirements of the social identity but can be herself in the classroom. This example of negotiation again highlights the highly discursive way in which teachers respond to their environment and demonstrate agency.

This section has revealed the varied way in which agency is articulated by the teachers in their narratives. A key feature of teachers' agency is their ability to act reflexively and be critically aware of the complex environment within which they work. It is this understanding of their environment and their own positioning within it that helps them to create perspective in their professional lives and to make choices about their responses and actions. Through reflexive action and decision making, teachers can retain a sense of control and thus have the confidence to reconcile the dilemmas and challenges with which they are confronted.

4.5 Concluding comments

In this chapter I have explored the highly complex nature of the 'professional work' that the teachers do (Vandestraeten, 2007, p.622). The narratives indicate that the way that the teachers act within the school is affected in a range of ways by the social forces acting upon them (Layder, 1998, p.3). Whilst the teachers sometimes question the social structures around them, they also see the need to conform and use the structures for positive gains. The analysis has illuminated the ways in which teachers are continually negotiating between their own sense of accountability which is underpinned by personal values, the needs of the school in which they work and the external expectations that dominate their practice. The narratives reveal an absorption of the language of accountability in teachers' discourse and it is clear that the existence of accountability has become internalised into the culture of teaching. However, whilst performative language is embedded in teachers' narratives, it is often expressed in positive terms; teachers use the systems of performativity to gain positive outcomes for the pupils and for their schools. In this way, the teachers show a continual negotiation of thought and action to enable them to work within the structures that guide their work.

The narratives also reveal the teachers' awareness of both the need to maintain their individual purpose that is driven by personal values and the need to work as a team within a school community towards shared aims. It is therefore not possible to neglect the distinction between the individual and notion of society, because even though there is clear evidence of a merging of the individual with social forces, these teachers show a strong sense of self - belief.

Through the analysis of teachers' narratives in this chapter, emerging conceptual clusters are revealed. These clusters centre on the internal and external accountabilities that guide teachers' work, the dialogical nature of teacher identity and the importance of being a reflexive and active participant in their own professional journey in enabling them to successfully navigate the challenges they face. In line with adaptive theory, the conceptual clusters identified in this chapter are used to develop theoretical typologies which are explored in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5: Teachers as navigators

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I address the third research question by reflecting upon the findings from the teachers' narratives to consider the implications for a developing understanding of teacher identity and for defining teacher professionalism in current times. At the start of this project, I defined teachers' experience as a journey that requires navigation, and my analysis of the six teachers' narratives in Chapter 4 illuminated the complex, varied and individualistic nature of the journey that each teacher undertakes. In this chapter, I discuss the key findings from the final stage of analysis to examine the dialogical nature of teacher identities and explore the increasingly hybridised forms of teacher professionalism that are emerging.

In accordance with adaptive theory, this final stage of analysis draws upon the conceptual clusters drawn from key literatures and the teachers' narratives to develop theoretical models or typologies (Layder, 1998) which help to describe and explain the ways in which teachers navigate their professional journeys. The aim is to connect the findings back to the more general theories of identity and the interrelatedness of structure and agency as discussed in Chapter 2.

The analysis of narrative data in this study reveals the competing dimensions of teachers' professional lives. Despite working in an era dominated by accountability and externally controlled performance measures (Mahony et al., 2004; Ball, 2008; Pring, 2012), the six teachers show a strong intrinsic personal commitment, investment and agency in their work. Whilst the external structures within the profession such as performance management and school performance targets clearly influence individual action, the analysis of the narratives reveals a challenge to the dominant discourse of the 1990s and 2000s of a social determinism that restricts or even prohibits teacher autonomy (Menter, 2009). The teachers' narratives reveal that teachers' responses to accountability and performativity and the relationship between structures and individual agency are nuanced, sometimes contradictory, and both individually and socially constructed.

In this chapter, I firstly discuss how dialogical aspects of these teachers' identities are revealed in the narratives (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011). I then identify three typologies that help to

explain how teachers navigate the complexities of their work in ways that support their ongoing motivation and commitment to the profession.

5.2 The dialogical nature of teacher identity

This study has illuminated the ways in which the increasingly complex and uncertain environment in which the six teachers work impacts upon their professional identity and the ways in which they respond to the demands of the profession. As Akkerman and Meijer (2011) posit, identity can no longer be viewed simply as an overarching framework that guides their practice, but it is also something that adapts and changes in relation to context. As Layder (2007) warns, an understanding of identity needs to be viewed as more than a 'lifestyle accessory chosen from a cultural supermarket' (p.6), and should consider the connections with human agency, intentionality, reasons and motives. The analysis of the narratives in this study reveal that all six teachers are able to articulate their strongly held personal beliefs and values about their work, and this provides them with a clear sense of who they are as teachers and what they hope to achieve. In this way, the teachers are demonstrating what I see as a strong sense of self or 'map' to guide their practice, as defined by Zlatkovic et al. (2012, p.378). However, the teachers also demonstrate a need to take different perspectives in response to different situations, as they share experiences of when they have adapted behaviours for pragmatic or self-preserving reasons. Thus, a stable or unified sense of self is shown through the consistent values and beliefs that the teachers maintain through the interviews, yet their actions and responses also adapt and change to portray multiple identity positions. This movement between the two is illustrated in the way that Stan questions himself about what he values (4.2.2) and how Patricia and Jessie adapt their practice to meet both external requirements and their own priorities (4.3.1). These simultaneous unitary and multiple identity positions (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011) reflect the paradoxical relationship between performativity and autonomy, and the interplay of emotion, pragmatism and vulnerability that the teachers are experiencing (Moore et al., 2002). Layder (2004) suggests that, in such times, maintaining a strong sense of self is important as it can provide an emotional 'security system' (2004, p.27) that ensures that identity is maintained through challenging times.

Whilst the teachers' narratives illuminate the importance of a stable sense of self, they also reveal another dimension of the dialogical view of identity, that it can be both continuous and

discontinuous (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011). For example, the teachers' experiences suggest that identity development is a dynamic process that can be affected by context and situation. Each teacher refers at some stage to a shift in priorities as they respond to changes in personal circumstance such as marriage and raising a new family. However, it is also evident that despite changing priorities in terms of their work-life balance, they maintain a coherent narrative about what is important to them. Teachers such as Tess and Stan acknowledge that they have to adapt their focus to balance their professional lives with the demands of starting a family, yet they are able to reason with themselves and justify the new approaches to their work to ensure that a consistent sense of self is maintained.

In accordance with Akkerman and Meijer's dialogical conceptualisation of identity, the teachers in the study also highlight the simultaneously individual and social aspects of their identity. For example, whilst holding strong individual views, the teachers' multiple responses as discussed above, are often informed by those being addressed such as pupils, parents, managers and external bodies. In addition, the teachers' positioning is often influenced by their anticipation of the reaction of others (Bakhtin, 1981 in Akkerman and Meijer, 2011). This is illustrated in the different ways that the teachers respond in relation to those around them. For example, Jessie and Patricia talked about standing up for what they believe in, yet also adapting and conforming to what others want or expect. This 'multi-voiced self' (Hermans and Hermans-Jansen, 2001) is also shown in Tess, Ash and Rupa's movement between discourses; they constantly move between performative, managerial speak, referring to the collective 'we' and 'us', and the personal use of 'I' as they express their personal hopes and intentions. What is also revealed, is that the teachers' identity is characterised by an awareness of this relationship. As Sachs (2005, p.8) suggests, 'Identity is the way that people understand their own individual experience and how they act and identify with different groups'.

The complexity and uncertainty of a dynamically evolving identity, as demonstrated in various ways by the six teachers, means that they are not always in control of their own identity, and this can challenge their motivation. The teachers have shown the need to negotiate and manage the relationship between their sense of self and the changing, conflicting nature of the identity positions they find themselves taking. Such negotiation requires active

engagement in their own positioning (Hermans, 2001) to achieve, what Layder (2004, p.130) calls 'self-realisation'. His concept refers to how identity actually develops within the immediacy of life and its social interactions and can be seen as distinct from how individuals see themselves or how they wish themselves to be. It is this process of 'self-realisation' that is central to this research project and to understanding how teachers navigate their professional lives. Layder (2004) also refers to this process as the 'emergent self-narrative' that occurs as individuals 'grapple with issues about what sort of person we are, what we should become and how we should live our lives' (2004, p.154). The dialogical view of identity proposes that it is through the emergence of an active 'dialogical space' that individuals are able to negotiate and reason between the multiple and discontinuous aspects of their identity (Akkerman and Meijer, 2011). This space draws from the different individual, social and contextual positions as a place for negotiation and reasoning. Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) highlight that, as organisations become more complex with the presence of increasing contradictory voices or influences, individuals need to develop 'a multi-voiced self that is able to move flexibly from one position to another' (2010, p.17). As Akkerman and Meijer, (2011, p.312) posit, 'the natural desire of people to maintain a consistent and coherent sense of self is what motivates a self to create a dialogical space between i-positions'. The question this raises is how teachers are able to use the dialogical space. As Hermans and Hermans-Konopka (2010) suggest, the question is not whether people are dialogical or not, but under what conditions dialogue is possible and whether it can be fostered.

Analysis of the teachers' narratives has revealed how the contexts of their work can impact upon their sense of agency and identity. The particular pressures and priorities that the schools face, the roles and positions that the teachers hold and the general conditions and culture of the schools have an impact on the opportunity for dialogue, either through individual reflection or discussion with others. However, the purpose of this study is not to examine contextual influences in depth but to consider the strategies and personal traits that teachers draw upon to navigate through a range of contexts. Therefore, the final stage of analysis identifies broad typologies that emerged from the interview data that show the ways in which teachers are enabled to use the dialogical space effectively and demonstrate agency in action. In the following sections I discuss how, through a combination of *metacognitive awareness*,

intellectual curiosity and *conscious positioning*, teachers are enabled to navigate their complex and uncertain environment to maintain a sense of professional identity.

5.3 A metacognitive awareness of professional lives

The narratives reveal what Archer (2012, p.2) calls 'first person awareness' as the teachers' accounts openly and honestly disclose their personal values, intentions and motivations. The teachers' descriptions of entering and being in the profession, as discussed in 4.2, illustrate the strength of their hopes and expectations, and highlight how a metacognitive understanding of practice (Alsup, 2006), can help teachers to make judgements and decisions to navigate their daily practice. Metacognition in this context can be seen as an extension of teachers' reflective practice, and about being able to view practice in a wider, more holistic way, beyond the day-to-day teaching and the performance measures that dominate their professional lives. It can also be seen as adaptive metacognition (Lin, Schwarz and Hatano, 2005), in that the teachers are aware of the complex situations they find themselves in and engage in purposeful action to question, make judgements and adapt their behaviour in ways that align more closely with their values. The motives for entering the profession that the six teachers share demonstrate purposeful action and direction: their narratives illuminate how they all entered the profession having already undergone considerable negotiation with themselves and others about their choice of career. The teachers all refer to dilemmas, choices and changes in direction to find what Snyder (2012) refers to as 'the royal road' (p.33). This positive action in response to dilemmas provides an early illustration of these teachers' ability to develop a dialogical identity which arguably, prepares the teachers for the complexity and uncertainty of the profession.

A key characteristic of the teachers in this study which is emerging is a capacity for reflexivity, that is, an ability to reflect on one's own attitudes, thought processes, actions and roles in relation to others (Bolton, 2010). The narratives reveal how this capacity for reflexivity can be enhanced by the strength of the teachers' personal values and their sense of purpose (Priestley, 2011). The importance of a reflective approach and self-awareness is emphasised by Stan:

How reflective you are, it's probably in people's nature I think, and I wonder if better teachers are more evaluative and more aware of themselves, because it is such an interpersonal job, isn't it? (Stan 2)

Tess also refers to the value of being aware of how her career has developed and recognising the 'patterns' in the journey so that she can learn from them:

At different stages in my career, I've had to reflect, so I can see the pattern and it's nice being able to internally reflect. (Tess 2)

This level of metacognitive understanding of the circumstances in which they work and act is also shown in the ways that the teachers continue to negotiate between the internal and external accountabilities to make sense of their work, as discussed in Chapter 4. It can be argued that reflection is a key aspect of all teachers' development, but what appears significant in these narratives is the way that the teachers' reflections show an awareness of issues and practice beyond the technical classroom skills and consider the impact of wider influences on the way they see themselves developing as teachers. This metacognitive awareness of wider tensions is explicated in Archer's concept of the 'reflexive imperative' (2012, p.1) which suggests that structure can only have influence on individuals when individuals have an awareness of how they themselves are affected. Having this awareness seems important to the teachers in this study and is illustrated by Tess's description of how she deals with the challenges she faces:

I just try and take each challenge, I realise this year's going to be a big challenge, so let's just see how it goes and at the end I can say, I did it and I moved forward I made progress with these things, so I won't have won all of them but I've tried. (Tess 3)

This positive approach to challenge is replicated in other accounts and shows how the teachers can be motivated when they see challenge as a means to their own professional development. This reflects Moore's (2006) findings that teacher reflexivity within a supportive environment can help individuals to cope when faced with situations that challenge personal ideals, suggesting that some element of crisis can be a positive aspect of these teachers' development (Meijer, 2011). Moore (2006) cites Hoggett's (2004) view that individuals should

'learn to enjoy our [internal and external] conflicts; it is only when we are afraid of them that our troubles begin' (2006, p.32).

In summary, the accounts suggest that a positive response to challenge is more likely when teachers take a metacognitive, reflexive approach to their work which is underpinned by an awareness of their own values and attitudes. As O'Connor and Scanlon (2006) suggest, 'teachers need to possess a professional philosophy which...enables them to negotiate the moral and ethical implications of their daily work' (p.1). The teachers in this study articulate a philosophy that is clearly grounded in their deep-rooted values and beliefs but is also developed through a willingness to face and deal with challenge. For teachers such as Tess, Jessie and Stan, this response to challenge is directly linked to their desire to continually learn and develop. A common finding from all the teachers' narratives is that the teachers have a perspective of their work that goes beyond the technical and shows an ongoing intellectual engagement with the profession.

5.4 An intellectual curiosity towards the profession

The teachers' narratives reveal a complex response to performativity and pose a challenge to the view that the standardisation and increased prescription and monitoring of teaching has led to a 'technical' profession' and a de-skilling of teachers as warned by Morrow and Torres (2000, in Menter, 2009). The implication that teaching is no longer an intellectual activity is not reflected in the ways that the teachers in this study talk about their work: the teachers provide examples of the intellectual curiosity that Day and Gu (2007) suggest is foundational to 'good teaching' (p.428). This curiosity is illustrated in the ways that the teachers take opportunities to question and challenge aspects of their work and engage in the type of scholarly activity that Bottery and Wright (2000) warned was no longer possible in such a directed profession. For example, Jessie repeatedly talks of 'questioning things' and wanting to know why she is being asked to take on new initiatives. She talks about the importance of finding things out and 'look for the evidence yourself' (Jessie 3). Similarly, Rupa and Tess both talk of how their schools encourage individual and collaborative enquiry into practice:

Everyone's classes are action research really in themselves, so what are you doing in your classes that's successful? Bring it back to the table and we'll learn from it. (Tess 2)

Other teachers cite similar examples of how they critically analyse their own practice, revealing a personal sense of what it means to do a good job and a desire to continually improve.

It's really interesting because you're learning all the time. It's just the constant learning; you're learning things about teaching and children but also learning things about the actual curriculum as well. (Jessie 2)

The teachers' narratives reveal that active engagement and participation in educational discussions and debates can help individuals to feel that they have something to contribute in an otherwise restrictive professional environment and enables them to critically shape their responses to the challenges they face (Biesta and Tedder, 2006). They share examples of reaching beyond their school for ways of reinforcing their own values and beliefs through professional development and personal enquiry. For example, Tess talks about debating issues with others at conferences and Jessie makes time to research what is happening in other education authorities to inform discussions about school policy. They all make passing reference to their Masters study at different points of the interviews, reflecting on their learning and the impact the experience has had on the way they think about their practice. In quite individual ways, the teachers' narratives reveal how they strive to meet their own personal and professional goals and develop their own sense of good teaching or mastery (Butler, 2007; 2012). Each teacher demonstrates a critical and questioning approach to their work and they are actively engaged in their own learning and development. They also provide indication that these attitudes are not seen in all teachers:

When you go in the staff room, people don't want to talk about their children or anything in their lessons; they just talk about like what's on telly or cupcakes. (Jessie 3)

Jessie's account illustrates how these teachers have a greater willingness to debate the purposes of the profession more than many of their colleagues. As Bottery (2006) suggests:

This calls for a degree of professional self-knowledge and self-reflection which, under the current strain of work intensification, is all too absent. Yet upon it depends in large part their ability to make a difference to education, and indeed in the long term to society at large. (p.110)

The link between the teachers' high levels of interest in the wider profession and their ongoing motivation is clear (Butler, 2012), as each teacher illustrates how their active engagement in professional learning such as Masters programmes or conferences has led to a greater capacity for individual agency (Biesta and Tedder, 2007). The narratives illuminate how these six teachers are able to draw upon their values about personal development and internal accountability to take responsibility for their own development and to question and challenge the structures of the profession that influence them. Through critical engagement and intellectual curiosity, the teachers develop strong foundations upon which to develop professional confidence and agency in their professional lives.

The findings of this research suggest that opportunities for personal growth can make a difference to how teachers feel about their work. Teachers who choose to fully integrate rather than merely participate in their professional lives (Rinke, 2011) seem to be able to maintain a certain degree of motivation and commitment. This requires individuals to have self-understanding of their values and motivations (Kelchtermans, 2005), be aware of what they want to achieve out of their careers and be conscious of their positioning within the wider context of the profession.

5.4 A conscious positioning within the profession

In section 5.2, I highlighted the growing importance for teachers to have a metacognitive awareness of their professional lives. Together with intellectual curiosity, teachers are able to position themselves and have what Vähäsantanen (2015) describes as having a perception of oneself as a professional actor. Nearly forty years ago, Maxine Greene focused on the need for students to demonstrate 'wide-awakeness' (1978, p.161) to understand what it is to be in the world and be mindful of oneself and others. It seems that in an increasingly complex and uncertain education environment, being wide awake is vital for preserving a sense of identity for teachers.

The teachers in this study each present examples of individual sense-making and positioning. For example, all six teachers show an ability to take on different positions and stances (Moore and Clark, 2016, p.667) from being broadly compliant and supportive of policy, to substantially rejecting or resisting policies, or reluctantly accepting them as a means of survival. As Stan reflects, 'you sort of work out where you fit in' (Stan 2). Similarly, Tess talks about identifying the things that matter the most to 'fight' for, and Jessie and Patricia both refer to knowing when to stand up for their beliefs or break the 'mould'. Their accounts reveal a sense of perspective and an ability to discriminate between the aspects of their work that they see as important and those that just have to be done. The narratives suggest that the teachers' sense of purpose remains underpinned by their own values, but also focuses on performance measures such as prescribed targets, illustrating the teachers' ongoing negotiation between performativity and agency. For example, Ash, Tess and Stan are highly student-focused yet repeatedly use managerial, performative language when describing their practice. They understand the requirement and importance of a collective approach to meeting school priorities but draw upon their own measures of good practice and focus on the impact on students. In this way they are continually moving between discourses and, whilst these could be seen as ambiguous, the teachers see them as connected: the performance and accountability measures need to be in place to enable them to ensure and demonstrate student progress and achievement. Whilst the teachers want and enjoy a certain degree of autonomy, the social school setting and working for the organisation can provide a sense of belonging and responsibility (Moore and Clarke, 2016). For example, Ash describes his own sense of achievement as he contributes to meeting the school's targets:

I am providing a need; I am providing or I am fulfilling, I should say, I am fulfilling a need that the school had; the school needed someone to hold Heads of Departments a bit more accountable. (Ash 2)

Ash's somewhat performative outlook becomes increasingly evident in all the teachers' narratives as they move into more senior roles within their schools. During the course of this research Tess, Stan and Ash took on new roles with greater responsibility and their narratives provide evidence of the potential challenges that increased managerialism can bring. For

example, Stan's account is illustrative of the challenge that becoming a department lead places on his relationship with colleagues.

It's the challenge of keeping the subject focus of the job as opposed to just managing and leading and organising the people,... it does challenge me as the sort of person I am and the sort of leader I kind of want to be or am comfortable being. (Stan 2)

The teachers' accounts suggest, however, that conscious positioning can be a challenge and could be seen as a compromise: constantly moving between discourses can make teachers feel like a 'performer' (Patricia 3). Patricia talks about how she adapts to be different people in different situations and describes it as a 'mask that teachers put on; you must toe the line but you can be yourself in the classroom', reflecting Hochschild's 'surface acting' (1983, p.37). As Hochschild suggests, individuals often have to balance between their public face and their personal view of themselves. It seems that, in contrast to the teachers in Woods and Jeffrey's (2002) study whose 'real selves' were concealed (p.102), the teachers in this study are able to maintain a strong sense of identity agency by remaining consciously aware of their personal stance and position. For example, Tess reveals how it is possible to position oneself in a way that earns high levels of professional trust and therefore a certain degree of autonomy and a space for discretion. This type of professional trust appears to derive from the acknowledgement that the teacher is already doing a good job and can then provide opportunities for autonomy and agency. Trust, it seems, comes with conditions and is not given to all, reflected in Archer's (2000) view of agency that it is not a personal attribute that one holds, but is a discursive position available to some people, some of the time. For others, such as Jessie and Patricia, this sense of trust is not so apparent so they focus upon the aspects of the work over which they have most autonomy such as their own classroom practice. In this way the teachers create a 'mesocosmic' world - a place or position in the school where they can create a social world in which they feel most fulfilled (Hargreaves, 1995, p.14).

The concept of positioning is a key theme that has emerged from the narratives and the significance of this in maintaining motivation is also illustrated by teachers as they reflect back

on their participation in the research. For example, Stan and Rupa articulate the benefits of talking about their professional lives explicitly:

You do take a step back, because most of my reflecting has been about that I do day to day is obviously about the work and the school and the academy, rather than necessarily about teaching as a whole, so ...because you don't have time to do that really because you've got so much other stuff to think about, so looking back on teaching as a whole, why I went into it, almost gives a bit more...sort of re-energizes about why I come to work each day and what I do and re-confirms how it's going. (Stan 3)

I've seen where I am in my career and perhaps where I'd like to go and why and why I do the job as well, which has been useful because I think you can...you could start to resent it quite quickly, so...yeah, it's given me perspective. (Rupa 3)

However, these accounts also suggest that self-positioning is not necessarily always a conscious endeavour and the teachers' understanding of their experience has only become illuminated through the direct questioning and discussion that this project has offered. It seems therefore that teachers' thoughts about their wider professional experience will often be hidden and unspoken until an opportunity to voice their views and concerns presents itself, and may only become aware of their positioning when their values are questioned or challenged (Yerrick et al., 1997). This would suggest that conscious positioning requires not only the metacognitive awareness and intellectual curiosity as discussed above, but also the opportunity to question and challenge aspects of their profession in relation to their own values and beliefs, as suggested by Moore (2006) and Meijer (2011).

5.5 Concluding comments

The three typologies, as discussed in this chapter, illuminate the increasing complexity of teachers' professional lives and present a challenge to conceptualisations of professionalism that have been previously cited (Ball, 1999; Bottery and Wright, 2000; Groundwater-Smith and Sachs, 2002; Moore et al., 2002; Moore, 2004; Menter, 2009). The dialogical nature of teacher identity and varied ways in which teachers respond to their environment suggest that the dualism between performativity and the opportunities for enhanced professionalism as

suggested by Menter (2009), and the dominance of 'technicist and instrumental forms of professionalism' as predicted by Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002, p.354) can be challenged.

The complex and varied experiences of the six teachers in this study illustrate the danger of classifying teachers into types of professional such as 'compliant' versus 'resistant' (Moore et al., 2002) or 'activist' versus 'entrepreneurial' (Sachs, 2000), as such classification can lead to reductionism and mask the variety of complex positionings that teachers can take. A similar warning is offered by Akkerman and Meijer (2011, p.316) who suggest a 'cautiousness in characterising teachers' as this suggests the existence of a unified and constant identity which can be challenged. Whilst the teachers in this study demonstrate seemingly contradictory traits at various times in their work, these characteristics are not seen in dualist terms; they do not appear to be necessarily in opposition with each other (Moore, 2004). It is therefore important to consider the ways in which professionalism might be redefined (Leaton-Gray and Whitty, 2010).

The complexity that characterises teachers' lives as revealed in this study, suggests the emergence of a increasingly 'hybridised' professionalism (Noordegraaf, 2007; 2016) that is not characterised solely by organisational control and structure but involves reflexivity within individuals, more fragmented ways of working and 'ephemeral identities' (Noordegraaf, 2016, p.16). This notion of a new type of professionalism challenges a purely structuralist view that considers the dominance of structures and accountability measures to be a threat to teacher identity and presents a professionalism in these teachers that is more nuanced and fluid. Analysis of the narratives has illuminated how the teachers are able to respond and act in a range of ways and move between positions such as acceptance, subversion, resistance and engagement within the structures and performativity within which they work. In this way, they demonstrate an ability to redefine themselves as individuals and position themselves as members of a profession under relentless scrutiny (Jones, 2003, p.394).

In different ways, all six teachers illustrate their professional identity by articulating what they value and standing up for what they believe. For example, this is expressed as 'rattling chains' (Patricia), 'ruffling feathers' (Ash) and 'not afraid to challenge' (Jessie). Such an approach

appears to be enabled by the teachers' critical awareness of their own positioning and a confidence in their own abilities and opinions. They draw upon deep professional knowledge which evolves from a deeply held intellectual curiosity in their work and interest in their own development and learning. The teachers also reveal an ability to make links between their individual concerns and wider, more public issues, providing perspective and personal control over their professional lives.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and next steps

6.1 Introduction

This final chapter summarises the findings that can be drawn from the research project which has sought to reveal how teachers conceptualise their work and navigate the tensions they face between personal values and the external pressures of the profession.

Through an approach based on the principles of adaptive theory, the project has focused on teachers' professional journeys and the ways in which they navigate the challenges that they face. In the following sections I reflect back upon the research questions posed at the start of the project. I summarise the key findings to discuss how teachers' narratives of their practice can inform our understanding of how teachers conceptualise their experience and therefore how this might support teacher development and retention. The chapter ends with some recommendations for future practice. I also reflect on the ways in which the research project has impacted upon my own personal and professional development.

6.2 Beliefs and values guide teachers' navigation

My first research question asked how teachers reflect on personal values when talking about their professional lives. The findings of the study suggest that the beliefs and values that guided the teachers into becoming a teacher tend to remain deeply rooted and continue to guide the teachers' journeys through their complex and ever-changing professional lives. The interview data revealed that the teachers have a personal investment in their work and that individual beliefs and values are largely unaffected by the institutional and external influences that they face (Yerrick et al., 1997).

The teachers revealed how the intrinsic values and extrinsic motivations are both important features of their professional lives (Bruinsma and Jansen, 2010) and that these need to be negotiated. For example, personal values and beliefs need to be balanced against being part of a collegial group that has its own needs and aspirations (Eccles, 2009). Teachers in this study appear able to recognise that whilst their personal needs are important, it is not possible to act purely altruistically as they are mindful of the wider needs of their teams and the school in relation to external accountability measures. In this way, the teachers are aware of both the internal and external accountabilities that guide their professional lives.

The findings reveal that it is often the strength of individuals' personal values that support the stable and continuous aspects of the teachers' dialogical identity. However, it has also been revealed that teachers' beliefs and values can be innate and teachers may require opportunities to explore their personal beliefs and values in ways that enable them to become activated (Fives and Buehl, 2012). Having an opportunity to articulate their own professional journey enabled the participants in this study to recognise how values have helped them to maintain a stable sense of self despite often having to adapt behaviours, prioritise actions and make compromises in response to the challenges they face.

6.3 Teachers need to be wide-awake, critical and curious

The second research question asked how teachers navigate potential tensions between their personal values and external influences on the profession. The findings of this research project have indicated that teachers' responses to performativity, accountability and the tensions they face in their work is highly complex and nuanced. Barker (2008) describes how current testing regimes and accountability measures in schools can limit risk-taking and innovation create 'uncomfortable dilemmas' (p.674) for teachers who recognise the limitations of such an approach, and the teachers in this study have shown that there is never just one response to such dilemmas. For example, there is sometimes a need for the teachers to be compliant, yet often they can be seen to be resistant: they can move between being the activist and entrepreneurial professionals that Groundwater-Smith and Sachs (2002) identified. The findings have revealed how teachers need to adapt behaviours in order to negotiate the tensions they face. They can act with pragmatism, knowing when to compromise their personal values, to meet the expectations and requirements of the organisation. For example, Patricia presents herself as a strong idealist, yet at times is seen as a conformist, a performer, a game player or what she describes as 'reluctant member of a cult' (Patricia 2). Similarly, Jessie talks about doing things 'my way', she continually reflects on her own values and is determined to live these values through her practice, yet she is also highly collegiate and understands her role in meeting the wider needs of the organisation. In this way teachers have to continually negotiate their positions and be prepared to manage their own idealism against the realities they face in their professional lives (Richardson, 2003). I have argued that it is by being 'wide-awake' (Greene, 1978) and having an 'ecological and political awareness'

(Bottery, 2006, p.106) of the wider contexts within which they work that the teachers are able to negotiate the tensions and maintain as sense of control over their professional lives. As Bullough (2011) emphasises:

The goal is...to learn to think more deeply, accurately, and realistically about situations and resources and thereby to locate genuine points of action where agency holds most promise. (p.27)

It is this ability to think deeply about their work that the findings reveal as crucial in relation to teacher commitment and motivation. I deliberately avoided use of the term 'resilience' at the start of this project as, to me, it evokes a sense of teachers who are coping with adversity in the day-to day pressures of being in the classroom and does not necessarily consider the wider contexts of their work. Similarly, Margolis, Hodge and Alexandrou (2014) are critical of research that focuses on teachers' 'coping mechanisms' suggesting that it is detrimental to the profession as it normalises intense stress and adversity and portrays those who cope as being 'super-human' (p.1). The findings of this project concur with Day and Gu's (2014) response to this criticism which emphasises that effective and committed teachers are not just "coping" but positively managing their work and lives' (p.411).

This research has revealed that teachers can navigate their professional lives by being aware of the factors that influence them, and also by questioning the structures within which they work. A critical approach may not always make lives easy, but as Akkerman and Meijer (2011) suggest, it can lead to an environment that is 'fertile for creativity' (p.317). Teachers such as Tess and Ash show that challenging decisions and questioning policies can lead to new ways of thinking and working that benefit both themselves and their colleagues. Thus, the findings reveal an emerging teacher professionalism that requires adaptive and flexible thinkers and individuals who recognise and understand this in themselves. It is this awareness and professional self-understanding of their work that is crucial in successful navigation through their professional lives.

The ways in which the teachers in this study talk about their work challenge the discourse of pessimism that has dominated much recent research of teachers' lives. These teachers have shown that there are opportunities for personal agency if one has the capacity and confidence

to make best use of the rules and resources that the structures within the profession provide (Giddens, 1984). For example, whilst striving to meet external expectations and targets, they draw upon pupil feedback, professional development opportunities and the positive relationships with colleagues to maintain a perspective of the internal and external accountabilities that guide their work. In this way, successful navigation of their professional journeys requires teachers to use an 'intricate set of resolving and rationalising mechanisms' to adapt and work with reforms and external requirements (Yerrick et al., 1997, p.154). In an environment where it might be said that teachers are 'no longer encouraged to have a rationale for practice' (Ball and Olmedo, 2013, p.91), it can be seen that many teachers are motivated to find this rationale for themselves.

Despite this optimism, it could be argued that opportunities for teacher agency, resistance or action are limited. There is no doubt that teachers are currently working within systems and structures that are not easily challenged, therefore agency and resistance need to be viewed in new ways. As Ball and Olmedo (2013, p.90) suggest, neoliberalism requires a 'new type of individual', one who looks critically at the enactment of policy, but in different ways from the past. Rather than engaging in collective action against the systems, teachers are required to overcome their own personal struggles as values and beliefs are challenged in their daily lives. A key finding of this research project is the complexity of the relationship between the individual and the organisation in current times. The teachers' stories reveal tensions as they balance personal motivations and aspirations with the requirements and targets of the school within which their work. This can put them at risk of experiencing what Moore and Clarke (2016, p.668) call a 'cruel optimism', whereby teachers reluctantly comply with policy directives whilst maintaining hopes and aspirations that may, as a result, be unfulfilled. The teachers in this project take positive action by carefully selecting the schools in which they want to work and by seeking like-minded colleagues with whom they can form supportive, collegiate relationships and ensure that they control certain aspects of their work in ways which align with their personal beliefs and values.

To conclude, the wide-awake, critical and curious nature of the teachers in this study enables them to address these struggles and to gain a sense of control of their own practice and of their professional lives. They have portrayed a view that they can take positive action about

the tensions that they face: it is this attitude and sense of agency that reduces the potential sense of hopelessness that many teachers who leave the profession end up experiencing.

It therefore seems appropriate to end this section with the sense of hope and optimism in the words of one of the participants. Reflecting back on her first interview, Patricia notes:

The optimism that came through, which...is really interesting to see the journey of resistance and then acceptance and then in the light of various institutional challenges that I've still maintained that sense of optimism, and almost a kind of quite determined stance. (Patricia 3)

6.4 Implications

The findings of this research project suggest that there is a need to find ways to enable teachers to become and remain wide-awake, critical and curious travellers through their professional journeys. I would argue that having an understanding of their own professional lives will have a positive impact on teachers' effectiveness, and upon the experience of the pupils with whom they work. As Bullough (2015) emphasises:

Who teachers are and how they understand the work of teaching clearly shapes for both good and evil what young people experience in school, shaping what and how they learn. (p.92)

This research has revealed that many teachers are able to develop this understanding for themselves, however recent trends of teachers leaving the profession (DfE, 2016b) suggest that more can be done to support this in initial training and in CPD activities. The findings from this project suggest that new teachers entering the profession need to see their career as a journey that requires continual negotiation and to understand their own role as navigators of that journey. The narratives suggest that teachers' development is complex and non-linear. It therefore requires 'deliberative and systematic reflection' about experience (Day 2012, p.14). The implication is that teachers need to continually reflect and review their developing identity in relation to the structures within which they work. The recently developed standards for teachers' professional development (DfE, 2016a) seem to omit any reference to the personal aspects of teaching and focus on pupil attainment and measurable outcomes, yet do encourage teachers to continually develop and support each other. Similarly, Greening's

(2017) desire to develop a profession of experts does emphasise the need to create an environment and opportunities where such teachers can flourish.

A key area to address is therefore, the place of values in teachers' professional development. It can be argued that the current performative landscape has resulted in the personal and affective aspects of teaching such as emotions, beliefs and values being neglected in teacher training due to the pressures of meeting professional standards and pupil progress targets (Ball, 2003; Korthagen, 2004; Noddings, 2011). The findings of this research suggest that this requires rebalancing. I would argue that the rationale that underpins both ITE and CPD needs stronger conceptualisation in relation to professional identity. It needs to acknowledge that it is not enough just to train people to be teachers, but that there is a need to educate them about what it means to be part of a profession in a complex national and global context. Further work needs to be done to establish ways of helping teachers to position themselves in this complex, ever-changing professional world: as governments come and go, policies and priorities shift and it becomes even more important that teachers have the confidence to develop their own forms of internal accountability. As Ball and Olmedo (2013) suggest, as a profession we must maintain the 'right to define ourselves according to our own judgements' (p.92).

One way to prepare teachers for the profession might be to introduce them at different career stages to the nature of the structures that might affect their capacity for agency in the profession so that they might consider their own positioning within it. Akkerman and Meijer's (2011) dialogical approach has been revealed as a useful lens through which to consider the experience of teachers, and it is therefore a potential tool for teachers themselves to consider their own developing identity. The main purpose would be to help new trainees and more experienced teachers to recognise potential dilemmas and to understand what it means to be a teacher in current times.

The findings have emphasised the fact that being a teacher requires a fusion of one's own values with the collective identity of school and profession as a whole. Teachers therefore require support in deciding the type of school that they would be most suited to work in, and

the schools themselves need to develop strategies to support teachers in the later stages of their career.

An important issue that arose from the research centres on the importance of teachers engaging with the wider issues faced by the profession. Therefore, a key implication from the study is the role of HEIs in future research and the continuing development of teachers. With an increasing focus on the technical, measurable aspects of teachers' work in initial training and the new standards of professional development, there is a need for opportunities to enquire into and develop the personal, intellectual and theoretical aspects of teacher development and the inter-relationship between the psychological and sociological aspects of teachers' lives. However, it is also clear that HEIs must not be seen to be too idealistic or removed from the current reality for schools. Successful partnerships will require HEIs to acknowledge the pressures that teachers and schools are under and work to respond to schools' agendas as well as taking forward those of the academy (Day, 2012).

In summary, the findings will inform the development of teacher training and CPD to provide opportunities for teachers to reflect upon and make explicit their values and beliefs and how these inform their practice and might become challenged. I would suggest that for teachers to remain motivated and for teaching to remain a valued and rewarding profession, leaders, policy makers and teacher educators must face the challenge of enabling teachers to navigate the increasingly complex environment in which they work (Kelchtermans, 2005).

6.5 Possible contribution to the field

Exploring teachers' experience of their professional lives through in-depth narrative interviewing has raised important issues relating to teacher motivation and retention. A focus on the positive aspects of teachers' lives adds a different perspective to the wide range of work on teacher identity, much of which has focused on teacher demotivation and attrition (Sachs, 2005; Ball, 2008; O'Connor, 2008; Gallant and Riley, 2014).

This project avoided a focus on resilience which is prominent in a lot of recent research into teachers' professional lives. It has revealed the importance of researching the more holistic aspects of being part of the teaching profession, and focusing on how teachers might be supported in becoming more effective in shaping their own professional journeys (Bullough

2015). My view is that such a focus will reduce the need for short term coping mechanisms to reduce stress and attrition from the profession.

This study demonstrates the potential of teachers' narratives to support an understanding of identity development (Polkinghorne, 1991; Bullough, 2015). I recognise the limitations of this project and see it as a foundation from which to build further study. I understand that the meanings of the narratives drawn from this study are bound by the specific time and context in which they were generated, yet I see significance in the ways in which teachers' responses have developed since the 1990s and 2000s. Therefore, it will be interesting to see the ways in which they continue to develop in the future: I believe that researchers who are interested in the personal aspects of teaching need to continue to examine narratives of teachers' experience in a range of ways and from a range of perspectives. Any changes in teachers' responses over time will reflect the changing landscape within which they work, so such research provides invaluable insights into the socio-political time and its impact on professions such as teaching.

It is also my view that understanding teachers' lives now needs to look beyond individual experience into an organisational perspective to look in greater depth at the interrelationship between individuals and the organisations within which they work. This research has raised questions about the implications for leaders of schools and how they might enable teachers to become more active participants in their own professional journeys (Vähäsantanen, 2015). My own future research will focus on how school leaders can support teachers to reflect on their own experience and to positively manage their own professional lives.

6.6 Personal reflection and evaluation

Finally, it is important to reflect upon the impact that this research project has had on my own personal and professional development. One of the most beneficial aspects of the process has been the way that I have developed both as a researcher and a practitioner. This research project has enabled me to explore sociological and psychological aspects of teachers' lives for the first time and made me consider my own and others' professional experiences in new and enlightening ways. Layder's (1998) adaptive theory enabled me to explore these complexities within a non-restrictive framework that aligned with the iterative and exploratory

nature of the research questions. The flexible nature of the approach was particularly important when exploring complex and often ambiguous concepts such as identity, agency and motivation. The continual integration of theory and data generation and the use of orienting concepts helped to frame and guide the process which might otherwise have been too messy and unwieldy. I also felt that the flexibility of the approach enabled space for the teachers' authentic voices to be heard, as I continually returned to the transcripts and moved between the specific detail and the more general theorising of the accounts.

It is important to acknowledge that the study was limited to a small sample which places limitations on the claims to be made and the generalisability of the findings. However I am satisfied by the way the research project evolved and the findings that I was able to elicit from the teachers' narratives. Another challenge was the lack of guidance and structure offered by the adaptive theory approach. As Miles et al. (2014) suggest, I had to work to some extent by insight and intuition to make sense of what the teachers were telling me. As a novice researcher, I found such lack of guidance somewhat intimidating and required reassurances that my approach and findings would be viewed as rigorous, authentic and convincing. I therefore found on-going reflections, discussions and debates with teachers, colleagues, friends and peers invaluable throughout the process. I was encouraged by the responses I received, particularly from other teachers in schools with whom the findings appeared to resonate. This maintained the ongoing sense that this was a subject worth researching and that the findings were of interest to the very people whose experiences I aimed to reveal.

The issues raised in this research have had a significant direct impact on my teaching and the discussions I now have with students, teachers and school leaders. I regularly engage in discussions about the hopes, motivations and dilemmas that teachers encounter, and the ways in which the teaching profession is promoted and portrayed. It is my hope that these conversations will be taken beyond the University environment and continue back in schools with colleagues, to enable the reflexive thinking and critical engagement of their work to develop. It is vital for the profession that school leaders and providers of teacher development consider the ways in which these critical conversations might be encouraged in light of the impact they can have on identity development and upon teachers' ability to successfully navigate the complexities of their work.

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Appendix 1: Extracts from research journal (reflective memos)

May 2013

The ideas that have been explored in the EdD so far have helped me to think more clearly about what I want to find out from my research. I had initially thought that performativity, managerialism, lack of autonomy in the profession has led to lack of agency and decline in teacher motivation, but I can see that the issues are more complex. The teachers I speak to are motivated, what is enabling them? What types of agency are they experiencing? Is the landscape of the profession different to that of the late 80s, 1990s and 2000s when I was teaching in schools and when there was considerable writing about the personal lives of teachers (Nias, Goodson, Ball, Woods and Jeffrey, Day). I need to explore the complex factors that currently influence teachers' lives, what is it that teachers now need to maintain motivation and commitment? Reading has led me to the idea of 'self-positioning', understanding the landscape within which they work. I do not think that was something I really thought about when I was teaching – it seems important now. Perhaps Masters study enables this? It will be interesting to see if teachers refer to this idea.

I am now open to the idea that professional identity is something that changes, 'in flux'. It adapts and develops over time. At different times and in different circumstances the teachers might be constrained or empowered. Exploring teachers' lives in narrative form might illuminate examples of this.

I now see why Nias and others emphasise the unavoidable relationship between the professional and the personal. There are distinct dualities emerging that seem to be significant

Personal- Professional

Internal values – external expectations

Individual – social/ organisational

All are interwoven, I want to find out more about how these inter-relationships are revealed in teachers' narratives. These are important parts of the teachers' professional journeys – the idea of navigating a professional journey seems a useful analogy to use. It reflects the idea that professional identity is far less fixed than I had assumed.

The questions seem to be, how is this journey navigated? How are tensions or potential tipping points (see Koster) managed?

August 2013

I now have a better understanding of what I want to find out, but I need to be clear about the contribution my research will make – is it worth exploring? Having spoken to a few teachers about my research interest I can see that they have genuine enthusiasm to be involved and to share their experiences. This indicates to me that there is something worth exploring and sharing – both exciting and motivating, but is it enough for a doctoral project? I have found examples of recent literature that highlight the importance of identity and the professional development of teachers. From this I can see how my research might inform how we design professional development programmes. I believe that it is important to understand teachers' own perceptions of their experience and how appropriate professional development opportunities can support positive identity. This aligns with my experience of teachers on Masters programmes – they talk about how the study enables them to rethink their identity as a teacher, re-establish what they see to be important, some talk about being 're-energised'.

Olsen(2008) – interesting point that there is much we can learn about teacher identity through research as much is hidden in an increasingly technical orientation towards teacher preparation and development. In depth narratives seem to be an appropriate approach to reveal much that is hidden? Key questions being raised: Will individual narratives provide enough depth and authenticity to make claims about teachers' lives? I need to explore this methodology in greater depth.

I know that I need to make clear links between the 'small stories' of the individual teachers with the 'big stories' of the wider professional environment. The methodology I choose needs to enable this.

I am starting to think about the selected participants. I have teachers in mind that I know – what is the impact of this? I feel it is important that I know something about the teachers' experience and their attitudes to the profession so therefore need to select from those that I have worked with. I want to focus on a particular group of motivated and committed teachers and I need to know something about them to ensure they meet the selection criteria. Will the fact that they know me affect the way that they respond? Will they be influenced by what they know about me and my views? I need to read more about trustworthiness and authenticity in narrative research.

I have read about purposive sampling and am reassured that there is an argument for carefully selecting the participants. I am not looking for representation across the whole population, I am looking for meaningful examples which will provide insights and provoke resonance.

November 2013

I am aware that the perspective I am taking to my research is changing over time. I had previously thought that I was taking a humanist perspective to the research (see Sep/Oct 2013 entries and discussion with supervision team). Whilst I still hold the humanist view that the individuals have agency and intentionality that enables them to affect change and influence their own lives, I am increasingly aware that this perspective can underplay the significant influence of organisational and wider structures. I can see that the personal dimensions must be considered in light of the structures, and this needs to be explicit in my research. See McLure, 1993.

I am moving towards a more post-positivist, realist perspective that links human activity and social contexts. I am becoming interested in underlying causal processes which I did not acknowledge at the start of the process. I want to be able to explain some of the responses that teachers make, not just describe them.

I am now seeing the importance of the integration of both sociological and psychological perspectives in my research. The psychological nature of identity, agency and motivation and the social theory that explores the relationship between structure and agency are significant aspects of my project. These are not areas that I have studied in depth before, so I need to read key texts to ensure that I have a strong underpinning to the research. I am concerned that this realisation has come quite late, but I can see that this unravelling of ideas is part of the research journey!

September 2014

Having conducted the first interviews with the teachers, I can see how the work of Akkermann and Meijer has become influential in my thinking about the nature of identity. They suggest that identity formation is far from linear and is fragmented/ adapts in relations to the social worlds with which we interact.

Dialogical identity – integrates both modern and postmodern perspectives. Identity can be both unitary and multiple, continuous and discontinuous, individual and social. Such a perspective can help me to make sense of the complex responses teachers make to their work. I can see these complexities in my own experience – I can maintain a sense of self whilst adapting my actions depending upon my role and context and the needs of those around me. Is this what the teachers are doing?

This complexity is also reflected in Day et al.'s (2006) different dimensions of teacher identity – personal, professional and situated. How is all this managed?

Does this suggest that the ideas of writers such as Sachs need to be considered in light of new emerging types of professionalism? There might be a merging of activist and entrepreneurial perspectives? Teachers moving between the two? Questions to bear in mind as I analyse teachers' narratives.

October 2014

The exploration of social theory has become increasingly important to my research. Layder's critique of social theory over time has influenced my thinking in a significant way. Reflecting on how key ideas about structure and agency have developed over time (Marx, Talcott Parsons, Giddens, Archer, Bourdieu) has helped me to see how the questions I have been asking of the initial data I have collected fit into an existing field of theory. I feel that I am starting to find the underpinning theoretical perspective that I was looking for.

Key idea to explore further – Giddens' structuration theory (this could be useful – read further).

January 2015

Reading around structure-agency led me to see the value of Derek Layder's adaptive theory in structuring my research. I was becoming concerned that I was conducting data collection whilst still exploring literature and establishing my approach to analysis. This seemed risky, but was relieved to find that the dilemmas I have been facing around the relationship between structure and agency and the analysis of the data are addressed in Layder's argument. As I read it seemed to address all my concerns! It is a relatively new approach and I have not found a lot of research that has used it directly which is disconcerting, but I am confident that it addresses many of the challenges I am facing. The reading I have found that refers to it emphasizes the usefulness in exploring the various levels of the social world and in drawing upon the realist perspective to reveal tentative explanations for social phenomena.

A key aspect of the adaptive theory is that it enables me to use the key ideas I have already identified through the literature as orienting concepts upon which to base initial analysis of the teachers' narratives. The approach encourages the ongoing movement between data and theory which is what I have been doing. It offers me the resources and tools to structure my analysis and make sense of the data in a meaningful way. I feel that I can continue with data generation and analysis with greater freedom and confidence.

Appendix 2: Participant information sheet



Participant Information Sheet

Research project title: The personal dimensions of teacher professional identity: potential tensions and dilemmas (working title)

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to participate it is important for you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and contact me 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.

What is the purpose of the research?

The purpose of my research is to gain a greater understanding of how teachers conceptualise their work the extent to which they draw upon their beliefs and values when discussing their professional experience and the environment in which they work.

The research will explore how teachers reconcile potential tensions between personal and professional values and external pressures that currently face the profession, and the impact that the school context, the socio-political environment and their CPD experience have on the ways individuals talk about their work.

The findings will inform teacher education programme developments and support providers in considering how issues around personal and professional identity and teacher agency might be addressed in such programmes, and the potential impact on motivation and resilience.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen as you have recently completed the Masters in Education with the University. You have demonstrated an interest in teacher development and in practitioner research and therefore, your views will be very useful for the purpose of the research.

A total of 5-8 teachers will participate in the research

Do I have to take part?

It is completely up to you to decide whether or not to take part.

If you do decide to take part you will keep this information sheet and be asked to sign a consent form.

If you decide to take part you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect any future involvement with the University.

What does participation in the research involve?

You will initially be asked to complete a reflective log related to your personal reasons for becoming a teacher.

The study will be conducted over one year and will involve three 1-hour interviews, one per school term and three reflective log entries, one per school term. The interviews will take place in your school at a mutually convenient time.

You will be requested to attend three interviews (one each school term) in which aspects of your professional experience will be explored through your own narratives. You will also be asked to complete two additional log entries (one each term) focusing on particular incidents and experiences of your choice.

Your narratives will be typed and returned to you, to check for accuracy and for your comment.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Personal benefits of the study may include gaining a greater understanding of the teaching profession and the process of practitioner research.

Furthermore it is anticipated that using 'narrative' may assist you in reflective practice which is an essential component of teacher development.

The findings of the study will contribute to knowledge in the area of teacher identity and may provide guidance for teacher educators when planning initial teacher training and CPD programmes.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

One foreseen disadvantage is the time taken to complete the interviews and the three log entries.

Reflecting on personal experiences may make you focus on uncomfortable aspects. If this arises, you will be offered support through debriefing, or advised to withdraw from further participation.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the research will be kept strictly confidential. Your anonymity will be protected throughout the study and your name changed on any narratives so that you cannot be identified.

Additionally, any other aspect of the narrative that may be distinctive to you will be changed in negotiation with you. The research will not be reporting on individual participants but will draw conclusions from all the interviews and narratives collated.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

You will be kept informed of the results of the research study and you will be invited to contribute to revisions or clarifications. Again all information provided will be kept strictly confidential. Only the researchers will have access to your details and will not affect any future study with the institution.

Who is involved in the research?

Hilary Taylor, School of Education, University of Hertfordshire
h.1.taylor@herts.ac.uk 07966 159724

Supervisors:

Dr Julie Shaughnessy, Roehampton University
J.Shaughnessy@roehampton.ac.uk 0208-392-3493

Dr Alaster Douglas, Roehampton University
Alaster.Douglas@roehampton.ac.uk

Thank you for reading this information sheet.

Appendix 3: Participant consent form



ETHICS COMMITTEE

Title of Research Project: The personal dimensions of teacher professional identity:

potential tensions and dilemmas

Brief Description of Research Project:

The purpose of the research is to gain a greater understanding of how teachers conceptualise their work the extent to which they draw upon their beliefs and values when discussing their professional experience and the environment in which they work.

The research will explore how teachers reconcile potential tensions between personal and professional values and external pressures that currently face the profession, and the impact that the school context, the socio-political environment and their CPD experience have on the ways individuals talk about their work.

The study will be conducted over one year and will involve three 1-hour interviews, one per school term and three reflective log entries, one per school term. The interviews will take place in your school at a mutually convenient time.

You will be requested to attend three interviews (one each school term) in which aspects of your professional experience will be explored through your own narratives. You will also be asked to complete two additional log entries (one each term) focusing on particular incidents and experiences of your choice.

The findings will inform teacher education programme developments and support providers in considering how issues around personal and professional identity and teacher agency might be addressed in such programmes, and the potential impact on motivation and resilience.

You have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty of any kind and will be able to withdraw all data pertaining to yourself should you wish to withdraw from the project.

Investigator Contact Details:

Hilary Taylor
School of Education
University of Hertfordshire
AL10 9AB
h.1.taylor@herts.ac.uk
01707 285661

Consent Statement:

I agree to take part in this research, and am aware that I am free to withdraw at any point. I understand that the information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity will be protected in the publication of any findings.

Name

Signature

Date

Please note: If you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator or Director of Studies. However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Professor of Education and

Philosophy and Head of Research.

School consent:

I agree for the research to take place in my school. I understand that the information provided will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that the school's identity will be protected in the publication of any findings.

Headteacher's name

Signature

Date

Director of Studies Contact Details:

Dr Julie Shaughnessy
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If you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator or Director of Studies. However, if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Professor of Education and Philosophy and Head of Research.

Professor of Education and Philosophy and Head of Research:

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Appendix 4: Participant activity preparation sheet

Writing the Reflective Log

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research project.

The purpose of the log is to enable you to reflect on key aspects of your professional practice which relate to the research focus. Your entries will provide me with insights into the events and aspects of your professional life that are significant to you.

The log entries will be explored further in the face-to-face interviews during which you will be able to elaborate upon and clarify issues and ideas raised. The aim is to create a collaborative research approach, to develop narratives of your thoughts and experience as a teacher at this time. You will have opportunities to annotate and amend the entries during the course of the research.

There is no set format or word-count for the entries. For example, your reflective log can be presented as word-processed writing, handwritten notes, a mind-map or voice recording. I have provided a notebook which you can use if you wish.

The logs are personal to you, but I would like to be able to have copies of your entries if you are in agreement. All entries will remain anonymous, will not be shared with anyone else and will be returned to you on completion of the project.

The first entry needs to be completed before the first interview (Summer Term 2014). Please see guidance below:

Reflective Log 1

Please respond to the following questions:

How and why did you become a teacher?

What/who were the main influences?

What were your hopes and aspirations when you first started in the profession?

You will be asked to complete two further entries, the foci of these are:

Reflective Log 2: Identifying the positive aspects of your professional role (Autumn term 2014)

Reflective Log 3: Identifying the challenges you face in your professional role

Reflections on being a participant in this research project (Spring Term 2015)

Further details about these entries will be discussed and negotiated with you after each interview.

I expect to have a transcription of Interview 1 by 7th July. I will email this to you for you to read through and annotate

Please return this to me by **Friday 18th July**

Appendix 5: Example interview schedule

3-4 weeks before interview 1 (by end of May 2014)

Initial meeting to be held at participants' school

Purpose of initial meeting:

- to provide information to participants and gain informed consent
- to set up stage 1 of the fieldwork data collection (log)
- to arrange date, time and location of Interview 1

During 3-4 weeks before interview:

Reflective log 1 'How I came into teaching'

To be completed in preparation for Interview 1 (see guidance attached)

Interview 1 (by end of June 2014)

Thank you again for agreeing to take part in this research. The research focuses on the experience of teachers – as a social scientist I am interested in teachers' narratives of their experience.

My aim on this interview is to encourage you to tell your narrative, therefore the interview will be semi-structured with open questions to enable you to talk with limited interruptions. There are no right or wrong answers – your task is simply to tell me some of the most important things that have happened, and that you think are significant about your work.

I will try to avoid a question-answer approach, but may intervene with prompts if I think it would be helpful.

We will start with the log as a focus for our initial discussion and then move to questions about your current role.

Do you have any questions before we start?

I am now going to turn on the sound recorder

Thank you for completing your log entry. Tell me about how you went about completing it, how did you decide to record it?

Please tell me about your reflections on why and how you came into teaching?

Can you tell me more about that...

Can you think of a specific example that illustrates that...

Is there anything else you want to say...

Thank you for sharing that with me. I would now like to move on to finding out more about your professional role as it is now.

First of all, can you describe your professional life to me

You have focussed a lot on what you do, can you tell me more about how you feel about your job

So how would you describe a good teacher?

How do you know you are good at your job?

Is there anything else that you want to tell me? Are there any significant points that we haven't covered?

Thank you that ends the interview for today, I am now going to turn off the recorder.

Turn off

I expect to have a transcription of this interview by 7th July. I will email this to you for you to read through and annotate

Please return this to me by Friday 18th July

Introduce Log entry 2. Guidance will be sent to you at the beginning of September

Discuss date, time and location for Interview 2

Appendix 6: Example analytical grid

Tess analysis: tensions and responses (extract)

Orienting concepts:

Internal/ External accountability

Individual/ Organisational tensions

Agency

identity

Performativity

| Column 1 Interview 2 transcript (reduced) | Column 2 Descriptive coding | Column 3 Orienting concepts | Column 4 Teacher's narrative | Column 5 Conceptual clusters typologies |
|---|--|--|--|--|
| <p>I think my values about why I'm in this profession and my values, even without that actually, are still the same, because they're so strong, they don't tend to change, is that I do have a strong drive for improvement, and that's in my own self and in my students, so that I think will always run through what I'm doing, so I think that is the key thing that drives me every day.</p> <p>you have tough days but when you go home at night and wake up in the morning, you think about, what can I do better today, and if you have a bad lesson it's, what do I need to do differently so that doesn't happen again, and that is just now become part of the thinking, you know, I don't have to think about thinking; that is just how I think. That lesson didn't go well and it's probably because I didn't do something so right, so what can I do differently, and that....</p> <p>So...positive aspects of my role...I think the one thing that I love about being in this position in the school is the autonomy of being allowed to create change and having the freedom to be creative and innovative in the approach, so...but I feel like as a team, we've managed to get our status up to quite</p> | <p>Values...so strong Drive for improvement</p> <p>What can I do better</p> <p>How I think</p> <p>Something I didn't do</p> <p>Autonomy Being allowed Freedom</p> | <p>identity</p> <p>agency</p> <p>Agency - motivation</p> <p>Agency -Self- efficacy</p> | <p>Tess describes how she has maintained a strong sense of values and that these have remained constant and 'run through' everything she does.</p> <p>She continually strives to do better for her pupils. She describes this drive to improve as 'part of the thinking'. It seems embedded.</p> <p>She takes responsibility for her practice. If she feels something didn't go well, she reflects on what she might have done differently</p> <p>She talks about having autonomy – she refers to this as 'being</p> | <p>Strong sense of self and purpose</p> <p>Aspiration</p> <p>Metacognitive awareness</p> <p>Nuanced link between performativity and autonomy – success leads to a licence to be creative</p> |

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| <p>a significant sort of...significant run school because people have recognised that we started off the year with three out of five of our GCSEs being in the top five per cent of schools. We beat our outstanding targets; there was a definite sense of last year, the drive and the ambition to surpass targets was collective and we all worked incredibly hard to get there, and even though I was on maternity leave for a few ...it was only like twelve weeks in the year, school year, you know that was still the momentum was still there and everyone was still really, really working hard, so we started off the year in a very positive aspect, which was recognised</p> <p>in the senior team and the curricular...I've been asked to almost lead the sort of share and collaborate with those people to sort of get them up to speed how I've been ... I believe strongly in each area has their own strengths that they need to focus on and prioritise; there's no one size fits all because that is the reason why we did so well last year was because we were allowed to differentiate, you know, the whole school might be working on assessment for learning and doing a specific thing, but that was already a strength in our department, so we did things differently and we were allowed to innovate and be creative and almost do a piece of action research, you know, it was that sense of everyone's classes are action research really in themselves, so what are you doing in your classes that's successful? Bring it back to the table and we'll learn from it, and it was that definite...it was lovely</p> <p>it was in part of my performance management appraisal where we had targets for the year, and the beginning of last year, I had to think about, well what do I want to focus on, and the thing...one of the things, aspects was about creating that vision and use of communication to</p> | <p>Our status</p> <p>Beat outstanding targets</p> <p>Collective we</p> <p>Share and collaborate Up to speed</p> <p>Allowed to differentiate</p> <p>Innovate Action research Doing well because they did it their own way</p> <p>Everyone on same wavelength</p> | <p>Performativity</p> <p>Use of we, our, collective</p> <p>Agency -Reward</p> <p>Collegiality</p> | <p><i>allowed</i> to be creative, suggesting that autonomy is linked to performativity. Tess has autonomy and freedom to be creative because the department has 'status' as a result of GCSE results.</p> <p>She describes the start to the year as positive as a result of these outcomes. She talks about collaboration but in terms of getting colleagues 'up to speed', suggesting that there is a recognised way of being that needs to be achieved.</p> <p>She recognises the importance of gaining the GCSE targets, However she also states that 'no one size fits all' so she is able to develop her ways of meeting targets in the department. Because the department is seen to do well, it is 'allowed to differentiate' that is not follow the directives in the school as a whole.</p> <p>She views performance management as a positive aspect of her work. It enables her to set targets that she can work towards, provides direction and</p> | <p>Conscious positioning</p> <p>Paradoxical relationship Performativity and autonomy</p> <p>Autonomy v 'belongingness'</p> <p>Licensed autonomy</p> <p>Conscious positioning</p> <p>Direction and purpose</p> <p>Metacognitive awareness</p> <p>Paradoxical relationship Performativity and autonomy</p> <p>Autonomy v 'belongingness'</p> |
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| <p>make sure that everybody is on the same wavelength and we're all moving towards the common goal and so I was really, really transparent in the way we worked, so every meeting, it's all very clear who said what, what needs to be done, and the information was shared immediately so that people could get going and there was no, you know, confusion about who's responsible for what, so...last year, I think that was such a focus and I felt that every step of the way, every single one of my team could tell you what we're working on and what's happening with each other; there's a clear routine and so I think that helped get us to where we were and the whole school policies that were sort of passed down were, you know, we wanted to close the gaps, for example, pupil premium and free school meals and SEN, white British boys and they wanted everybody to write a context sheet for their class which basically outlined, this is my class, this is who I teach, these are the specific barriers for these types of students, and we adapted it slightly; not huge amounts, but we adapted it to fit our needs and made sure that it was working, and it was nice to be able to adapt and it was that sense of...and we used to context sheets anyway, we were one of the first ones to always do them, but it was nice to show, this is how we do it and we do it very well and it was highlighted. So yeah, I think the year started off in that sort of positive atmosphere, positive drive from where we were last year. So yeah, just going back to some of the positive aspects of my role, having the freedom to think about where we're at now and how we'd like to move forward is I really enjoy that.</p> <p>There's huge challenges because we have four new members of staff... , so the possible potential for instability, it's already showing, and the challenges now of not</p> | <p>Team knows targets</p> <p>Targets</p> <p>Barriers for students</p> <p>Freedom to think about how to move forward</p> <p>New staff</p> <p>Potential instability</p> <p>Systems and procedures</p> | <p>Agency decisions Ind v org</p> <p>Ind v org Agency</p> | <p>purpose. It is meaningful because she decides what is important to focus on.</p> <p>It works when the aims of the organisation align with the aims of the organisation</p> <p>The discourse of performativity is embedded. She is very focused on the national agenda, school targets because she recognises the importance for the school, but also because she cares about all pupils achieving the best they can</p> <p>She is conscious not to adopt initiatives without adapting to meet needs of pupils</p> <p>She uses 'we' in reference to the department, portraying a sense of collegiality whilst having very clear individual aims.</p> | <p>Conscious positioning in organisation</p> <p>Complex relationship between Structures/ agency --enabler</p> |
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| <p>being...not having meeting time regularly because of new situations, could possibly, you know, damage that future potential. What we've started, sort of the structure is all there, but it's so difficult when people don't know the systems and procedures in the school; you're really starting again,</p> <p>there is a culture of developing leaders in the school and so there..., and they do see me as someone who's got more experience and ask, what would you do if...but I tend to step away from that and let people talk about what they need to talk about because I'm not...technically, I'm not their leader, we're collaborative, and as soon as I take on that role of trying to lead them, that will change, the relationship will change.</p> <p>And I don't want that relationship to change, so I'm very collegiate and you know, I have to be careful about how I put things and I do ...there is a good atmosphere, I think we're all under a lot of stress.</p> <p>I'm not saying they're like the children, but the relationships are like children in that in my class, you've got to win the big things, so you've got to pick and choose the things that you have battles over, and so when something isn't done to my standards, or you know, it's not a case of, do I need to have an argument about this, do I need to discipline this person? The big thing is, I want them to get here, so how can we move forward without anyone getting too upset, and that's how I think about it all the time.</p> <p>I think trust is like really, really big for me and I am hopefully, most of the time, trusted to lead my department and I have to trust my teachers because the majority of teachers are in this job because they want to do something positive in</p> | <p>Culture of developing leaders</p> <p>Collegiate Good atmosphere</p> <p>Win the big things</p> <p>trust</p> <p>positive in children's lives</p> <p>Challenging people</p> | | <p>The importance of a cohesive team is also reflected in her concerns about staff turnover</p> <p>She emphasises the importance of systems and procedures and the culture in the school of developing leaders,</p> <p>She focuses on collaboration and the importance of relationships</p> <p>She describes herself as 'collegiate', but also of 'battles' and 'winning', 'my standards', 'discipline'</p> <p>Focus on the bigger picture rather than the small details – it is as though she is giving licensed autonomy to others. They can do things their way as long as they comply with the 'big things'</p> | <p>Conscious positioning – relationships</p> <p>Discourse of pragmatism</p> <p>Strategic positioning of self and others</p> <p>Licensed autonomy</p> <p>'allow' autonomy in others</p> <p>Dialogical identity Moving between discourses</p> |
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| <p>children's lives, and I have to give them some level of trust, and I share that with them and I...it is a fine line....yeah....so yeah, positive aspects, yeah, decision-making, being in terms of in the change making and providing that vision, I realised that especially now that we've got four new people, it's absolutely important to get the right message across and the right vision. And I haven't got that right with everyone, you know, we've got some challenging people who aren't very good with communication, and therefore create negative atmosphere, which I'm not used to. It's been a while since I've had that in the team, maybe four or five years ago so I've got a new challenge ahead in creating that vision and making sure everybody believes and follows it.</p> <p>The other thing I think is positive aspect is being able to... actually moving the subject forward, it's another part of my...the thing that I find quite positive is thinking about...I find that more challenging because I need time to go and develop knowledge because I am teaching a subject that is rapidly changing, and so you have to keep up with the times, you know, I went to University to do my degree with this subject ten years ago, eleven years ago.., I've just bought a 3D printer. Sitting in a box over there, and I haven't had time to take it out and test it and play with it and learn how to use the software to make it happen, and that will really change the face of projects at Year 9, for example, but I can't do that without time,</p> <p>I love the fact that we can be creative in changing the projects and coming up with things that the students can make, because ...that's very exciting about technology and art, unlike, you know, ...we think of an idea, that student will be making it next year and taking it home, and it'll be something that</p> | <p>Negative atmosphere</p> <p>Make sure everybody believes</p> <p>Develop knowledge</p> <p>Love being creative</p> <p>Students will make it and take home Help their future</p> <p>Look beyond school</p> | <p>identity</p> <p>Identity as leader</p> <p>Identity as a DT teacher</p> | <p>Despite performative language, she intermittently provides reminders of what she values</p> <p>'give them' trust</p> <p>But then 'get the right message across'</p> <p>She talks of negative people in the team, who do not believe in the vision. – whose vision?</p> <p>She reflects on the need for opportunity to develop subject knowledge. She is passionate about her subject and enjoys the fact that it is always developing,</p> | <p>Intellectual curiosity</p> <p>Dialogical identity Moving between discourses</p> <p>Intellectual curiosity</p> |
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| <p>they'll keep for the next twenty years and help them become an engineer..</p> <p>So... I've joined Twitter now. Painfully. And we're part of the Design and Technology Association, so we have a membership to them, so we get publications and journals to do with that which shows us what other schools are doing as well, which is nice to see that we're either on a par or, how come they're doing that? We need to sort of get our act together, which is where I found that 3D printer from an article in there. We have sort of CPD on exam board stuff, but that's more about standardising course-work, but it is quite interesting to see what other schools are doing and talk to other people, because they're online. Even though they're online, you can still ask questions, and in terms of my knowledge, I've got three more subjects that I need to start thinking about because I'm now in charge of Drama and Music; so the challenge is there, of keeping in touch with those two subjects, I do really try hard to move them on forward by carrying out research off my own bat, looking at exam specifications or looking at, you know, what I need to do and be down there. But it is a big struggle, really time-wise, because I've just...if I was in the same situation last year where I had all the staff in place and everything where it was, and then I got Music and Drama, it would be different, but the situation I'm in this year, I've got lots of balls to juggle.</p> <p>So I hate being ineffective. I hate not being able to do my job properly and there's lots of factors that are stopping me from doing that, so we need to talk about that another time,</p> | <p>Challenge to keep in touch with subjects</p> <p>Struggle time</p> <p>juggle</p> <p>hate being ineffective</p> <p>factors stop me doing job properly</p> <p>Need more hours in the day to be passionate</p> <p>Multi-task</p> | <p>Identity as a DT teacher</p> <p>Purpose motivation</p> <p>Professional knowledge Agency</p> | <p>She is keen to keep moving the subject forward. She uses Twitter Associations, articles, publications To keep up to date and to see what is happening outside school</p> <p>She likes to ask questions, develop her knowledge. She has taken on a new role and oversees new subjects that she needs to know more about.</p> <p>She moves to talk about the struggle she faces with time</p> <p>Now she has a family she is starting to resent the extra time she is putting in to the job</p> <p>She sets high expectations for herself and now she has other commitments, she has to prioritise.</p> | <p>Dialogical identity Moving between individual and social</p> <p>Metacognitive awareness</p> <p>Metacognitive awareness- changing priorities, intentions</p> |
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| <p>...we are highly thought of in the school and our results are very good. But certain aspects, there are teachers that are known to not do things, you know, to protocol, and I know I've still got those challenges, so...yeah, I just wish I had more time, but I think everyone feels the same about pretty much every job, we just need a few more hours in the day to be more passionate because I have to juggle now with my home life, which is very different when I just had a five year old, so there are, you know, I don't literally can't do anything in the evenings apart from really, really late and I am very, very tired, so whilst I, you know, one of the things is like my own personal achievement in being able to multi-task so many different things, I do get pride out of that, but at the same time, I'm absolutely exhausted; really, really tired and I have to prioritise. It comes back down to those core things: what do I need to make sure gets done on the face of it? Children need to make progress and have good results. My team need to be happy and teaching good lessons, and so when I have to cut back on all the other things, unfortunately I'm a bit of a rebel in that way in SLT where I just say, I'm not doing it that way, doing it this way, because that's just more efficient use of my time.</p> <p>it's a journey over time that before I would've spent every waking moment and you know, sacrificed a lot of personal things for that, but I actually can't, I've got two children that need me and a husband that needs me, so...</p> <p>And it's realising now that those things aren't a hindrance; that's what I live for really, the other thing that I live for, so whilst I have been in here on a Saturday morning, I've brought my daughter along and she does her painting and stuff anyway, so it's nice because we actually get a bit of alone time away from home, and she gets all the</p> | <p>Exhausted</p> <p>Resist Questions SLT</p> <p>Not a hindrance</p> <p>Need to learn and develop</p> <p>Progress</p> | <p>performativity</p> <p>Identity High expectations Self-efficacy</p> <p>Commitment motivation</p> <p>Ind v org</p> | <p>She has the commitment and motivation, just needs more time (see also Jessie)</p> <p>So she considers what are the important things that will make a difference</p> <p>She has developed professional confidence to be able to stand up for own beliefs about what to prioritise</p> <p>Her circumstances have changed which means that she can't commit the same time to the job</p> <p>Doesn't resent the challenges, she finds ways of overcoming them. Balancing priorities and navigating challenges provides a sense of achievement</p> | <p>Discourse of pragmatism</p> <p>Priorities change</p> <p>Conscious positioning</p> <p>Balance ind and org expectations Develop own sense of priorities</p> <p>Conscious positioning</p> <p>Navigation can be rewarding</p> <p>'finding your own way'</p> |
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| <p>resources that she wants to do things with. I've just had to learn how to manage my time and prioritise differently and I do get a sense of achievement out of developing myself like that, because...I can see the path change. I've seen how I've changed over the years because I've tracked at different times, you know, different...when I was doing my Masters and when I started in teaching and I had to reflect on where I wanted to be, so at different stages in my career, I've had to reflect, so I can see the pattern and it's nice being able to internally reflect on...</p> <p>if I don't feel like I'm developing myself or learning, then I can see that's where I would be a bit miserable, you know, the fact that I think there's still room for improvement, so keep going, and so I just try and take each challenge, I realise this year's going to be a big challenge, so let's just see how it goes and at the end I can say, I did it and I moved forward, you know, I made progress with these things, so I won't have won all of them but I've tried. I'll try. So one of the other things was, yeah, sort of my own professional development in terms of what I would like to do next and how that's being catered for.</p> <p>I think a really nice, positive thing is that the leadership team, I think the senior leadership team, have almost...for years we've been saying, why am I doing it this way? Why do I have to write a lesson plan this way when we do it this way? Do we really have to? Let's differentiate, and it's nice to know that Ofsted and all those years of saying this, and to be honest, we were doing our own thing anyway, in terms of with the school, you know, whole school priorities but luckily because the Head and Deputy Head know that my standards are high, I will only be doing it if I needed to do it this way. We do sometimes have</p> | <p>won</p> | <p>Identity</p> <p>Professional development</p> | <p>She is reflective and thinks about the different stages of her career and 'tracked' the path she has taken. It has enabled her to 'see a pattern', and recognise her own professional development. Seeing her own development is important to her motivation</p> <p>She describes the need to move forward She uses the term 'win' as if it is a challenge/ competition within herself</p> <p>She returns to the idea of autonomy. Because standards are high she is able to make own decisions and differentiate priorities</p> | <p>Conscious positioning</p> <p>Knowing the journey</p> <p>Recognising development – make it explicit</p> |
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| <p>our little debates about things, but I think when Ofsted put in their sort of myth-busting letter out a few weeks ago that's kind of, you know teachers should not be marking every single piece of work and you should not be providing lesson plans because you know, you hear in other schools, teachers handing over folders of lesson plans. It's insane; it's common sense and it's nice to know we're going back to commonsense</p> <p>I can sense that level of differentiation being allowed to... more ownership and autonomy of departments,</p> <p>do you see what I mean? It's a balance</p> | | | <p>However, she also recognises that situation may be different elsewhere or for other teachers</p> | |
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Appendix 7: Extracts from research journal (analytical memos)

May 2014

As I make arrangements for the first interviews with the teachers I am aware of the need to acknowledge my own thoughts about becoming a teacher, so that I am aware of any perspective I might bring to discussion. I have decided to make my own response to the questions I am posing and have written it down in my journal. Reading it back I have highlighted the final paragraphs as being relevant:

As I progressed through my teaching career, I experienced more and more prescription and guidance on what should be taught, when and how. It seemed a far cry from my days in Mr L's class and as a secondary pupil. I have often reflected on this time and asked myself:

- *What did I learn?*
- *What did I not learn?*
- *What might the experience have been like for other pupils?*

My hopes and aspirations were to inspire learning in others as I had been inspired at primary school, but lacked in secondary. I soon realised that not all pupils were like me when I was at school, all had their own ideas, strengths and issues. A teacher like Mr L wouldn't have suited everyone and I soon learnt that there were gaps in my own education. What I did realise on reflecting my own schooling, is the importance of focus and direction; knowing what education is for.

I was concerned that I might be looking for similar responses in the teachers' narratives, and aware that I must not lead them in any way. As it happens, after the interviews I noted that I did not need to probe or guide the teachers— they just talked freely and openly. I will look back at this reflection when I start coding the interview transcripts.

August 2014

Initial notes from listening to transcripts of Interview 1 (Becoming a teacher)

I am starting to engage in descriptive coding, trying to do so in a grounded way, code in a tentative manner. I am trying not be influenced by the literature but as I read I am reminded of things to go back to look at eg. OECD article.

Provisional themes:

- How the teachers see themselves academically – all mention their on academic achievements, both successes and challenges, experiences of education
- How they view the profession – link to their own goals and aspirations, career prospects
- How they view teaching – purpose of education, their subject
- What makes a good teacher – student centred

Some tensions are already emerging:

- Creativity/ prescriptiveness
- Attitudes to learning/ grades
- Autonomy/ directed
- Values/ accountability, pay and conditions

Values centre on:

- Being believed in – trust, positive feedback from colleagues, parents, friends, pupils, public
It is interesting to see the wide range of people they see as important/ are accountable to.
- Collegiality - relationships

I have noticed that each teacher responds to the questions in a varied and unique way. I must be careful not to lose their individuality by theming their responses.

I am struck by the general positivity in their narratives. I had assumed that they would see a focus on grades, levels and Ofsted as being negative parts of their work, but this has not been evident. It

seems that they see these aspects as necessary to their work (Rupa, Ash), or not something that affects their daily practice (*Not on my radar: Stan*). Can these aspects be drivers maybe? I need to gain deeper insight into this – it is very different to my experience. Patricia's response is rather different, she talks of 'adapting to reality'. Less positive but still motivated – interesting to explore. The next interviews will explore this further by asking them to reflect on the positive aspects and challenges they face.

My next step is to go back to the orienting concepts and code the transcripts more closely, drawing out distinctions between the teachers as well as the general themes.

December 2014

The second interviews have been enlightening in gaining a deeper understanding of how the teachers see their work and what they value.

I am starting to see a picture of teachers who see themselves as part of the wider profession, they question and challenge and see beyond the pressures of the day today classroom. Is this how teachers like Patricia question and challenge the context in which she works, the directed nature of the job, but remains positive about the profession?

Key feature of narratives – a sense that they can do something about their own practice. There is a lack of blame which has surprised me (see Tess, Stan, Jessie). Next to Patricia's notes I have written HOPE! And Sarah – prepared to stand up for what they believe.

A dilemma is emerging, whilst accountability measures might be a tool (acknowledgement of good work), they still have pupils at the heart. Ash 'we would do them a disservice if we did not help them get the qualifications' – this is an important factor. Getting the grades is important in so many ways.

I am seeing that in different ways, all the teachers are confident of their own views and opinions. This helps them to question and stand up for what they believe. I am getting a sense that they do not let themselves be dominated by the system – needs further analysis.

As Stan says 'more positives than negatives' – this is indicative of the balancing/ tipping point/ journey analogy. Interesting phrase from Stan 'play the game', Patricia talks about 'try to be what they want' and even 'caricature'. Rupa says 'it is a bit fake'. This could be an important theme.

March 2015

Notes after working on the analytical grid:

Using adaptive theory has helped me to see the themes that are emerging in relation to the wider theories. The relationships between structure/ agency, individual/ organisational/, the dialogic nature of identity have become useful in helping me make sense and develop tentative causal explanations of how teachers respond. I can see how teachers are continually moving between and negotiating different perspectives and tensions. The teachers work hard at this because they think it is important. Sarah illustrates this by saying the 'I seem to make life hard for myself'. But it is this effort that seems to keep her motivated because she stays 'true to my values'. I have written *self-fulfillment* next to Jessie and Tess – they are very driven and seem to want to prove something to themselves about what they can achieve. They have professional pride.

There is a sense of all the teachers doing things 'beyond' teaching– this goes back to see a bigger picture, the wider context of the profession. Is this what makes the difference?

The final stage of analysis needs to look more closely at these ideas – what might be the explanations for these teachers maintaining a commitment and motivation in these challenging times? Their wider outlook, awareness of their positioning?

These are aspects that can be addressed in teacher development.